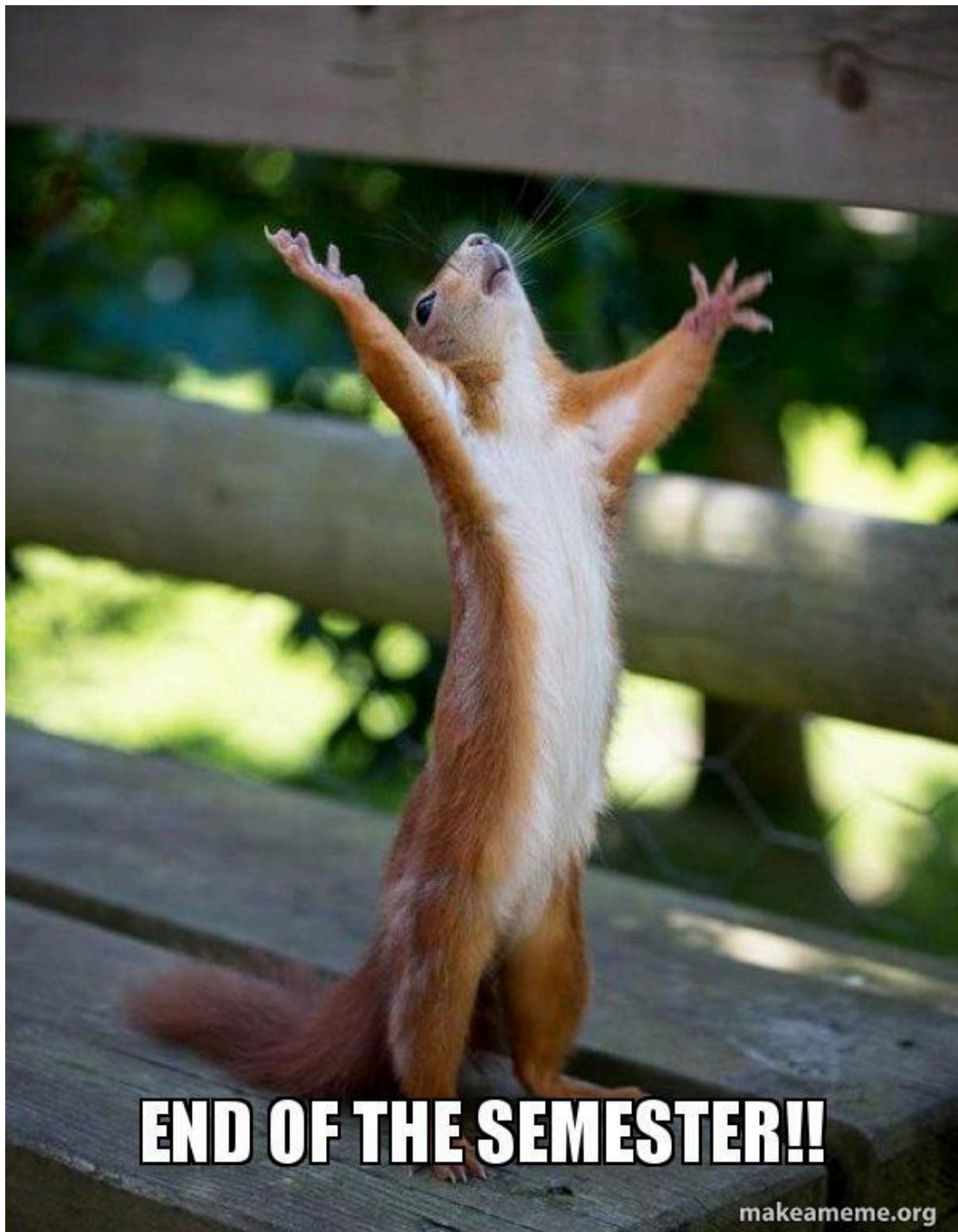


ABCFT - YOUnionews - January 24, 2020



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(ABC Federation of Teachers)

In Unity

ABC Federation of Teachers

abcft@abcusd.us

For confidential emails - use your non-work email to write to us at:

abcft2317@gmail.com

ABC EDUCATION FOUNDATION GRANT ANNOUNCED



The ABCUSD Education Foundation has announced its 2019-20 Grant results this week. The ABC Ed Foundation has funded 115 grants for \$221,000 over the past seven years. The majority of these grants have been awarded to classroom teachers or school site projects. Some of ABC's most innovative classroom experiences for students are a direct result of the grant funding provided by the ABC Education Foundation. For the 2019-2020 school year, there are eight special grants and twenty-two education classroom grants.

