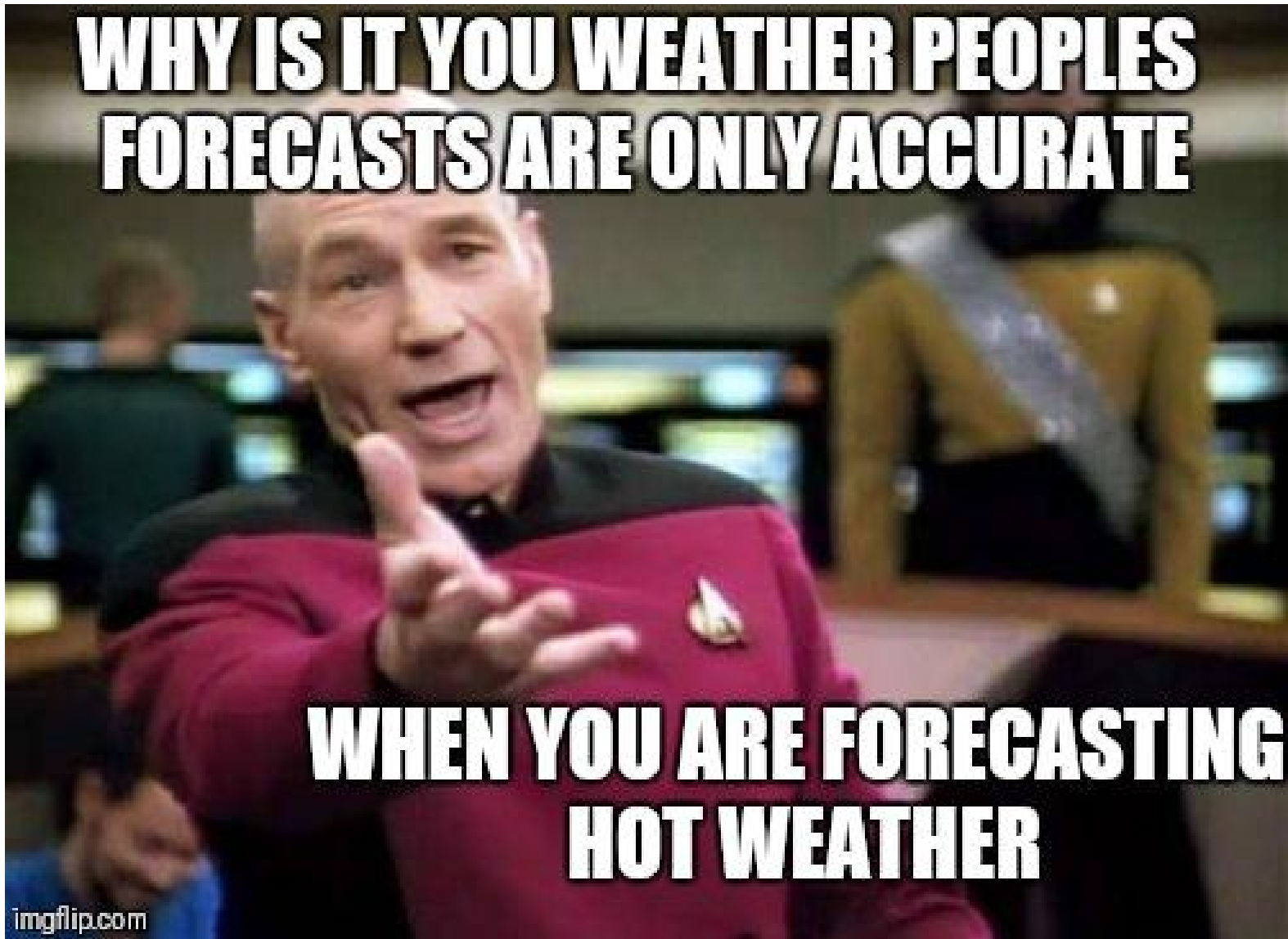


ABCFT YOUnionews



HOTLINKS! In this edition of YOUnionews

- [KEEPING YOU INFORMED](#)
- [ABCFT CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY](#)
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ABCFT Representative Council Notes

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ABCFT Resources

[ABCFT Master Contract](#)

[ABCFT Membership Benefits](#)



