

ABCFT YOUnionews



HOTLINKS! In this edition of YOUnionews

- [KEEPING YOU INFORMED](#)
- [AD HOC COMMITTEE UPDATE](#)
- [ELEMENTARY UPDATE](#)
- [ABCFT PRESIDENT'S REPORT](#)
- [CFT & AFT NEWS](#)
- [Educational News From Across the Nation](#)

Previous Editions of YOUnionews

[YOUnionews January 19, 2024](#)

[YOUnionews January 12, 2024](#)

[YOUnionews December 21, 2023](#)

ABCFT Representative Council Notes

[November 2, 2023 Rep Council](#)

ABCFT Resources

[2020-2025 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 X @ #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



Here are some of the headlines from recent workshops regarding Governor Newsom's initial budget for 2024-2025:

Headline inflation is down year over year and is expected to decline further through the budget year. Leading economists anticipate a reduction to interest rates later in 2024. The national and state economies are in a slow growth pattern. A recession is no longer forecasted in 2024 or 2025. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) just grew by an impressive 3.3% in the fourth quarter of 2023. It appears that nationally we have

achieved the challenging task of a "soft landing" or an economy that tames inflation without sliding into recession.

The current California budget deficit is significant, but years of strong revenue growth, the elimination of most general fund borrowing and gimmicks, and healthy budget reserves make the deficit manageable. The Governor attempts to maintain funding for all existing, ongoing K-12 programs, but a .76% COLA is insufficient to cover the actual cost increases (including salary and pensions) for most districts. There is a risk that May Revision data will be worse than January projections. Our CalSTRS employer contribution rate will remain unchanged at 19.1% but the rate the district pays for CalPERS will increase from 26.68% in 2023-2024 to 27.8% in 2024-2025.

Perhaps the biggest takeaway is the three year COLA projections. 2024-25 is projected to come in at 0.76%. But 2025-26 is projected at 2.73% and 2026-27 is at 3.11%. As we have learned, these numbers are subject to change but they point towards a potentially difficult next year followed by two more reasonable projections in the out years.

Dr. Fraser and I had our PAL meeting this week and we scheduled a formal negotiations session for February 7 with both the ABCFT and district teams. The current status of our bargaining is that ABCFT presented the most recent proposal during our last session in December so we are awaiting the district's counterproposal.

KEEPING YOU
Informed

KEEPING YOU INFORMED-

School Facilities Capacities and Declining Enrollment Ad Hoc Committee Update by Ray Gaer

[Here is the link to the school district's website and their information about the Schools Facilities Committee.](#)

[Previous YOUnionews report from 1.19.2024](#)

[Previous YOUnionews report from 12.15.2023](#)



The ABCUSD School Facilities Capacities and Declining Enrollment Ad Hoc Committee meeting to discuss further those schools recommended for additional investigation. This committee is reviewing data for all district school site facilities, enrollment, demographics, location, and other factors to make a recommendation to the board on possible site(s) that could be “repurposed.” At the bottom of this article, you will find key documents used by the committee and notes from the November meeting.

The month of February has additional town hall meetings that will provide all stakeholders a chance to give additional input. Those town hall meetings are on February 7th and February 15th at 6:00 p.m. locations to be determined.

Staying informed is about being proactive. If you would like to attend these public meetings and speak about your concerns, the regular committee meetings are held at the district school board room on the third Wednesday of each month, starting at **6:00 p.m. on February 21, March 20, April 17, and May 15, 2024.**