Next Tuesday, January 28th, there will be a Grant Awardee Event where participants will hear about the exciting projects that are making a difference for students throughout ABCUSD. This event is also an opportunity for the ABC Ed Foundation Board to recognize the many donors that make these grants possible each year.

ABCFT will have a follow-up report following the Foundations event on January 20th. At that time we will have a list of the specific grant projects. [Click this link for additional information from this week's press release.](#)

Education Budget 101 - Part 2: California Finances by Ray Gaer

This week ABCFT looks at an overview of the financial conditions currently in the State of California and some of the financial factors that go into how the State funds public education in California. I hope that those of you that are interested in the financial factors that have an impact on the ABC School District budget and ultimately how this impacts negotiations for compensation and contracts for education unions.

This week, we look at slides that highlight the big three revenues that the State of California relies on to balance the budget. The majority of the California budget comes



from revenues from personal income taxes, Corporation taxes, and state and use taxes. Overall, these charts still point to moderate growth in the highly diverse California economy, a balanced budget with investment in education, and more money put into the States Rainy Day Fund. Lastly, on slide 29, you will see a general budget summary of the State's budget and other budget initiatives from Governor Newsom.

[Click here for this week's installment covering the current projections for California's 2020-2021 budget.](#)

Next week, I'll point out some of the slides that discuss the health of the California economy and how that will impact education in the future.

PICTURE OF THE WEEK - PLO: *School Resilience 101*



This week, a dozen ABCFT members attend the ABCFT Personal Learning Opportunity on the topic of resilience. The topics covered in this workshop dealt with the science of stress, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), resilience, and how to start thinking about initiatives for your school. [We also discussed the topic of teacher burnout and the lack of systematic training for educators for self-care.](#) Participants discussed the stress of being an educator and what kind of support is needed for long term mental health over the span of an educator's career. [For more information and a deep catalog of resources, please take look at \[healthiergeneration.org\]\(http://healthiergeneration.org\).](#)

Thank you to all those in attendance and for everyone's continued feedback on the Personal Learning Opportunity program, we are piloting this school year. ABCFT and Kaiser Permanente have teamed up throughout the year to provide information workshops that relate to employee and student mental wellness. ABCFT is in the process of working with Blue Shield to provide more resources and supports for ABCFT members.

RESOURCES FOR YOUR CLASSROOMS

Does Your School Register Students to Vote?



Teaching Tolerance has announced its [Future Voters Project](#)! Their goal is to ensure all eligible students have the opportunity to register to vote before they graduate from high school. Check out their [recommendations](#) for leading inclusive, effective school-based voter registration drives. And if you [sign up to join](#), they will keep you posted as they continue to add new resources and recommendations for ensuring all students have a chance to participate in our diverse democracy.

[Teaching Tolerance | Diversity, Equity And Justice](#)

[SHARE MY LESSON - Free Lesson Plan Website](#)

Top Free Lessons: Driving Innovation with Quality Content



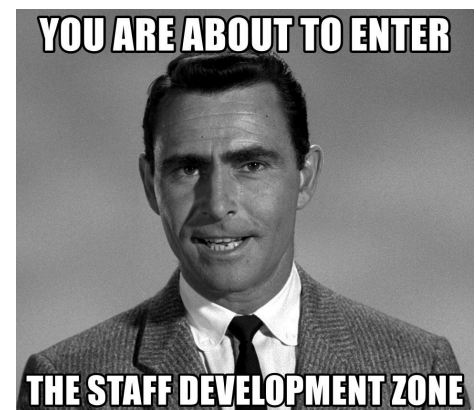
When AFT launched Share My Lesson as a crowdsourcing site for educators, AFT had a strong desire for educators from across the country to collaborate on classroom resources. And, today, Share My Lesson continues as a popular open-source site that drives innovation and excellence by remaining free and open to all. Our members and content partners share and download some of the best content, while also rating and reviewing resources so we know what's

hot and what's not. Take a look at the [Top Free Lessons: Collections of the Decade](#).