HOTLINKS- Contact ABCFT at ABC Federation of Teachers abcft@abcusd.us

- For confidential emails - use your non-work email to write to us at: abcft2317@gmail.com
- Find us on [Twitter @ #ABCTeachernews](#) or [Facebook](#)
- [ABCFT 2020-2023 Strategic Plan Summary](#)
- [ABCFT 2020-2023 Strategic Plan Details](#)
- [Who are the officers for the ABC Federation of Teachers?](#) **NEW!**

KEEPING YOU INFORMED - Negotiations Update By Ruben Mancillas



Many members chose to participate in the two voluntary professional learning days on August 16 and 17. The negotiating team bargained for this additional compensation being available to every member at the same rate of \$474 for each day of the training. **We have confirmed with the district that this payment will occur on October 5, 2022.** This will be paid on the same check as any other hourly that a member may have and is a separate check from the monthly pay on the first of the month. If members have direct deposit, it will be direct deposited, otherwise it is a physical check.

I was fortunate to be able to meet up with some CFT leaders who visited ABC and Carver elementary school yesterday. CFT president Jeff Freitas, Secretary Treasurer Luukia Smith, and Senior Vice President Lacy Barnes are touring the state to meet with and listen to our members. We were able to talk about statewide issues and, crucially, share some fellowship and laughs as well. It was also a reminder that we in ABCFT are part of a much larger union; the California Federation of Teachers is 1.7 million members strong. These numbers represent not only a formidable political entity but provide a shared vision and expertise which give us a powerful voice to advocate for policy and legislation that can improve the lives of our members and our students.

In Unity,



ABCFT CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

ABCFT became the bargaining agent for ABC teachers and nurses in 1972. We are recognizing this significant milestone by celebrating the 50th anniversary of the ABC Federation of Teachers. All ABCFT current members and retirees are invited to this special event. The evening will include a delicious selection of hors d'oeuvres.

Bring your best dance moves for the D.J. as we boogie the night away! There's also a chance to win a special gift in the raffle drawing and a no-host bar.

A black poster with gold confetti at the top. The title "ABCFT 50th Anniversary Celebration 1972-2022" is written in a large, elegant, gold script font. Below the title, on the left, are two gold, shimmering balloons. To the right of the balloons, the text "FOR CURRENT AND RETIRED ABCFT MEMBERS" is in a smaller, gold, sans-serif font. Below that, the event details "FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2022", "HOLIDAY INN BUENA PARK", and "7000 BEACH BLVD." are listed in the same gold, sans-serif font. Further down, the registration information "REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED - EMAIL ABCFT2317@gmail.com for link" is provided. At the bottom, the payment link "PayPal.Me/ABCFT50th" is shown. On the right side of the poster, there is a vertical logo for "Greetings ISLAND" with a stylized "G" and a star.

WHO: ABCFT members current and retired

WHEN: Friday, September 30, 2022, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

WHERE: Holiday Inn 7000 Beach Blvd. Buena Park, CA 90620

COST: \$20.00 per member/retiree

Space is limited to ABCFT members and retirees. First come, first serve. Register and send payment by September 19th.

[Click here to register](#) then [Click here for payment](#)

MEMBER ACTIVISM - Support ABCFT-Retiree Chapter

This is your chance to own a piece of ABCFT history and support the Retiree chapter's scholarship fund and food basket program. Read below and see the attached flier to find out how you can support these worthy causes and perhaps win a piece of ABCFT history. You will also be able to buy tickets at the ABCFT 50th Anniversary event. You do not have to be present to win.

All donations for the drawing will be split between the ABCFT Retiree Chapter's Scholarship Fund and the Food Basket Program. The chapter has given out 10 scholarships worth a total of \$24,277 to future teachers from ABC and has helped over 40 ABC families with over \$18,000 worth of food and gift cards with our food basket program.