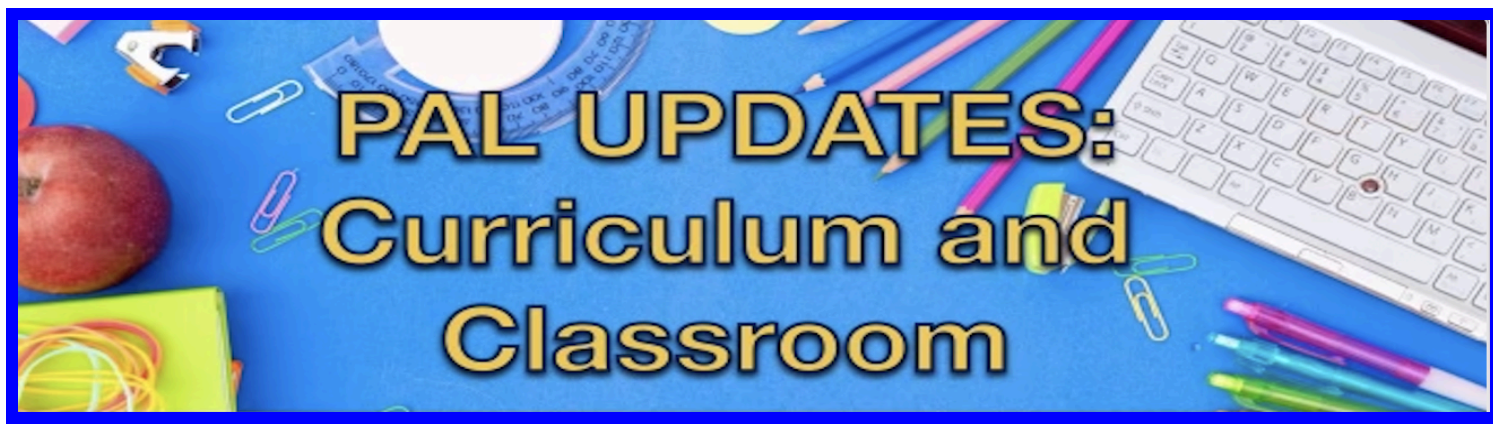
Thank you in advance for your comments; the committee and the board members in attendance need to hear your concerns.

[Click here or the picture to see this presentation](#)

[Criteria used to create the preliminary list of schools to do further research on](#)

[Committee member recommendations](#)

[ABC Demographic Report from January 2023](#)



KEEPING YOU INFORMED- Elementary Update by Megan Mitchell



"Giving you the best that I got!"- Anita Baker

Goodbye, 2023! Hello, 2024! Between a bum foot, a loss of a family member, and life doing what it does best, "lifing", I feel like I barely survived the fourth quarter of 2023. Jumping back into the swing of things, on February 13th at 3:30pm, there will be an Elementary Town Hall meeting to provide an opportunity for elementary teachers to share any concerns or ask any questions you may have. [If you are interested in attending, please register here.](#)

- ❖ ABCFT Teachers ROCK! Shout out to all the teachers, from elementary and secondary, that helped score the 6th grade writing assessments. Academic Services is currently working on uploading those scores to Aeries to provide 6th grade teachers access to see how their scholars performed on the writing assessment.

- ❖ Fifth grade students across the district will participate in the Day of Remembrance activities this year. All 5th grade teachers should have received three picture books to add to your classroom libraries and to read to your scholars in preparation of the Day of Remembrance virtual assembly on February 16th. Academic Services is also providing short companion lessons and activities to teachers that would like to use them. For teachers who choose to complete the supplemental lessons, **Academic Services is providing 1.5 hours of compensation for additional planning time for teachers to organize the resources for the supplemental lessons.** *If teachers are unable to fit the supplemental lessons in their schedule or opt to not do the lessons, they do not need to turn in a time card for planning.*
- ❖ Attention 5th grade teachers! You should have received an invitation to participate in a science benchmark Pilot using “Inner Orbit”. Lora Ayala (Program Specialist) can provide more information about the Pilot opportunity.
- ❖ The Science of Reading Community of Practice primary and upper grade cohorts have had their sessions with Dr. Spangler, and there are over 50 teachers participating. As a member of the upper grade cohort, the first session was eye opening and provided strategies that are easy to implement into my everyday routine. I am most excited to have the opportunity to collaborate and glean from my fellow teachers. The transition to Communities of Practice (CoP) is to ensure that there are ongoing opportunities for professional learning and collaboration amongst teachers. Having the opportunity to implement strategies, assess and reflect on the effectiveness of the strategy, and engage in discourse with colleagues provides an opportunity for iron to sharpen iron. **Academic Services is providing an additional half hour of compensation, as part of the training, for gathering and uploading the evidence of the practices they chose as part of the learning.** *If teachers are unable to upload the work samples or opt not to do so, they do not need to turn in a time card for planning.*

Important dates to remember:

- February 13, 2024: Elementary Town Hall- [Please register here to attend.](#)

Elementary Coaches are available for help during office hours and by appointment.

