

On the last weekend of January, Gina and I went to Los Angeles for the State Council meeting. On the Negotiations Committee, there was a lot of discussion about the Local Control Funding Formula and what it means for us as teachers. Part of the law that authorized the LCFF requires the formulation of a Local Control Accountability Plan to ensure funds are spent to meet the state's designated priorities, and to meet the needs and ensure the support of students with special needs, those on free and reduced meal plans, and children in foster care. It is imperative that local associations have representation on the budget committees charged with formulating the LCAP. Other implications for local negotiations include improved revenue, which has led to a lot of districts settling with their locals and agreeing to raises and maintaining or increasing the cap on district payment of health insurance premiums. Sadly, not all districts are being well-managed, nor honest and above-board with their employees. We heard from the Alpine Teachers Association. They are in contentious negotiations with their school board, which is imposing draconian salary cuts and a huge increase in the amount employees are expected to contribute to health care costs. They made an appeal to the council for support from the members present for their strike fund. Several thousand dollars were raised and pledged for the Alpine Teachers.

Here is the formal report from State Council:

Council Decides - January 24-26, 2014 - Westin Bonaventure, LA

Opportunities Abound for CTA, Vogel says

With the passage of Prop. 30 and new revenues coming into the state's coffers, the promise of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), and the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, CTA has some real opportunities ahead, CTA President Dean E. Vogel told State Council in his [Saturday morning remarks](#). "Right now we have an opportunity with the [Local Control Funding Formula](#) and, honestly, with the implementation of the [Common Core State Standards](#), to lead the education discussion and the profession," Vogel said. "It gives us the opportunity to lead those discussions with parents and the community to move our schools forward and fund the priorities we know work best for kids, for our

students. And I can't think of a better opportunity for us to engage our communities and organize."

On the heels of Gov. Jerry Brown's state budget announcement, Vogel told Council that the [budget proposal](#) provides \$10 billion more for schools and colleges and repays all of the budget deferrals to local schools. Included in the proposal is a funding increase of \$244 million for the UC and CSU systems, which will hold tuition at existing levels. State funding for our community colleges includes an 11 percent increase in 2014-15.

"The governor also committed to working with us to ensure the stability of the California State Teachers' Retirement System. This too was an important recognition that the state must ensure the retirement commitments made to our hardworking teachers and educators," Vogel said. "This is our time!"

Yet in spite of the opportunities, challenges remain as well, Vogel told Council. Two lawsuits, the [Vergara](#) and Friedrichs cases, potentially have major impacts on the teaching profession and California schools. The Vergara lawsuit attacks the Education Code provisions that provide due process in teacher dismissal proceedings and protect seniority as a component of the layoff process.

In the [Friedrichs case](#), corporate interests are trying to do in the courts what they couldn't do in the Legislature or in the ballot box: silence our voices by preventing CTA from collecting agency fees. Although the U.S. District dismissed the lawsuit in December, it is widely believed the Friedrichs team plans to appeal the case in order to overturn a previous U.S. Supreme Court decision.

CTA Executive Director: LCFF Regulations Adopted

In his [report to Council](#), CTA Executive Director Joe Nuñez related the extensive preparation by CTA for the State Board of Education's adoption of the Local Control Funding Formula regulations and the basic template for the Local Control Accountability Plan. The adopted regulations and template are largely the outcome of months of work and collaboration among CTA, the ACLU, and Public Advocates, which is a coalition of community and civil rights groups, staff from the State

Board of Education, the Department of Finance, and the California Department of Education.

"It was kind of a Wild West hearing at the State Board of Education on January 16. More than 500 people were there to testify," Nuñez said. In addition to CTA members, he noted, the governor showed up unexpectedly to testify, and started by thanking the CTA for helping to pass Prop. 30.

Nuñez said, "The regulations for the LCFF and the LCAP are inextricably linked and give local educators and our local chapters an opportunity to further participate and guide district budgets."

Some locals have already started local conversations with districts. Among the chapters implementing agreements are the Lennox, El Centro and Riverside City teachers associations, which negotiated Common Core Implementation Committees with a majority of union members. The Brentwood Teachers Association established a Common Core Workgroup that provides paid stipends for BTA members. CTA staff also worked with the Moreno Valley Education Association to host its first-ever community conversation at March Mountain High School to address achievement gaps for African American and Latino students and to get parent input on how to address those gaps.

"This is how we seize control of [LCAP] implementation and begin to transform our profession as outlined in CTA's Strategic Plan," Nuñez said.

In addition to an update on recent bargaining achievements by CTA local chapters, Nuñez also highlighted work being done by CTA's Instruction and Professional Development staff to provide support and training to local chapters on the Common Core State Standards.

He announced a \$250,000 grant from NEA that will be used to present five regional seminars on Common Core in conjunction with the California Department of Education, WestEd and Secondary Literacy Partners. More information is available at cta.org/conferences.