Ticket Cost:

\$20 = 1 Ticket

\$40 = 3 Tickets

\$60 = 5 Tickets

\$100 = Ten Tickets

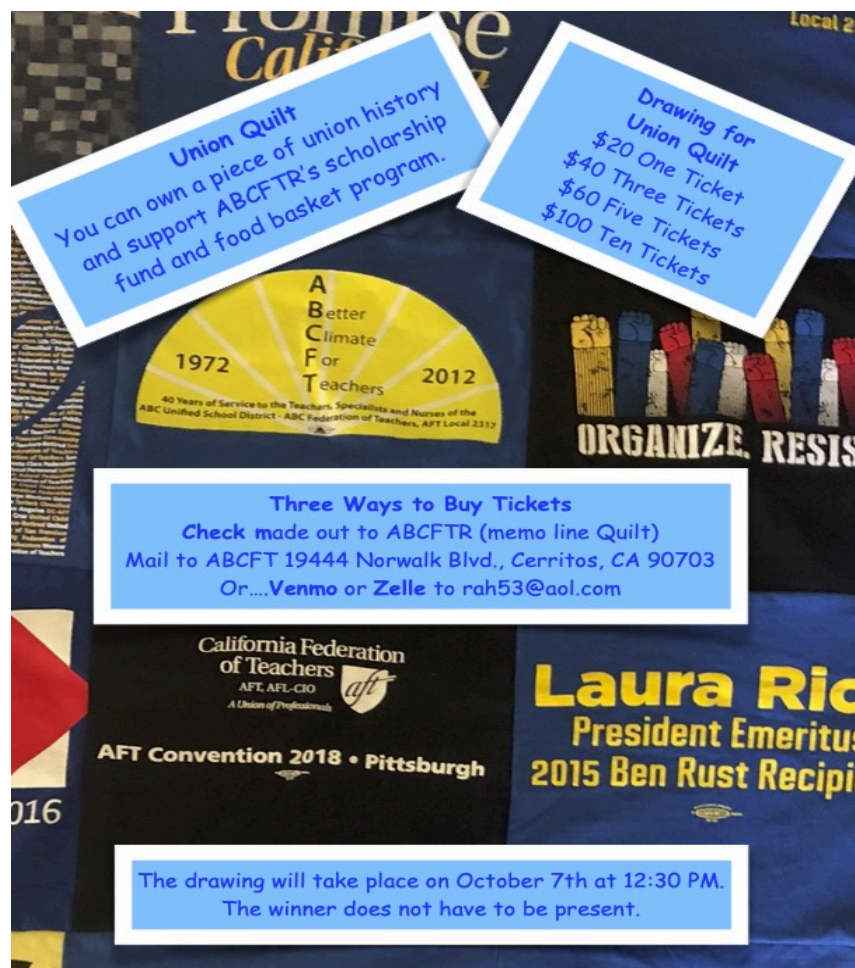
Three options to buy tickets

Write "Quilt" on all Payments

1. Write a check to ABCFTR with "Quilt" in the memo line. Mail to: ABCFTR, 19444 Norwalk Blvd., Cerritos, CA 90703 or drop in district mail to ABCFT

2. Venmo to rah53@aol.com
(Richard-Hathaway-7)

3. Zelle to rah53@aol.com



ABCUSD LEGACY - Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu

Last week the District hosted its final send-off to Dr. Sieu who announced her retirement over the Summer. Dr. Sieu devoted most of her working life to ABC and its employees. ABCFT thought it fitting that we share her inspirational professional biography but it understates her humble beginnings of growing up and living in the back of her parents dry cleaning business in Chicago. Her life is one of those many American dreams that started in poverty with language challenges but through education became a story of inspiration to many. Dr. Sieu will always be remembered for her ability to engage those around her and her special touch will be felt among the ABC Community for years to come. Below is her professional bio:

"Dr. Mary Sieu has been with ABC Unified School District since 1989 and has served as Superintendent since 2012. She has served in a variety of leadership positions in the District, including Deputy Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services. Prior to coming to ABC, she was a Clinical Supervisor of the Teacher Education Lab at UCLA, supervising preservice teachers in the Graduate School of Education.

Dr. Sieu began her career as an elementary teacher in the Chicago Public Schools and later in the Chino Unified School District in California. She spent several years as a foreign language teacher in the People's Republic of China in the early '80s. Dr. Sieu has also worked as an adjunct professor at the Rossier School of

Education at USC (2003-2011). Although she obtained her Ph.D. at UCLA she likes to support both the Bruins and the Trojans! She considers herself a “Brojan”.

She has spoken extensively throughout the country on collaborative labor-management relations, increasing parent engagement, building leadership capacity and promoting magnet schools in the district. She is a proud member of every PTA in the District!