- [Michelle Joyce](#) (Imagine Learning, Renaissance, McGraw Hill)
- [Julie Yabumoto](#) (Renaissance, RCM)
- [Amber Prieto](#) (Savvas Math & Savvas History)

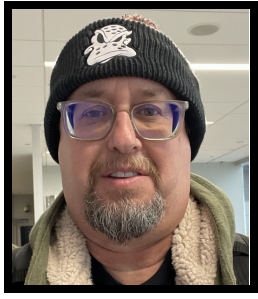
Reminder: Teacher resources in the [ABCUSD Elementary Teacher Resources file](#) (Use your abcusd.us account)
[Elementary Academic Services Resource link](#)

For Elementary curricular issues, please email Megan at Megan.Mitchell@abcusd.us.



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. This weekly report informs members about issues impacting their working/learning conditions and mental well-being. Our work as a Union is a larger conversation and united we make the YOUNion.

"It's not what's said, it's what's heard." Randi Weingarten AFT National President

What I'm hearing right now from the community and teachers is...STOP. With the Facilities Committee now into the ninth month of deliberations and research the damn has finally busted and emotions are running high. The community has awoken from a long sleep after their exhaustion from the pandemic only to find themselves faced with the possibility of their local school closing its doors. It's a rude awakening for some people and what people hear about the process is not always what is being said.

However, here's what I can say about what is actually happening behind the scenes. One of my mottos is "control the narrative." It's one of my golden rules along with "first story wins." When people lack information they begin mythmaking and creating narratives that may not be true so it's vital for good leadership to get in front of any challenge or systemic change. I was pleased this week to hear this week that the district administration was working with all principals (especially those six schools) on how to inform their parent communities about the two February town hall meetings that will help to provide an opportunity for parents, students, and employees to voice their concerns about the possible closure of schools. In an effort to have full transparency, the ABC School District is informing all parents in ABC about the Facility Committee's meetings so that all parents get an opportunity to voice their concerns about how this will impact their children, their families, and their institutional memories.

Over the next couple of weeks, Tanya and I are visiting with staff of all of the schools that are on the list of schools being considered for closing (Aloha, Furgeson, Hawaiian, Juarez, Kennedy, and Willow). Our job is to deliver the facts and to reassure ABCFT members that we are advocating for them throughout the process. There may be shuffling, and a changing of school boundaries but teaching jobs stay intact. Teachers' jobs will follow the students. During our site visits, we are also making sure that everyone understands the rules of engagement so that teachers/nurses have safe and protected avenues to express their concerns or support for any changes.

Below are the guidelines for rules of engagement by ABCFT members:

*As employees, we are only allowed to inform the public without bias about the process such as dates and purpose of the town halls/meetings. For example, a flyer to inform about the date of the town halls and the future dates of the Committee meetings (dates can be found in the YOUNionews). **These flyers should have no opinions. The district is currently working on uniform flyers/communication set to go out to all parents.** Let the community do the heavy lifting, all they need to know is the dates of the meetings and they will do what is right for them and their schools.*

Employees have the right to share their opinions at the town halls, the facility committee and school board meetings. We encourage our members to share their opinions and to be a part of the process.

