



## Berkeley Federation of Teachers organizes teachers at two new charter schools

Teachers at REALM Middle and High Schools became the first charter schools in Berkeley to receive union recognition last month when they were informed by the California Public Employment Relations Board that their request to join the Berkeley Federation of Teachers had been granted.

When asked why the teachers chose the Berkeley Federation, Hillary Walker, a sixth grade humanities teacher at REALM said, "Based on its history of advocacy, support, and collective bargaining, we felt that the BFT could help us negoti-



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ate a strong contract, and its emphasis on democratic participation can be a model for other charter schools."

REALM is a new charter school system that opened its doors in August 2011. Its certificated staff sought out the Berkeley Federation for union representation. Last summer, prospective teachers met with

*"We look forward to working together to negotiate a first contract that addresses the unique concerns of charter teachers, while also maintaining the best conditions our teachers enjoy in the Berkeley Unified School District."*

— Cathy Campbell, President, Berkeley Federation of Teachers

leaders of the Berkeley Federation and the CFT Organizing Department to answer questions and discuss options.

Cathy Campbell, president of the Berkeley Federation, said, "We look forward to working together to negotiate a first contract that addresses the unique concerns of charter teachers, while

also maintaining the best conditions our teachers enjoy in the Berkeley Unified School District."

Lauding the Berkeley charter teachers for seeking union representation, CFT President Josh Pechthalt said, "Charter school teachers deserve the same rights in school decision-making as teachers in traditional public schools."

## Congratulations to Newport-Mesa political organizer Joel Flores

**ON OCTOBER 27**, Joel Flores, director of political organizing for the Newport-Mesa Federation of Teachers, was named Delegate of the Month by the Orange County Central Labor Council for his "tireless advocacy on behalf of working families in Orange County."

Working with with Kimberley Claytor, president of Local 1794, Flores coordinated with the Orange County Labor Federation to design, develop, and orchestrate a Candidate Academy to educate and recruit prospective and current local government leaders. Flores presented K-12 issues to the Academy, and Dean Mancina, president of the Coast Federation of Educators, Local 1911, presented information on higher education issues.

For the first time ever, education advocates in Orange County had a voice at the Candidate Academy. It was a huge success and many elected officials and other participants shared that they were glad to see education represented.



KIMBERLY CLAYTOR

## CFT committee meetings in October a success

This fall's meeting of the 14 CFT standing committees was a huge success. With over 100 members in attendance, CFT President Josh Pechthalt kicked off the day describing CFT's efforts to place a progressive tax initiative on the ballot for the 2012 General Election.

Each committee outlined its immediate work and developed goals for the coming year. As an example, the Early Childhood Education Committee agreed to host a

Transitional Kindergarten implementation and best practices workshop at the CFT Convention, continue to support and communicate the needs of early educators to all educational communities and make sure that early childhood is included as a part of K-12, support committee members in identifying opportunities to serve on advocacy and policy bodies and seek appointments, and submit four resolutions to the CFT Convention.



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CFT President Josh Pechthalt addresses record turn out CFT committee meetings.

> **TO LEARN MORE** about the standing committees of the CFT, go to [www.cft.org](http://www.cft.org) and click on Committees.

## CFT and Preschool California co-sponsor Transitional Kindergarten Implementation Summit

In early November, the CFT co-sponsored Preschool California's *Transitional Kindergarten Implementation Summit*. Almost 500 educators from nearly 100 school districts — including nearly a dozen CFT members and

with those who are planning their own programs. Breakout sessions dealt with topics such as curriculum, family outreach and engagement, and provided educators with practical information and tools that will help ensure

*“Transitional Kindergarten is one of the bright spots for education.”*

— Tom Torlakson, State Superintendent of Public Education

Secretary Treasurer Jeff Frietas — discussed how to effectively implement transitional kindergarten.

With statewide implementation beginning next fall, leaders, and early adopters shared their promising practices

early learners are better prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson called transitional kindergarten “one of the bright spots for education,” noting that it will



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Representing the CFT at the Transitional Kindergarten Implementation Summit, left to right: Elaine Merriweather, United Educators of San Francisco; Ray Gaer, ABC Federation; Gary Ravani, EC/K-12 Council president; Tracey Iglehart, Berkeley Federation; Betty Robinson-Harris, UESF; Jeff Freitas, CFT secretary treasurer; Margaret Martinez-Ingle, El Rancho Federation; Jennifer Moreno, CFT legislative rep; and Jocelyn Gadiant, El Rancho Federation.

help our students obtain proficiency in math and

language arts in the early elementary grades.