Dr. Sieu was selected for ACSA’s State “Valuing Diversity Award” in 2011 and was awarded Region XIV Administrator of the Year in 2010. In 2012, Dr. Sieu was honored with the “Woman of Distinction Award” by California State Senator Alan Lowenthal. Dr. Sieu was honored as a 2016 Woman of the Year in the 32nd Senatorial District. In 2017, she was selected as the State ACSA “Superintendent of the Year”.



A major highlight in her career was when Dr. Sieu was selected as a 2018 National Superintendent of the Year Finalist by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). She was honored in Nashville, TN on February 15, 2018. Most recently, Dr. Sieu was selected as “Superintendent of the Year” by Education Dive: K12. The 2018 Dive Awards recognize the industry’s top disruptors and innovators. These executives, companies, trends and breakthroughs are transforming the industry and shaping the future. Education Dive: K12 solicited suggestions for title nominees from its 151,000 readers. Winners were chosen by the editors of Education Dive: K12 based on resonance and industry impact.

Most importantly, Dr. Sieu is a proud mother of a son who is a product of the ABC Unified School District and is working as an academic counselor”

ABCFT wishes Dr. Sieu the best for her retirement, thank you for your years of service.

MEMBER-ONLY RESOURCES





Top Webinars for Back-to-School PD: Literacy, Mental Health and Student Voice

Reading Opens the World

Supporting AFT's landmark initiative, [Reading Opens the World](#), we hosted [12 popular webinars](#) focused on the nuts and bolts of literacy instruction for all grade levels. If you haven't tried this series yet, [Literacy in the Content Areas](#) was a standout during this year's SML Virtual Conference. Three are focused on supporting English language learners via [scaffolding](#), [individualized instruction](#) and [academic language](#). The 2021-22 series wrapped with three webinars hosted by a team led by Stanford University professor [Anne Charity Hudley](#), including this favorite: [Crafting Linguistic Autobiographies to Build Cultural Knowledge](#). Good news: We will be offering more Reading Opens the World webinars starting next month.

Prioritizing Mental Health and Well-Being

I believe the mental health and well-being of students is only one side of the coin; the wellness and self-care of teachers and school staff is the other side. As Robert Ingersoll says, "We rise by lifting others." Helping students navigate emotional and physical challenges is equally important to helping ourselves cope with grief and stress and become more mindful. To find joy in our lives, despite the ups and downs, we must prioritize our collective wellness. So if you insist on putting your students first, try this new session on [Mental Health in the Classroom](#) from Young Minds Inspired and On Our Sleeves, as well as this powerful session on [Preventing Teen Suicide and Promoting Mental Wellness Through Animation](#) from My Life Is Worth Living. But then, you must promise me, you will also check out our [mindfulness series](#) for educators with wellness coach Catherine Zack as well as [The 5 Adult SEL Muscles That Will Make Your Life Easier](#).

Centering Student Voices

Our students are "our" kids. The emotional connection so many teachers and school staff feel toward the young people entrusted in our care can run deep. And fostering students' growth—academically, emotionally, physically—on their path to adulthood is a job that involves modeling the behaviors we want them to

experience. Several of our most popular webinars this year focused on supporting and developing our students' voices via their personal stories, individual expression, connections with one another and exploring their aspirational selves. I'd be remiss not to highlight a few of these webinars to help centering ourselves and our humanity in this new school year:

- [Bring Back Joy: Deep Learning Strategies to Inspire All Readers and YOU](#) with the Folger Shakespeare Library
- [Building Community to Center Student Voice](#) with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
- [Centering Student Voices Through Storytelling](#) with Stacy Vocasek
- [Elevating Educator Voices on Teaching Truth About Racism](#) with a panel co-hosted by the Education Civil Rights Alliance that includes Georgia's 2014 Teacher of the Year and Minnesota's 2016 Teacher of the Year
- [Storytelling and Culturally Responsive Literacy Practices for and About Native American Students](#) with the National Indian Education Association
- [Using Stories to Explore Persistence, Resilience, Voice and Allyship](#) with Students with Girl Rising



ACADEMIC SERVICES UPDATE

This month's academic service update is vital for all teachers. We hope that you will take a moment to look at this monthly report which discusses changes in academic services. This document provides the union with a means of giving the District feedback on the many programs or changes they are proposing at any one time. Without your feedback or questions on these changes, it is harder for ABCFT to slow down and modify the district's neverending roll out of new projects. Please submit your comments and questions to the appropriate ABCFT liaison.