Strategic Plan is Unanimously Approved by Council

After two years of meetings, input from more than 30,000 members, discussions and debate by the 100-plus-member Strategic Planning Group, the State Council of Education unanimously approved CTA's Long-Term Strategic Plan during its Sunday session. The plan, ["Our Union, Our Future,"](#) will be CTA's road map for the next four years and is intended to result in a more vibrant, inclusive, strong and engaged union that will take back the teaching profession.

"I'm very glad CTA is engaging in strategic planning," said UTLA member Ingrid Villeda. "I think it's an opportunity for locals to transform education. It's an opportunity to work with students and parents, to stand with the community. I feel we can't do unionism as we used to do it. We need to change the way we are a union. Site grievances are not enough. Bargaining the way we used to do it doesn't work as well. So it takes a whole community standing behind educators to be able to transform and change."

Following a directive from State Council three years ago, CTA's leadership engaged the Labor Education Research Center at the University of Oregon to help coordinate and facilitate a process that brought together rank-and-file members, leaders and CTA staff to craft strategies to meet the challenges ahead.

The plan was completed last fall and presented to Council for review during its October meeting. The plan was then vetted during CTA conferences and during a telephone town hall that reached out to 30,000 members. State Council also conducted a forum Saturday evening in advance of its final vote on Sunday.

Members can [read](#) more about the plan on the CTA website, [view comments](#) by CTA President Vogel to Council on the plan, or watch a [brief video](#) that provides highlights of the plan.

Now that Council has approved the plan, an Implementation Workgroup consisting of members and staff will be appointed to advise and make recommendations to the CTA Board of Directors about how to implement these goals and how to align governance structures. The workgroup will not be successful, though, without members getting involved. It will be up to local chapters to determine

how they engage in the plan and engage with educators in local schools. The workgroup will monitor the progress being made, constantly review the plan, and make adjustments as needed. And then, of course, ultimate responsibility for implementation and oversight lies with your elected CTA Board of Directors.

Council Denounces Vergara Lawsuit

In a unanimous vote on Saturday, the CTA State Council of Education denounced the [Vergara v. State of California](#) lawsuit attacking educators' professional and due process rights, which is being bankrolled by millionaires and corporate special interests.

Strongly reiterating CTA concerns with the "deceptive" lawsuit filed by Students Matter, a group headed by Silicon Valley millionaire David Welch, Council delegates adopted [a resolution](#) stating California's teachers "stand for students, educators and local public schools and denounce the meritless claims, fallacies and fabrications of the Vergara lawsuit and its deceptive goals."

Candidate Recommendations – Torlakson Re-election Backed

State Council voted to support State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson in his bid for re-election in November, in addition to candidates for other statewide constitutional offices.

"Superintendent Torlakson has demonstrated the leadership that has helped our public schools and colleges begin to turn the corner," said CTA President Dean E. Vogel. "He has always been a strong advocate for increasing state resources in support of K-14 education, and has been a sponsor and supporter for reforms that work, like the Quality Education Investment Act."

Council also voted to support the re-election of Gov. Jerry Brown; Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom; state Attorney General Kamala Harris; Commissioner of Insurance Dave Jones; and Controller John Chiang, who is a candidate for state Treasurer. In addition, Council voted to support Assembly Speaker John Perez, who is running for state Controller.

Council also voted to support dozens of [candidates](#) in local Assembly and state Senate races.

Initiative Positions

Along with candidate recommendations, State Council took positions on the following initiatives which are still in the signature- gathering process:

- [Nonprofit Donor Full Disclosure Act of 2014](#) (13-0054) – **SUPPORT**
- Public Employees: [Pension and Retiree Healthcare Benefits, Initiative Constitutional Amendment](#) (13-0026) – **OPPOSE**
- [High Quality Teachers Act of 2014 \(13-0058\)](#) - **OPPOSE**

Council also voted to authorize up to \$3 million from the CTA Initiative Fund to support CTA's positions on initiatives in the 2014 election.

In Other Actions, CTA State Council:

- Heard from Cathy Creasia, a member of United Teachers Los Angeles and recipient of the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship, who is completing her Ph.D. at University of Southern California.
- Heard a presentation from this year's [Read Across America](#) Committee about plans to pilot a new program, [California Reads](#).
- Raised \$20,000 for the [Alpine Teachers Association](#) strike fund in contributions from State Council members — including a \$5,000 pledge from San Diego Education Association, a \$2,000 pledge from United Educators of San Francisco, a \$1,000 pledge from San Jose Teachers Association, and several thousand dollars from a discretionary fund of the CTA officers. <http://www.alpineta.org>
- Accepted the [CTA Annual Report](#).
- Re-elected Doreen McGuire-Grigg, NEA Director, District 1; and Greg Bonaccorsi, NEA Director, District 3.