Sign up today for this free resource provided by AFT [Share My Lesson](#)

January ACADEMIC SERVICES UPDATE

Each month Kelley Forsythe and Rich Saldana work with Beth Bray and Carol Castro to provide teacher input about professional development, curriculum changes, and testing changes. ABCFT believes that the biggest working condition impacting teachers are the key curriculum and the professional development being churned out of academic services. Many times the district is implementing changes that are coming from the State of California but rarely do unions get involved in those changes. ABCFT believes that the teacher's voice helps to provide the district office with classroom advice and input that helps to deliver better comprehensive



changes. Each month at the ABCFT Representative Council Rich and Kelley give reports and take questions on all things related to academic services.

[Click Here For This Month's Full Report](#)

ABCFT PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Ray Gaer

Each week I work with unit members in representations, contract resolutions, email/text/phone call questions, site concerns, site visits, presentations, state/national representations and mediations. Here are some of the highlights of interest. Throughout the year I find articles that are interesting and food for thought;

[Here's the link to the 2019-20 President's Reading List.](#) (3 new articles)

I hope that you all had a good week. It never seems like a short week when we have one but I'm always thankful for Friday when it comes. Before I get to what I've been up to I want to remind everyone to be extra vigilant about washing your hands or sanitizing your desk regularly to minimize your exposure. I know it is easier said than done but make sure you are getting enough rest and that you are taking care of yourself. Over the next month, we may encounter more parents that will be concerned about the things they are hearing in the media about people getting ill and we should be prepared to tell them how we practice and teach good hygiene in our classrooms. Stay healthy and safe.

Last weekend, Membership Coordinator, Tanya Golden and I attended the bi-annual AFT Western Regional Leadership Conference. At this meeting, we heard details about the AFT endorsement process for the office of the President of the United States. In a word, it sounds to me like they will wait until things look clearer about who the frontrunner will be. If you recall, during the last Presidential election, it was quite shocking for all of us to hear that AFT was the first to endorse the candidate Hillary Clinton without deeper discussions with the national membership. In California, our then CFT President was in the minority for voting against this early endorsement but the damage was done. There were many AFT members throughout the country who felt like there was not enough transparency during the endorsement process. Consequently, AFT is now more cautious than ever about getting too far ahead of its members during the next Presidential election.

Where does ABCFT stand on the Presidential election? Here's what is most important in my eyes. That all members regardless of who they like or which party you affiliate with the need to be part of the process. For the first time that I can recall, the California primary will carry more weight than ever because it has been moved to March which will make this an exciting time for politics in California. The democratic process is the most important mechanism in our system of government and it defines us as Americans.



As the March primary approaches, ABCFT will try to provide information about each candidate's education platform and how it relates to the shared values of all educators. Knowing the education platform of each candidate will help ABCFT members to make informed decisions that will support public education. To ensure that your vote in the primary is counted, make sure you are registered for your party of preference. If you are registered with "no party preference" as your party selection, take a moment to look at page 7 in your primary voting guide on how you can change your party so that you will receive a primary ballot. Special note for those who are registered for Green, Peace, and Freedom, or Republican parties, according to the voters guide you must re-register with that specific party. To change your voter registration, visit registertovote.ca.gov.

Does ABCFT get involved in politics? For the most part, we stay out of national and state politics as much as we can because collectively we all come from different political affiliations and we have more in common than our politics. We do our best to provide balanced coverage of any topic we tackle. However, the ABC Federation of Teachers is very active in local school board elections because that impacts the membership directly. There is nothing more important for a school district and its employees than having a school board that respects and values its hard-working teachers, nurses, and SLPs. Four of the seven ABC School Board positions will be up for the November 2020 elections so this is an important election for ABCFT members. Having a school board that supports our members is critical to the success of our school district. Over the next couple of months, we will begin to hear more from our Committee On Political Education (COPE) on how you can contribute and invest in your future by donating to the ABCFT COPE Fund. ABCFT is proud to say that 100% of our political action funds go toward ensuring we have education-friendly school board members who value their employees.

Before I go, thank you to all the ABC Adult teachers who came out to talk with Tanya and me this past week. Your valuable ideas and input are greatly appreciated!

In Unity,

Ray Gaer
President, ABCFT



CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

The latest CFT articles and news stories can be found here on the PreK12 news feed on the CFT.org website.