Don't

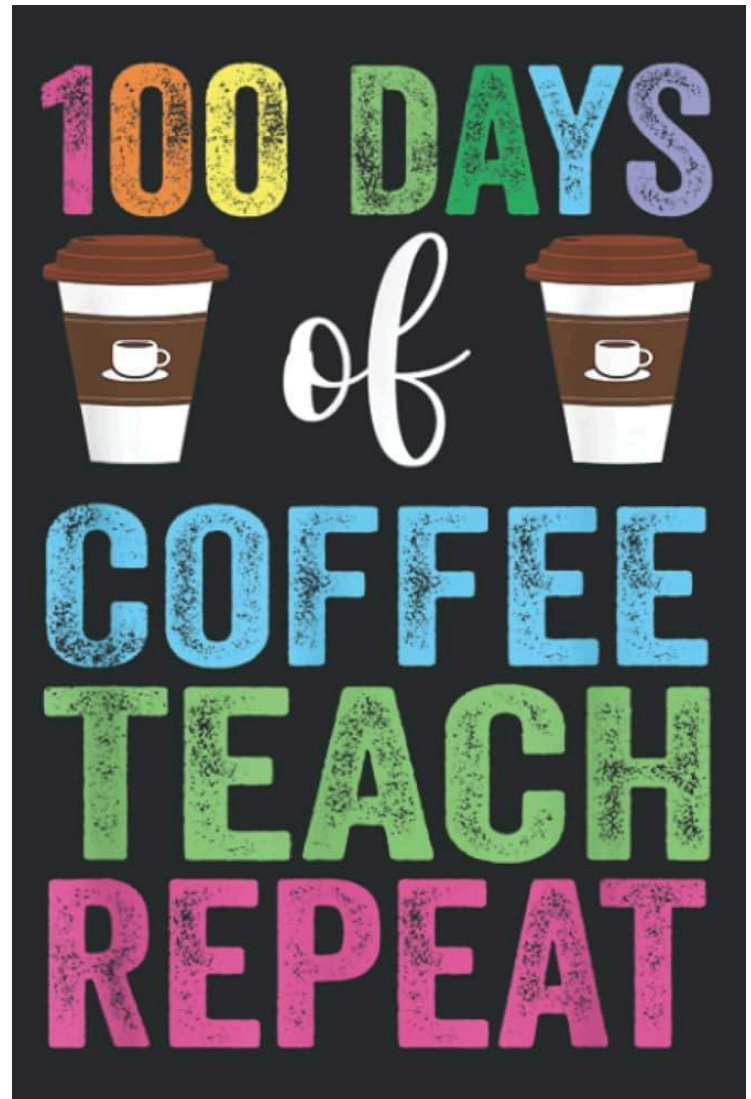
Don't use the district server or work email to engage in any opinions about this process. Use a non-work email. Text messaging is probably okay in this case but refrain from using the district/site WiFi when doing this. Do not engage parents during work hours, professional duties, using district technology, or on site campus if you are going to engage in opinionated activities. Violations of these board policies could lead to disciplinary action so always use caution. As I said earlier, always act professionally. and let the community do the yelling.

As a district, we are going through the grieving process and many community members including employees are in the shock and anger stage which is a natural reaction to the specter of a possible dramatic change. Remember, that nothing has been decided yet and that the school board and facilities committee need to hear all sides of the issue. Will ABC actually close a school? I don't know. The Facility Committee is just the start of the process but the next couple of months will have a big impact on the school board members and how they proceed before making a final decision in May/June.

All I ask is that everyone keep asking those critical questions, keep making constructive comments and suggestions, keep talking amongst each other, and keep informed about the process. How we treat each other as a community during this process will say a lot about the future of this school district.

In YOUunity,

Ray Gaer
President, ABCFT





*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-----

Cal State faculty ends their strike after reaching a tentative contract agreement

A Cal State system wide strike secured what more than half a year of negotiations and partial strikes couldn't: a deal.

Negotiators of the California Faculty Association and California State University [finalized a tentative agreement tonight](#), the union said, ending what [would have been a week-long strike](#) at the nation's largest four-year public university system.

The deal falls short of the 12% general salary increase the union sought for this academic year and instead provides a retroactive 5% raise to July 1, 2023 — consistent with what Cal State leaders were offering for the past several months.

The deal also provides a 5% salary increase starting July 1, 2024 for all 29,000 faculty — contingent on Cal

State receiving at least the same amount of state funding lawmakers and the governor approved last summer. [That's a shift for Cal State officials](#) — previously, they only wanted to offer a 5% raise next year if the state increased funding to the university.

“We’re messaging this as 10% in the next six months,” said Kevin Wehr, chair of the faculty union’s bargaining committee and a professor at Sacramento State.

