

September 3, 2024



Coachella Valley Teachers Association
California Teachers Association
National Education Association

Join our mailing list!

Good morning! Hopefully you enjoyed your Labor Day Weekend. I'm going to get right into what you need to know this week.

CVUSD School Board Elections

We have officially endorsed 4 candidates for CVUSD School Board. We hope that you will volunteer some time to help these candidates win. There will be a variety of opportunities to do so, coming in the very near future.

- **Trinidad Arredondo**, incumbent for his Coachella seat. Trini has children in our schools, always contacts both unions before board meetings, and asks relevant questions prior to voting.
- **Adrian Rodriguez** is running against Jocelyn Vargas, incumbent, for the Mecca seat. Adrian has children in our schools and would like to see the board change their focus to what's best for students.
- **Thomas Torte**, chairman of the Torres-Martinez Tribe, running unopposed for the Oasis seat. Thomas also has children in our schools and would like to see a board that focuses on ALL students' needs.
- **Altrena Santillanes**, secretary of the Torres-Martinez Tribe, running against Jesus Gonzalez, incumbent. Altrena is running for the Thermal seat, has children in our schools, and would like to see our district prioritize the education of students over the personal interests that only benefit a few.

RIF Update

We still have 24 people on the rehire list, waiting to be reinstated. [Dr. Esparza has told the media we would be fully staffed by the start of school](#), yet several of you have reported classes at your sites filled by substitutes. Only a few sites have reported to date, and already we are aware of 17 classrooms with subs. It is unclear how that can be considered fully staffed.

We are also aware that many combo classes are being created each day in order to keep the class sizes as high as possible. If you are assigned a combo, make sure to arrange for your two days of prep time allotted by the contract. ([Article 17.1](#))

CTA has authorized a lawyer to address the many unfair labor practices we have been dealing with, such as withholding critical information needed to represent members ([Article 8.4](#)), errors made in the rehiring of our RIFd teachers, and the limited access that CVTA Leadership has to district leadership in order to collaborate and discuss issues as they arise ([Article 3](#)). We will keep you updated regarding this issue.

Mainstreaming and Class Size Issues

In elementary, you may have students mainstreamed into your classroom for a period of time. Please remember that your class size ratios (gen ed) are 30:1 or 24:1 ([Article 17.1](#)). If

students are placed into your classroom for any period of time that takes you above that ratio, it is a contract violation. It is a legal requirement, not to mention what is best for students, for mainstreaming to take place. However, if the district is not accounting for those students and leaving space in your rooms for mainstreaming to take place, you can and should file a grievance.

You cannot refuse to take students at any time. As we've always said, *follow the directive and then grieve*. This is not about what's best for teachers, it is about the students. CVTA and the district agreed that 30:1 and 24:1 is the best ratio for learning to occur. So why would they violate that agreement? To save money. That's the reason. It appears as if the district is more concerned with saving money rather than ensuring students get a quality education that includes the new district initiatives.

CVTA wants to abide by what's best for student learning, so here is what you should do:

- Send an email (the informal grievance) to your administrator which states that when students are mainstreamed in your classroom, the student to teacher ratio increases to ____:____ instead of the agreed upon (30:1 or 24:1). As a resolution, the students need to be mainstreamed into a classroom with fewer students than you, or the district needs to move _____ students out of your classroom to allow for the mainstreaming to occur within the agreed upon class sizes. Make sure to state "This is my informal grievance on this matter."
- Give them a couple of days to comply and if they do not, contact me for a sample grievance you can edit and file for the formal Level 1 grievance.

Again, I want to reiterate that this has nothing to do with teachers not wanting to have students in their classrooms, as the district will try to convince you. Every student in your classroom deserves as much of your time as possible, and each additional student decreases the amount of individual attention available. Our special education students have goals you are to work on with them, and it is important to have the time to do so or we are doing them a disservice.

In the past, the district has told teachers that students being mainstreamed "don't count" towards class size because they are there for only a short time--which is an incredibly insensitive comment to make about any student who deserves attention for their academic achievement.. The issue is not your roster numbers, it is bodies in the classroom. The Association of Colton Educators won arbitration on this very issue. It is time for us to do the same.

Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank

Open enrollment is from September 1-30. In order to withdraw from the Sick Leave Bank you need to enroll and donate a day each year. If you ever need to use this bank, you get 40 paid days and will then have the option to seek donations for another 40 days. Please don't wait until it's too late to join. Contact Jasmine Persaud in HR to enroll.

Virtual Retirement Workshops

CTA is hosting several virtual retirement workshops. It's never too early to start planning! [Click here to view the flyer](#). There will be materials and discussion of the CalSTRS retirement benefit formula, options, Defined Benefit Supplemental program, survivor benefits, legislative changes, and Social Security Offsets.

Have a great week! We will visit your sites soon to check in. :)

[Visit Our Website](#)

Important Dates

- **September TBD:** CVTA Welcome Back Social
- **September 1st to 30th:** Catastrophic Sick Bank Open Enrollment

- **September 2nd: Labor Day Holiday**
- **September 7th:** Low Desert Leadership and Rep Council Meeting (Site Rep Training)
- **September 9th: CVTA Organizing Committee Meeting,** 4:00 pm @ Starbucks on Cesar Chavez - community and members welcome!
- **September 12th:** CVUSD School Board Mtg. 5:30 pm @ DO ([Live Stream Link here](#))
- **September 17th:** CVTA Virtual Office Hours 4:30-5:00
- **September 19th:** Class Balancing Deadline
- **September 24th:** CVTA Eboard Meeting, 4:30 om via Zoom
- **September 26th:** CVUSD School Board Mtg. 5:30 pm @ DO ([Live Stream Link here](#))
- **September 27th to 29th:** CTA Special Ed Conference (cta.org to register, must pay for yourself)
- **September 30th:** Deadline for Admin to review Site Budget with Staff



Carissa Carrera
CVTA President

"An injury to one is an injury to all."

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