For Elementary curricular issues please email Kelley at Kelley.Forsythe@abcusd.us if you have any questions or concerns. For Secondary curricular issues please email Catherine at Catherine.Pascual@abcusd.us if you have any questions or concerns.

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

ABCFT PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Ray Gaer

Consistent and regular communication is a union's most important tool for advocating for its members at the bargaining table. Every conversation with members is focused on the end result of negotiating for the future



prosperity and well-being of ALL ABCFT members. The goal of this weekly report is to keep members informed about issues that impact their working/learning conditions and their mental well-being. Our work as a Union is a larger conversation, and together we make the YOUNion.

The visiting President of the California Federation of Teachers, Jeff Freitas asked a group of Carver Elementary teachers if the Governor of California was in the lunch room with them, what would they tell him? This group of teachers, all with less than ten years of experience, nodded their heads in agreement as one teacher commented, “ Just like the governor, the work of a teacher is non-stop. The day doesn’t end with the bell rings.” She continued her list of FACTS - teachers are under tremendous pressure from parents, the workload is overwhelming, the compensation is lacking and the students have more needs than before the pandemic.

ABCFT was honored to have President Freitas and his executive team visit directly with ABCFT members as part of his tour of California schools in an attempt to hear the ground truth about what CFT certificated and classified members are experiencing in the field of education. Another nugget of information that we heard from Carver teacher Myong Cho, a veteran of 28 years, was that decades earlier there were fewer student social-emotional needs and that teachers have taken a new demanding role of being counselors too. Mrs. Cho stated that the home life of many of our students is challenging and when we were teaching virtual as teachers, we were able to see some of those challenges. Mrs. Cho also emphasized that “as teachers, we provide 6 hours of structured peaceful, and practical learning.”

As teachers and paras filed in and out of the lunchroom, we heard common themes such as teachers are pouring a lot of their own money into their classrooms; there’s not enough support personnel; the legal and systemic roadblocks that hinder students from getting the services they need due to past lawsuits, etc. All of this should sound very familiar since all of you are living this reality, but I want to highlight something positive and hopeful



in these conversations at Carver. Second-grade teacher, Elaine Kimura summed it up in her comments about how she is engaging parents and how she soothed her parents' worries at a recent Back to School Night. Miss Kimura stated that once reassured parents that their children were in good hands and that even if a student is struggling that if we work together and give these students the gift of time they all have the potential to shine. In her words to her student’s parents, “we’ve got this, it’s gonna be okay.”

These conversations between members and President Freitas will help the CFT leadership make policy and strategic decisions that will help CFT members directly. Mr. Freitas is a regular reader of the ABCFT

YOUnews and I wanted to make sure to tell you that his efforts to travel to Southern California to visit with ABCFT members is something we won't forget. My thanks to him for his leadership over the past five years during some of the most difficult times. I look forward to seeing how these discussions shape CFT policies in the coming months.

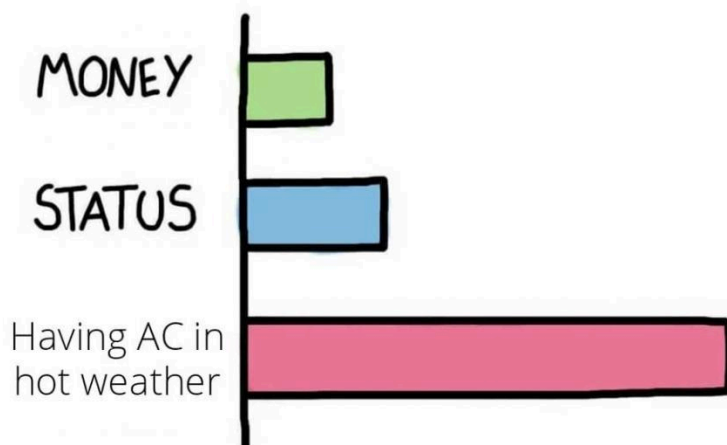


A special thank you to the Carver Elementary Staff for your valuable input and patience in explaining your teaching challenges during your precious lunchtime. Your comments spoke volumes about the REAL work that needs to be done to support all teachers in our schools.