[View current issues here](#)



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Devos sued for rescinding career training regulation

The American Federation of Teachers on Wednesday sued U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, alleging that she repealed a rule meant to protect student loan borrowers from for-profit and career-focused schools that graduate them with too much debt and limited job prospects. The 2014 "gainful employment" rule that DeVos repealed served as a warning to for-profit colleges and any school that offers career certificate programs: If graduates don't earn enough income to repay their student debts, schools could lose access to federal aid. Randi Weingarten, president of the 1.7 million-member union, says the lawsuit's message is clear: "Protect the students of the United States of America — not the for-profit schools that are making a buck off of them."

[Washington Post](#) [NPR](#)

Follow AFT President Randi Weingarten: <http://twitter.com/rweingarten>

----- NEWS STORY HIGHLIGHT-----

Teachers' classroom tech thoughts revealed

The vast majority of teachers (84%) disagree with the suggestion that student learning would likely improve if more K-12 teachers had AI-powered robots working with them as classroom assistants, according to Education Week's recent Big Ideas survey of K-12 teachers, which also revealed that over 90% did not think that student learning would improve in classrooms where chronically low-performing human teachers were replaced by artificially intelligent robots. Notably, when asked to rank duties they thought AI robots could do to help them do a better job teaching, 44% of teachers said "taking attendance, making copies, and other administrative tasks."

[Education Week](#)

----- TEACHER ACTIONS -----

Last year's strike didn't solve LAUSD funding problems

A year on from a major teachers' strike over funding deficits, Los Angeles USD Superintendent Austin Beutner reveals that, despite securing additional funding, the state's largest school district is still spending more than it receives from the state. The district gets \$16,402 from the state to educate each child, but is spending \$18,788 per child. This means it is still being forced to dip into its reserves to cover basic costs. "We're taking

whatever savings existed and spending in the classroom today, knowing that can't continue forever, which is why we have to go to the Legislature and get more funding," said Beutner. United Teachers Los Angeles, the major teachers' union, agreed that more funds would be needed, but disputed the suggestion that the district risked going bankrupt. The UTLA also claimed the LAUSD has not met some of its obligations as per the agreement signed last year.

[EdSource](#) [EdSource](#)

Richmond Public Schools Closed Next Monday Due To Teacher Rally

The [AP](#) (1/19) reported Richmond Public Schools released a statement Sunday from Superintendent Jason Kamras stating schools would be closed on Monday, Jan. 27 because "so many teachers are planning to attend a rally at the state Capitol...in support of increased school funding." Kamras said about 700, or approximately a third, of the district's teachers were taking leave to participate in the rally hosted by the Virginia Education Association.

----- NATIONAL NEWS -----

USDA changes Obama-era school lunch rules, citing 'flexibility'

The US Department of Agriculture on Friday announced two new proposals that would give school nutrition professionals "more flexibility" in what they serve to students. USDA Deputy Under Secretary Brandon Lipps proposed new rules for the Food and Nutrition Service that would allow schools to cut the amount of vegetables and fruits required at lunch and breakfasts while giving them license to sell more pizza, burgers and fries to students. The agency is responsible for administering nutritional programs that feed nearly 30 million students at 99,000 schools. For lunches, the proposals would allow schools to offer potatoes as a vegetable every day and gives them the flexibility to provide things such as pizza and burgers as a la carte items that students may choose over more nutritious full meals. Nancy Roman, president of Partnership for a Healthier America, said these proposed rule changes "sound like a step in the wrong direction. If anything, the science of the past few years suggests that we need even more fruits and vegetables at each meal, and the less processed the better. It's not just what is on the plate, but how it is prepared. And particularly young children need more exposure to unprocessed, easy-to-eat fruits, vegetables and greens."

[New York Times](#) [Washington Post](#) [CNN Politics](#) [Politico](#) [USA Today](#)

Supreme Court takes up church-state separation in Christian schools case

The Supreme Court will take up the issue of religion in public life on Wednesday, when it considers whether states violate the Constitution if they prevent religious groups from receiving some state benefits. The case comes from Montana, which established a program in 2015 to provide a tax credit of up to \$150 a year for people and businesses that donate to private schools. The organizations that receive the contributions then give financial aid to parents, who decide which private schools their children should attend. However, a state agency later barred any of the scholarship money from ending up at religious schools, invoking a provision of the state Constitution that prohibits "any direct or indirect appropriation or payment ... to aid any church, school ... controlled in whole or in part by any church." Proponents of religious school funding contend that the no-aid to religious institutions provisions in place in 38 states are so-called Blaine amendments, written into the majority of state constitutions in the 19th century as a form of anti-Catholic discrimination. Eighteen

other states have tax-credit programs like the one ended in Montana, supporting around 250,000 students, according to a court filing. Most private schools in those states are religious.