<https://calmatters.org/education/2024/01/cal-state/>

----- DECLINING ENROLLMENT NATIONALLY -----

Schools nationwide seeing significant enrollment losses

Over 1,400 schools in California have witnessed a drop in enrollment of at least 20% during the pandemic, according to a report by the Brookings Institution. The decline in enrollment is projected to continue throughout the decade, with states like Oregon, New Mexico, and West Virginia expected to see an additional 10% decline. The report also highlights that school districts in large metropolitan cities and southern states have experienced similar declines. The enrollment crisis has forced administrators to make budget cuts and merge classrooms. Factors contributing to the decline include record-low birth rates and high living costs. Additionally, the report mentions that families have opted for private schools and charters during school closures. Meanwhile, charter schools have seen significant gains in enrollment, with an increase of 9% over the past four years, while district-run public schools have lost 1.5m students since the beginning of the pandemic. The enrollment decline poses a risk to thousands of school districts, some of which may face closures due to the loss of students.

[Fox News](#)

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

Biden announces more student loan relief

President Joe Biden approved more student loan relief for another 74,000 borrowers on Friday, waiving \$4.9bn in debt. The relief targets longtime borrowers enrolled in income-driven repayment plans and the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. It comes largely as a result of changes the Education Department made to the programs, in part motivated by a nonpartisan watchdog report. It largely mirrors other relief he has granted in recent months.

[USA Today](#)

Education Department funding levels maintained

Congress last Thursday approved a continuing resolution that delays a decision until March 8 about the final fiscal year 2024 budget for the U.S. Department of Education and several other agencies. Education Department FY 2023 spending levels had previously been extended to February 2 for the fiscal year beginning October 1. The measure is awaiting President Joe Biden’s signature. “Passing this measure will allow us the time we need to hammer out those funding bills for fiscal year ’24 after many months of needless delays,” said Sen. Patty Murray, D-Washington, on the Senate floor. “I think we all want this to be a drama-free and reliable process.” For this year in particular, funding uncertainty may cause more angst as education leaders plan for the last year of federal COVID-19 emergency spending.

[K12 Dive](#)

Schools nationwide show improvements

Twenty-nine percent of public schools have made comprehensive or targeted improvements under federal and state accountability systems, according to the latest National Center for Education Statistics' School Pulse Panel. The data also reveal that schools focus on changing reading and math curriculums in their improvement plans, with less emphasis on teacher professional development or student engagement. Experts express concerns about the challenges schools will face as federal pandemic aid ends. Chronic absenteeism is another issue affecting school improvement efforts, with two-thirds of public school students attending schools with high or extreme chronic absenteeism. The survey also highlights the discrepancy between average daily attendance rates and chronic absenteeism rates. Hedy Chang, director of Attendance Works, warns that average daily attendance rates may not accurately reflect the number of students at risk academically due to chronic absenteeism. Overall, the data suggest that while some progress has been made, there are still significant challenges to overcome in improving school performance.

[Education Week News](#)

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

Newsom's plan to protect schools faces financial challenges

California Gov. Gavin Newsom has promised to protect schools and colleges from budget cuts, but the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) has raised concerns about how he plans to close an \$8bn revenue shortfall. The LAO has also urged legislators to plan for education spending beyond 2024-25, when declining revenues are expected. Newsom is proposing to divert \$5.7bn from the Proposition 98 rainy day fund and find reductions from the non-Proposition 98 side of the general fund to fill the deficit. However, the LAO warns that the governor's budget may underestimate the future fiscal pressure facing the state. The budget also includes accounting maneuvers and deferred payments that may compound future deficits. School districts may face their own deficits in 2024-25 due to declining enrollments and a low projected cost-of-living adjustment. Protecting education will require finding alternative sources of funding outside of Proposition 98.

[EdSource](#)

State budget changes could further pressure schools' fiscal challenges

Recent and upcoming state funding changes could negatively impact school districts nationwide, many of which are already bracing for a fiscal cliff as a result of the expiration of federal pandemic relief funds. Developments at the state level, such as tax cuts and the expansion of private school voucher programs, could siphon funds from public schools and make it more difficult for them to recover from the expiration of federal pandemic aid in the 2024-25 school year, according to an analysis by Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP). "Pandemic-related aid has really bolstered a lot of K-12 schools' ability to provide things like school meals, to update materials, to update buildings," comments Whitney Tucker, director of state fiscal policy research for the CBPP. "And now with the ending of those funds, they were already going to have budget holes that needed to be filled." Over the past three years, 26 states have cut personal and corporate income tax rates and will collect a total estimated \$111bn less over the next five years, alongside losses of \$30bn per year by 2028. Furthermore, several states have approved school voucher program expansions. North Carolina, Florida, Arizona, Indiana, and Ohio, have all expanded their school choice programs, while Arkansas, Iowa, Utah, and Oklahoma have created new voucher programs.