In YOUity,

Ray Gaer
President, ABCFT

WHAT GIVES PEOPLE FEELINGS OF POWER



made with mematic

@iamnotanartist_



*A Union of Educators
& Classified Professionals*

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

[Find the latest AFT news here](#)

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



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

California may become 20th state to mandate kindergarten

On Tuesday, California moved one step closer to mandating kindergarten beginning in the 2024-25 school year as state Sen. Susan Rubio's Senate Bill 70, which passed the state Senate last week, landed on Gov. Gavin Newsom's desk. Under the current proposed state law, students would be able to attend either public or private kindergarten. Other early childhood programs, like transitional kindergarten (or preschool) which is required for four-year olds, don't count toward the required kindergarten program for five-year olds. If the bill is signed into law, California will become the 20th state to require kindergarten. Mr. Newsom has not signaled whether he will sign the bill, but he has shown support for early education initiatives in the past. "As a public school teacher for 17 years, I have witnessed the detrimental impact on young students who miss out on

fundamental early education,” Ms. Rubio said. “The voluntary participation for kindergarten leaves students unprepared for the educational environment they will encounter in elementary school.”

[K12 Dive](#)

----- Washington Teachers Strike -----

First day of school in Seattle delayed as educators strike

The Seattle Education Association, which represents about 6,000 employees in Washington state's largest public school district, was set to begin its strike Wednesday morning, the same day school was to start for Seattle Public Schools' 50,000 students. The union is working with the school district to reach a contract agreement that "brings us back to the classrooms as fast as possible," it said in a statement. Seattle Public Schools is the latest district to see the start of its academic year thrown into uncertainty as teachers unions across the country have gone on strike to demand better conditions for educators and students. That includes the Kent School District in a Seattle suburb, where the Kent Education Association has been on strike since last month, delaying the start of the school year. Also last month, teachers and staff in Columbus, Ohio, went on strike, forcing classes to be held online until a resolution was reached.

[CNN Edition](#)

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

Borrowers in 7 states to pay taxes

Loan borrowers take a breath from celebrating the cancelation of some or all of their federal student loans, millions of them could be in for a nasty surprise:

While President Biden's [sweeping student debt relief](#) won't be subject to federal income tax, in seven states borrowers may have to pay *state* income tax on all those canceled loans.

Before 2021, student debt cancelation was generally considered a form of income, and therefore taxable both at the federal and usually state level. But in March of 2021, the American Rescue Plan changed that, at least temporarily: Until the end of 2025, Congress said, the U.S. government will *not* consider canceled student loan debts to be taxable income.

<https://www.npr.org/2022/09/09/1121717824/biden-student-loans-debt-cancellation-taxpayer-impact>

Hiring unqualified teachers 'not the way,' Cardona says

Education secretary Miguel Cardona has complained that lowering standards and changing pathways to qualify educators is disrespectful to the profession. Speaking to reporters, Cardona said: “Look, I’m all for veterans becoming teachers... but let’s remember, when the nation’s report card is showing that our students have dropped drastically, to provide educators who are not qualified or trained in the pedagogy of teaching is a slap in the face to the profession.” The education secretary instead advocated for better working conditions and more competitive salaries to attract and retain teachers in the profession, and suggested different uses of American Rescue Plan funding to compel new teachers to the field.

[The Hill](#)

Nutrition task force recommends universal school meal program

Ahead of the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health on September 28th, the Task Force on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health, formed by an independent group of professors, advocates and food industry

executives, recently advised the Biden administration to bring back universal school meals. “Congress should provide free nutritious meals (lunch, breakfast, summer, afterschool meals) for all children in the United States, removing the income test and ensuring all children receive free meals without stigma or burdensome paperwork,” the task force report states. Congress approved pandemic-era meal waivers in 2020 that permitted all U.S. schools to serve free meals to students, regardless of income. That provision expired June 30 and has not been extended. Another option Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture can pursue, the report said, is expanding districts’ eligibility for the Community Eligibility Provision to allow more low- and middle-income students to receive free school meals. The task force also said the reduced-price meal category should be eliminated so students who qualify for that category get a free meal instead.