[Washington Post](#) [Reuters](#) [NBC News](#) [Education Week](#)

Supreme Court likely to protect state aid for religious schools

In a case with potentially far-reaching implications for church-state relations, the Supreme Court on Wednesday argued from familiar ideological positions over whether religious schools can be excluded from government-backed scholarship programs. While the court's more liberal members questioned if the case of the Montana tax-credit program, which stood to benefit religiously-affiliated schools, even presented a concrete injury for the justices to resolve, more conservative justices expressed concerns about whether the Montana-based dispute amounted to religious discrimination. States "do not have to fund private education at all," asserted Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr., who suggested that if they provide vouchers or grants to children or their parents for private elementary or secondary schools "they can't discriminate against parents who want to send their children to schools that are affiliated in some way with a church." In 2018, the Montana Supreme Court decided 5-2 that the tax credit program violated the no-aid provision, prompting the Montana parents' appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

[New York Times](#) [Los Angeles Times](#) [The Hill](#)

----- STATE NEWS -----

California moves closer to eliminate, replace RICA

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing is assembling a panel to recommend alternatives to the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment, or RICA, a test that has been proven to be a major hurdle for many aspiring teachers across the state. State data covering 2012-2017 reveals that around one-third who take the test fail the first time. Critics of the test, which is generally taken after a teacher candidate has completed a bachelor's degree and is enrolled in a teacher preparation program, say it is outdated and racially biased, while supporters of the current version argue it ensures prospective teachers understand how to teach reading based on phonics. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing is looking to reform all the tests and assessments that teachers have to take to enter the profession. The effort is meant to update the tests to reflect current state academic standards, as well as to ease the teacher shortage by reducing obstacles to earning a credential.

[EdSource](#)

----- CLASSROOM -----

Schools using increasingly inventive ways to manage phones in class

Sarah Krouse explores theories that kids being separated from their smartphones, long a scourge for the teachers and administrators who have to try and manage them in the classroom, can actually create unhelpful separation anxiety. Jayne Lawrence, a teacher at High Point Academy Fort Worth in Texas, suggests that the best way to combat students' phone addictions happen without confrontation: "The quickest way here to burn a relationship is to take something from them," she says. DREAM Charter High School in New York uses a "Harry Potter-like" system that allows students to earn points that give them privileges. Students earn credit for good grades and actions such as persisting through challenges that help them achieve "prefect status," a reference to the Hogwarts students who earn special privileges.

[Wall Street Journal](#)

Teacher prep, equity top list of 'hot' literacy topics

Teacher preparation programs are not adequately preparing teachers to provide “effective reading instruction,” according to 60% of the literacy educators, researchers and experts responding to this year’s “What’s Hot in Literacy Survey” from the International Literacy Association. The organization has been conducting the survey for more than 20 years. The respondents represent 65 countries and territories, with the U.S. and Canada among the top responding countries. According to the survey, teachers were slightly more likely to say they were trained to teach reading using a “literature-based” approach rather than a phonics approach — 69% compared to 63%. Fifty-nine per cent said their program emphasized phonemic awareness. But regardless of the method, only about a third or fewer of the respondents said their pre-service programs did an “excellent” or “very good” job teaching them that method.

Education Dive

----- FINANCE -----

Seven California school districts have negative budget outlooks in Fitch ratings

Seven California school districts have a negative outlook rating from the Fitch Group, a national credit rating agency: **Los Angeles, Redwood City, Ross Valley, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Ysidro, and Sweetwater.** “A bunch of those are on negative outlook just because their budgets are pretty imbalanced,” said Fitch analyst Graham Schnaars. “I think pretty consistently we see them spending one-time funding on ongoing expenses, and that just kind of exacerbates problems as time goes on.”

San Diego Union-Tribun

----- LEGAL -----

Supreme Court Set To Hear Montana Religious Schools Case

The [Washington Post](#) (1/20, Barnes) reports the Supreme Court is set to hear a “landmark” case “testing the constitutionality of state laws that exclude religious organizations from government funding available to others.” In the case, the issue hinges on “whether a scholarship fund supported by tax-deductible donations can help children attending the state’s private schools, most of which are religious.” A decision in the plaintiffs’ favor would bolster “a movement by school choice advocates such as Education Secretary Betsy DeVos to allow government support of students seeking what she recently called ‘faith-based education.’”