# Political organizers trained as CFT Strategic Campaign Initiative advances

GLEN ROSSELLI

## POLITICAL LEADERS UNITED to CREATE CHANGE

- > Berkeley Federation of Teachers, Local 1078
- > Cabrillo College Federation of Teachers, Local 4400  
Sadie Reynolds
- > Coast Federation of Educators, Local 1911  
Robert Schneiderman
- > Galt Federation of Teachers, Local 2219  
Alex Bauer
- > Greater Santa Cruz Federation of Teachers, Local 2030  
Casey Carlson
- > Newport-Mesa Federation of Teachers, Local 1794  
Joel Flores
- > Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers, Local 1936  
Jenn Laskin
- > Peralta Federation of Teachers, Local 1603  
Janelle Hampton
- > Oxnard Federation of Teachers and School Employees, Local 1273
- > San Francisco Community College Federation of Teachers, Local 2121  
Galina Gerasimova
- > United Educators of San Francisco, Local 61  
Ken Tray
- > Ventura County Federation of College Teachers, Local 1828

The Strategic Campaign Initiative moved ahead last month with the Political Leaders United to Create Change program training. Local unions in the PLUCC program (See listing on left) received matching grants to hire political organizers. These organizers met for two days at the CFT Bay Area office to discuss how to build a comprehensive organizing and political program.

CFT President Josh Pechthalt kicked off the meeting by thanking members for their dedication and commitment while emphasizing that the overall goal of the campaign is to align the union's work and develop a group of trained and active members, leaders, and staff to aide the CFT in becoming more efficient and better focused on building power.

Sylvia A. Allegretto, from the Center on Wage and Employment Dynamics at UC Berkeley, gave a detailed overview of the economy, discussing employment and the jobs deficit, wage deterioration and the growth of income inequality, and the housing crisis.

Statewide Affiliate Political Organizer Jim Araby led segments on designing a political strategy, increasing local COPE participation, and building coalitions that support



Local PLUCC leaders participate in a two-day training as part of the Strategic Campaign Initiative.

work of the local union as well as the CFT.

Sandra Weese, Director of Organizing, led a session focused on the

tion and coordinate their efforts through regular conference calls. They are working to cultivate political, community, and labor

*"It was incredibly helpful for our local to have resources to engage our members in political issues."* — PLUCC training participant

importance of organizing for building local capacity and power. Based on the interest of the locals present, much of that session focused on organizing fundamentals, how to organize internally around issues, and how to approach fee payers about membership.

One PLUCC political director in attendance said it was "incredibly helpful for our local to have resources to engage our members in political issues." The political directors continue to share informa-

relationships to assist in building the strength of our locals so that they will be able to bargain better contracts, achieve legislative goals, and elect people to key offices that support CFT priorities.

With the PLUCC program underway and a draft of the CFT local union capacity survey completed, the SCI now turns to completing a comprehensive organizing plan for CFT, building a CFT Member Organiz-

See **PLUCC**, page 4

## Area council meetings in full swing

The CFT Executive Council recently revised the area council structure and established 17 area councils throughout the state. Area meetings to review CFT's annual priorities, discuss local issues, and coordinate political endorsements are to be held at least twice a year.

Turnout for the area council meetings this fall has been great, with local presidents, executive directors, and political directors in regular at-



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*Cathy Campbell, Berkeley Federation president, Debra Weintraub from the Peralta Federation and Allyson Page from Mount Diablo School Psychologists Association participate in the East Bay Area Council.*

tendance. Overall people are enthusiastic and have given very positive

feedback on this new approach.

## San Francisco early childhood education organizing project moves ahead

Organizers on the San Francisco Early Childhood Education Organizing Project met with more than half the staff at St. Nicholas Preschool earlier in the fall. During the meeting, teachers

and aides expressed a desire for greater respect for their profession, and workers at the school expressed a need for better health insurance and compensation.

Healthcare survey data

from early childhood centers is beginning to come in, which will later inform the potential creation of a "Taft-Hartley insurance fund" for early childhood workers in San Francisco.

### PLUCC continued from page 3

ing Committee, and identifying locals that are interested in organizing new members in strategic sectors.

Working together, the organizing and political field departments have engaged several local leaders and their executive boards and field representatives about providing assistance in developing their strategic

plans and other activities. A few examples include Lacy Barnes and the e-board of the State Center Federation of Teachers, Sam Russo and the e-board of Adjunct Faculty United, and Matt Goldstein and the e-board of the Peralta Federation of Teachers.

The Peralta Federation is developing a comprehensive plan that

includes a membership drive, COPE drive, outreach to new organizing targets, strategy to elect board trustees, building community coalitions, and a joint campaign with campus unions to force renegotiation of the district's "swap interest rate," which could save the district as much as \$1.6 million.



The California Federation of Teachers is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. The CFT represents faculty and classified workers in public and private schools and colleges, from early childhood through higher education. The CFT is committed to raising the standards of the profession and to securing the conditions essential to provide the best service to California's students.

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Jeff Freitas

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