[K12 Dive](#)

Concerns shadow California's cursive mandate

California is now mandating cursive instruction for public school students. However, with the prevalence of digital technology, many question the relevance of teaching cursive. Despite this, supporters argue that cursive writing helps develop fine motor skills, enhances cognitive abilities, and improves reading comprehension. According to the California Department of Education: "Cursive writing can be a valuable tool for students to express themselves and communicate effectively." While some educators and parents welcome the return of cursive, others believe that time could be better spent on other subjects. One teacher comments: "It's important to strike a balance between traditional skills and preparing students for the digital age."

[NPR / National Public Radio](#)

Updated ARP late liquidation guidance issued

The U.S. Department of Education has advised states that request an extended spending deadline for American Rescue Plan funds to explain how doing so would help accelerate students' academic success. Specifically, the department encouraged the requests to explain investments in evidence-based strategies including increasing daily student attendance, providing high-quality tutoring, and expanding access to learning time before and after school, and also over the summer. Approvals for ARP late liquidation would allow states and districts to spend the funds through March 28 2026, as long as the money has been obligated by September 30 2024 and relates to COVID recovery efforts, according to an updated FAQ the department has issued to grantees. An extension is not automatic. States must submit the requests on behalf of themselves and districts, along with an explanation of how the funds will help with academic recovery and details of how the state supports expedited spending. Notably, the late liquidation request does not need to include details of school systems' fiscal data, but states should be prepared to collect, review, and maintain all supporting documents, the FAQ said. The new guidance clarifies "the largest financial question in education," says Narrie Rome, managing director of federal and state policy at tutoring nonprofit Accelerate.

[K12 Dive](#)

----- DISTRICTS -----

Santa Barbara Unified hits impasse with teachers' union

Following three months of bargaining, the **Santa Barbara Teachers Association** and the **Santa Barbara Unified School District** have reached an impasse. An impasse is reached when the differences in positions are so substantial and prolonged that future meetings would be futile. Both sides have struggled to agree on wages, along with hours and conditions. After the California Public Employee Relations Board certifies the impasse, both parties would be assigned a state mediator for free.

[EdSource](#)

Fresno Unified superintendent leaving for California State

After nearly seven years as **Fresno Unified** superintendent, Bob Nelson will leave the district to accept a tenure-track position at California State University, Fresno. Nelson will join the educational leadership division at the Kremen School of Education and Human Development. He will continue serving as superintendent until July 31, with Deputy Superintendent Misty Her expected to be named as interim superintendent if a permanent replacement isn't found by then. Fresno Unified has had only two superintendents in the last two decades, despite the average superintendent tenure in large urban school systems being 30 months.

[EdSource](#)

Temecula Valley school board President Joseph Komrosky will face recall election

Joseph Komrosky, the president of the Temecula Valley Unified School District school board, will face a recall election this spring – likely between April 19 and May 26, [KTLA reported](#).

"I have fulfilled my campaign promises to my constituents and have done exactly what I was elected to do," he told the Press-Enterprise of Riverside.

"I've represented the voices in my community by fighting for traditional family values, such as parental rights. ... I will rigorously seek out and stand against any evil such as pervasive obscenity, vulgarity, pornography, and erotica here at TVUSD. I will continue to resist these harmful things with every ounce of my being."

Since his election, the board's conservative majority has banned critical race theory, temporarily removed the Social Studies Alive! curriculum over a mention of LGBTQ+ activist Harvey Milk, fired the former superintendent and passed a policy mandating school officials notify parents if their child shows signs of being transgender.

One Temecula Valley PAC, a political action committee, [submitted the signatures for Komrosky' recall](#) in December. Election officials have now confirmed the required 4,884 voter signatures.