The [AP](#) (1/18, Sherman) reports the Supreme Court “is set to hear a case that could make it easier to use public money to pay for religious schooling in many states.” According to the AP, “The justices will hear arguments Wednesday in a dispute over a Montana scholarship program for private K-12 education that also makes donors eligible for up to \$150 in state tax credits.” Proponents on each side claim “the outcome could be momentous because it could lead to efforts in other states to funnel taxpayer money to religious schools.” Montana is one of the 37 states whose state constitutions feature provisions which “bar religious schools from receiving state aid.”

In its coverage, [Education Week](#) (1/20, Blad) notes that DeVos “has championed a proposed \$5 billion program, which would provide tax-credits in exchange for contributions to scholarship programs in states that wish to participate. DeVos has argued that those tax credits don’t amount to public funding, an argument that runs parallel to the debate in the Montana case.”

----- HEALTH & WELLBEING -----

Administration Moves To Roll Back Michelle Obama's School Nutrition Standards

In a front-page article, the [New York Times](#) (1/17, A1, Fadulu) reports, "The Trump administration moved on Friday to roll back school nutrition standards championed by Michelle Obama, an effort long sought by food manufacturers and some school districts that have chafed at the cost of Mrs. Obama's prescriptions for fresh fruit and vegetables." The proposed rule would, among other things, provide schools with greater "latitude to decide how much fruit to offer during breakfast and what types of vegetables to include in meals." The Times also reports that the proposed rule's roll out occurred on Michelle Obama's birthday, and while an agency spokeswoman said this wasn't intentional, "some Democratic aides on Capitol Hill had their doubts." In a statement, Agriculture Secretary **Perdue** said, "Schools and school districts continue to tell us that there is still too much food waste and that more common-sense flexibility is needed to provide students nutritious and appetizing meals," adding, "We listened and now we're getting to work."

On its front page, the [Washington Post](#) (1/17, A1, Reiley) reports USDA Deputy Under Secretary Brandon Lipps "said the changes" to the nutritional standards "will help address what he described as unintended consequences of the regulations put in place during the Obama administration. For example, when schools were trying to implement innovative solutions such as grab-and-go breakfast off a cart or meals in the classroom, they were forced to give kids two bananas to meet minimum federal requirements." The Post adds that Friday's proposals are going to be put into "the Federal Register on Jan. 23, and will be open for public comment for 60 days."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/17, Gasparro, Subscription Publication) reports a number of consumer-advocacy organizations said the alterations would provide students with greater flexibility in selecting burgers and pizza rather than balanced meals.

[NPR](#) (1/17, Aubrey) reported that the USDA "has proposed new rules for school meals aimed at giving administrators more flexibility in what they serve in school cafeterias around the country each day." For example, "schools would have more discretion over the varieties of vegetables they offer each day," and "students will be allowed to purchase more entree items as a la carte selections." Critics, though, "say the proposed changes from the Trump administration amount to further rollbacks of the nutrition standards put in place during the Obama administration following the passage of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010."

----- HIGHER EDUCATION -----

UC enrolls record number of California students in the fall

The **University of California** enrolled a record number of in-state undergraduates in the fall, marking the fourth consecutive annual increase. The system's nine undergraduate campuses enrolled a total of 185,559 California residents, a 10.3% increase of 17,369 since 2015. All campuses but Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz increased their in-state students. UC did admit a record number of California students for fall 2019, but it appears that fewer accepted the admission offers and enrolled. UC President Janet Napolitano said the overall enrollment growth "means expanded opportunities for a new generation of young people. The University of California is looking forward to providing these talented, hardworking students a world-class education, while expanding access for future Californians." In other UC news, Gov. Gavin Newsom says he opposes any tuition hikes this fall, describing the proposals as "unwarranted, bad for students and inconsistent with our college affordability goals."

The Hill

The Daily Bruin

----- OTHER -----



NTA Life Insurance - An ABCFT Sponsor

About three years ago ABCFT started a working relationship with [National Teachers Associates Life Insurance Company](#). Throughout our partnership, NTA has been supportive of ABCFT activities by sponsorship and prizes for our various events. This organization specializes in providing insurance for educators across the nation. We have been provided both data and member testimonials about how pleased they have been with the NTA products and the opportunity to look at alternatives to the district insurance choice.

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