[K12 Dive](#). [NPR](#)

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

Californians may have to pay taxes on forgiven student loans

Millions of Californians got a long-awaited financial boost last month when the Biden administration announced that it would cancel up to \$20,000 in federal student debt for low- and moderate-income borrowers. However, the loan forgiveness may be taxable under current state rules, even while its tax-free under federal law. The Franchise Tax Board isn’t offering any clear guidance on the issue yet, stating that it is waiting to find out whether the U.S. Department of Education will administer the program under Section 1098e of Title 20 of the United States Code, or use some other method. Section 1098e of Title 20 governs the Education Department’s income-based loan repayment plans, which cancel a borrower’s remaining debt after up to 25 years’ worth of monthly payments. Under state law, student loan debt canceled that way is not taxable in California. If the debt is forgiven through some other section of the law, the board said, it will be taxable in California.

[Los Angeles Times](#)

Thousands without childhood vaccinations unable to return to school in California

Falling childhood vaccination rates have resulted in thousands of students unable to start the school year on campus because they did not have the immunizations required by the state. More than one in eight California students aged four to six did not have their measles, mumps and rubella vaccination — one of 10 vaccinations. Catherine Flores Martin, executive director of the California Immunization Coalition, suggests some children received Covid vaccinations at pharmacies or clinics where technicians did not check to see if they needed other vaccinations. In Placerville, a limited supply of vaccines at doctors’ offices and pharmacies is keeping students from getting needed vaccinations, says Eric Bonniksen, superintendent of the Placerville Union School District. In Orange County some parents are submitting homeopathic vaccine records to school clerks as proof of vaccination, said Pamela Kahn, coordinator for health and wellness for the Orange County Department of Education. These do not meet the state requirement, she said. This year San Juan Unified, which serves 39,442 students in Sacramento County, excluded 55 students from classroom instruction at the beginning of the school year because they lacked the required vaccinations. San Diego Unified officials weren’t sure last week how many of their students would have to be excluded from school when classes began this week. Los Angeles Unified, the state’s largest school district had 91.9% of its students fully vaccinated as of August 24. In a district with 430,000 students though, that still means that more than 30,000 students may not have all their vaccinations.

[EdSource](#)

----- DISTRICTS -----

So Long, Remote Learning: Why Some Districts Are Ending Virtual Options

Remote learning became the primary mode of instruction for most K-12 schools during the height of the coronavirus pandemic, when many students and staff weren't able to meet in person.

But more than two years later, about one-third of a sample of 100 large and urban districts in the country report they are ending their remote learning programs for the 2022-23 school year, according to [an analysis by the Center on Reinventing Public Education](https://www.edweek.org/technology/so-long-remote-learning-why-some-districts-are-ending-virtual-options/2022/09).

Since the pandemic began, CRPE, a nonprofit research organization, has been monitoring the learning options offered by 100 school districts, which serve nearly 10 million students. The database includes a mix of large urban districts, smaller rural ones, and others from states not otherwise represented.

<https://www.edweek.org/technology/so-long-remote-learning-why-some-districts-are-ending-virtual-options/2022/09>

----- FINANCE -----

Finance expert warns of school budget 'bloodletting' ahead

As federal COVID relief dollars flow to schools across the country, budgets have swollen more than 16% over the last two years, a recent analysis of more than 100 districts reveals. The average increase was 10.8% from 2020-21 to 2021-22 and 16.5% from 2020-21 to 2022-23, according to a late August audit of 118 large school system budgets published by Burbio. However, with American Rescue Plan money set to expire in 2024, Chad Aldeman, policy director of the Edunomics Lab at Georgetown University, says that schools must brace for a period of "bloodletting" by 2024-25 when budgets must adjust back down. "You don't have to look too far out to see pain coming. That could look like flat or stagnant salaries, that can look like layoffs, that could look like closing schools," Aldeman said. "The federal money has deferred some of those tough choices or even made it so people can ignore them for a little bit. But they will come and it's just a matter of when and how hard they hit." He warned superintendents looking at enrollment declines not to rule out consolidations. Though school closings will inevitably cause disruptions, he explained, policymakers can ease the pain with investments like more guidance counselors or improved transportation. "Now would be a good time to start thinking about [consolidating]," Alderman said. "If we delay it, then the money will run out."