"This is an amazing day for our school district, city and community and we're hoping this is yet another step to correcting the wrongs that have occurred over the past year under Komrosky and his cohorts," co-founder of One Temecula Valley PAC Jeff Pack told KTLA.

----- WORKFORCE -----

California State University professors and staff launch five-day strike

A union representing 29,000 professors and staff throughout the **California State University** (CSU) system launched a five-day strike on Monday, creating uncertainty for more than 450,000 students on 23 campuses on the first day of the semester. The **California Faculty Association** and the CSU have been bargaining for a new contract since May and were unable to reach a deal ahead of Monday's strike date. "If students have not heard from their instructor that their class is canceled, they should assume that it is being held as scheduled and go to class," the CSU said in a statement. The faculty union is seeking a 12% annual raise, which the CSU called "financially unrealistic." The CSU said it has offered a 15% raise over three years, or 5% each year.

[U.S. News](#)

----- LEGAL -----

Mother of Michigan school shooter faces trial

The mother of a teenager who committed a mass school shooting in Michigan is going to trial on involuntary manslaughter charges. Jennifer and James Crumbley are accused of making a gun accessible to their son, Ethan Crumbley, and ignoring his mental health needs. The trial is notable as they are the first parents to be charged in a mass school shooting in the United States. Ethan was sentenced to life in prison after pleading guilty to murder, terrorism, and other crimes. Defense attorneys argue that the tragedy was not foreseeable by the parents. In Michigan, involuntary manslaughter carries a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison.

[The Hill](#)

Orange County school districts settle abuse lawsuit

A pair of Orange County school districts have reached a combined \$4.8m settlement with six young women who alleged abuse by Bahram Hojreh, a prominent local water polo coach. The **Irvine Unified School District** has agreed to pay two women \$2.5m and the **Anaheim Union High School District** has agreed to pay four

women \$2.3m. Along with Hojreh's criminal conviction, the settlements bring the various legal actions related to the sexual assault allegations to an end.

[East Bay](#)

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

Anonymous tips do prevent school shootings

Anonymous reporting systems used by schoolchildren to report concerning behavior among their peers has resulted in the prevention of numerous instances of suicide, school violence, and planned attacks, according to a new study. Researchers studied data from the Say Something Anonymous Reporting System, operated by the violence prevention group Sandy Hook Promise. In a review of tips submitted from 2019 to 2023 in one southeastern state, the researchers found that the anonymous reporting system enabled 1,039 confirmed mental health interventions, 109 "saves," whereby clear evidence of imminent suicide crisis was present and averted, prevented 38 acts of school-violence including weapons recovered on school grounds, and averted six confirmed planned school attacks. Nearly 10% of tips received were related to firearms, which researchers noted are the leading cause of death among children and adolescents. "The urgency of firearm-related tips highlights the need to educate families on firearm violence prevention and ensure support and response protocols for school systems," the authors said while noting the importance of greater awareness of anonymous reporting programs by public health and medical professionals.

[CNN](#)

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

UC moves to ban political statements on its websites by faculty and others

University of California faculty and other staff could be banned from publishing political statements, including those stemming from the Israel-Hamas war, on university websites and other university channels under a policy brought to UC's board of regents.

The consideration of such a policy comes after some units, including at least two ethnic studies departments, posted statements on their websites last fall supporting Palestine and condemning Israel.

The proposal is causing an uproar among some faculty who say it would repress their academic freedom and question how it would be enforced.

UC officials behind the idea say it is necessary to ensure that the opinions of certain individuals or groups of faculty aren't mistaken for the opinions of UC as a whole.

"When individual or group viewpoints or opinions on matters not directly related to the official business of the unit are posted on these administrative websites, it creates the potential that the statements and opinions will be mistaken as the position of the institution itself," regent Jay Sures, who helped develop the proposal as chair of the regents' compliance and audit committee, said during Wednesday's regents meeting.

<https://edsource.org/2024/uc-moves-to-ban-political-statements-from-its-websites-by-faculty-and-others/704664>

Happy 100th Day of - sit down, line
up, use your words, blow
your nose, hands
off, quiet please,
write your
name, ..only 80
more to go..
School!

som^{ee}cards
user card