[The 74](#)

----- LEGAL -----

LA student newspaper caught up in freedom-of-speech dispute

Last November, the student-run news website of **Daniel Pearl Magnet High School** in Lake Balboa published a story naming a faculty member who had refused to comply with the district's COVID-19 vaccine mandate. The *Pearl Post* article was well-reported, accurate and important to the school community, the students and 1st Amendment experts said; however, it has led to a dispute over censorship as **Los Angeles USD** seeks to take disciplinary action against the students' journalism advisor. School librarian Greta Enszer asked *Post* advisor Adriana Chavira to remove her name from the story, citing the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, or HIPAA, which prevents medical professionals from revealing patients' records without their consent. The students, who control the editorial content of the *Post*, reached out to the Student Press Law Center and were told by an attorney that they were within their rights to keep Ms. Enszer's name in the story. Last week, Ms. Chavira was issued a three-day, unpaid suspension. Pearl Post editor-in-chief Delilah

Brumer said Chavira informed her students of the situation, and they knew she could be suspended if they refused to change the story. “We’re not going to let them intimidate us,” Brumer said, although she added that the situation has been “mentally draining.”

----- WORKFORCE -----

Teacher preparation 'shortcuts' won't solve workforce shortages

Loren Welles argues that reducing training requirements for teachers will harm student learning, weaken the profession, and ignore "the systemic issues that have long contributed to teacher shortages." In July 2022, she notes, Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey signed legislation aimed at addressing the state's acute teacher shortage by allowing students enrolled in college to serve as full-time teachers before earning their bachelor's degree or completing a teacher training program. In Florida, Gov. Ron DeSantis' administration announced a similar policy focused on bringing veterans into the workforce, while other states too have implemented policies that reduce or eliminate clinical training hours and licensure requirements needed for entry into the educator profession. "These kinds of approaches, which reduce the requirements to become a teacher, are impractical and unsustainable," Welles asserts. Instead, she suggests, states should leverage "creative, balanced, and sustainable" approaches to ensure that qualified candidates seek employment as teachers and want to remain in the profession.

[Center For American Progress](#)

----- CHILD DEVELOPMENT -----

Masks remain on at Head Start, despite C.D.C.'s relaxed guidelines

Although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now only recommends universal masking as a precaution against COVID in communities with a high transmission rate, face coverings are still mandatory at Head Start preschools and child care centers. In a written statement, the Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees Head Start, acknowledged that the current guidelines contradict those of the C.D.C. but said that centers are not being checked for compliance on masking. Updating the official rules is “a lengthy process,” the statement said, which would take into consideration the C.D.C.’s evolving recommendations, the recent availability of vaccinations for children as young as six months and over 2,700 public comments. Even though the federal government has said it will not “monitor” the Head Start masking rule, centers across the country have struggled to interpret what that means in practice. Program directors described a culture of compliance within Head Start that leaves them, they said, with little choice but to follow the guidelines strictly. Amanda Worth-Colón, who works for Acelero Learning, overseeing several Head Start programs in New Jersey, said that parents often asked why their young children had to wear masks when local kindergarten students were allowed to be mask free. The contradictory government mandates have contributed to confusion and skepticism, not only about masking, but also about the efficacy of vaccines, she said, noting that only about 20% of her students have been vaccinated.

[New York Times](#)

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

Teens' alcohol use is down

The School Health Profiles report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention underlines significant declines in alcohol and drug use among students in grades 9-12 since 2009. Teens are increasingly perceiving

alcohol and substance abuse as less risky than in the past however, and the report urges schools to sustain prevention programs as they are effective in delaying or preventing substance use, as well deterring escalated use. Nearly 60% of schools taught all nine of the CDC's listed drug and alcohol prevention topics in the 2019-20 school year, the report indicates.

[K12 Dive](#)

Too much screen time can give kids eye problems, study warns

Children could be left with long-term eye damage due to spending more than five hours a day glued to screens, experts have warned. The Global Myopia Awareness Coalition, an advisory board under the World Council of Optometry, said: "Certain activities can contribute to the progression of myopia, such as increased screen-time." A study found 13% of parents who haven't taken their children to an eye test thought it would be arranged by the school – but vision screenings at school are not considered a substitute for a comprehensive eye examination. Yet, of those who have never taken their children to the opticians, 35% said their child is displaying at least one symptom of possible eye issues – including being disruptive in school.

[Daily Express](#)

----- OTHER -----

