

Get Organized!

CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

AFT, AFL-CIO

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CFT Tops Off Successful Year of Organizing with Addition of Two New Locals and Five New Units

This has been a successful year for organizing efforts, with almost 1000 new members joining the CFT family. New units have been organized, numerous membership drives have been held, and nearly 1500 members, local leaders, and site reps have been trained.

The AFT Guild, San Diego and Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community Colleges and the Cerritos College Faculty Federation added 162 and 248 members respectively. Over the course of the year, the Cerritos College Faculty Federation increased membership by nearly 50 percent, while the Palomar College Council of Classified Employees and the Citrus College Adjunct Faculty Federation each

Miquel Concy



Lycée Français Association Lapérouse members casting their ballots in unanimous support of affiliation with the CFT.

increased membership by just under 30 percent.

Many new locals and units have been organized and joined the CFT, including: Life Chiropractic College West Faculty Federation, Local 6538; El Camino College Police Officers Association, El Camino Classified Em-

ployees, Local 6142; IBEW Apprenticeship Program Training Instructors, Palomar Faculty Federation, Local 6161; Non-Credit Hourly Adjuncts, Citrus College Adjunct Faculty Federation, Local 6352; Five Keys Charter School Los Angeles, United Educators of San Francisco,

Local 61; Ivy Academia Charter School, United Teachers Los Angeles, Local 1021; and the Lycée Français Association Lapérouse.

The most recent victory is the organizing of Lycée Français. This winter, teachers and other staff from the Lycée Français, a French immersion school in the San Francisco Bay Area, reached out to the CFT to discuss potential affiliation. Teachers and staff of the Lycée Français have had an independent union since 1990, but in recent years negotiations have begun to deteriorate. Because of this increasingly contentious bargaining environment, folks within the union made the determination that they would benefit from and were in

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JEFT Partners with Parents to Reclaim the Promise of Public Education



Sandra Weese
Jefferson Elementary educators and parents along with AFT and CFT staff helped plan and organize a very successful Reclaim the Promise event.

Hundreds turned out on Saturday, March 8, 2014 for "Reclaiming the Promise of Quality Public Education," a professional development and storytelling festival for educators, parents, and children. Hosted by the AFT, the California Federation of Teachers, and the Jefferson Elementary Federation of Teachers (JEFT), in partnership with the Jefferson Council PTA, it promoted collaboration between educators and Daly City area parents while providing useful resources for all participants. It also highlighted Share My Lesson, Colorin Colorado, and First Book and provided educators and parents with essential information about the Common Core State Standards and how to navigate the public school system. Simultaneous translation in Spanish and Arabic was offered, and over 350 parents signed in.

"As education professionals we want the same thing for our students as their parents — a better future," said Melinda Dart, president of the JEFT. "Making academic success a reality for every child doesn't take magic, but it does take commitment, focus and a great deal of collaboration between parents and school employees."

Fight for Fair Accreditation Heats Up as Campus Events Build Solidarity & Support

When the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) put City College of San Francisco on "show cause" status in spring 2012, CCSF's Local 2121 and the CFT fought back. As part of a comprehensive strategy, CFT made the case to the Department of Education that the ACCJC itself was out of compliance with its own standards as an accrediting body. The National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity agreed and directed that ACCJC correct a host of deficiencies. The CFT and the San Francisco City Attorney filed suit and at the beginning of the year obtained a preliminary injunction to keep the college open.

Building on these victories, the CFT has launched a statewide Campaign for Fair Accreditation. The campaign will use organizing at every CFT local to demonstrate that the ACCJC has lost the support of California's community colleges.

Six CFT locals have already kicked off the campaign by hosting the CCSF Speakers Bureau on their campuses. Cabrillo College Federation of Teachers, Local 4400 and San Mateo Federation of Teachers, Local 1493 hosted Fair Accredita-



A standing room only crowd attended the Palomar Faculty Federation CCSF Speakers Bureau event.

tion forums and passed resolutions last fall, and this winter the Palomar Faculty Federation, Local 6161; United Professors of Marin, Local 1610; the San Jose/Evergreen Faculty Association, Local 6157; and the Coast Federation of Educators, Local 1911 organized highly successful events featuring the CCSF speakers.

At Palomar, SCI organizer Debbie Forward noted that hosting the forum helped build their local's own internal capacity for mobilizing members. "Engaging members in the Fair Accreditation conversation and bringing the CCSF event to campus has made the Palomar community much more aware of what our union does. We're more than just bargaining a contract -- we're fighting for public education as an institution."

To date nearly 400 faculty, students, administrators, and trustees have turned out to hear the CCSF panel members tell their story of CCSF's battle. Fair accreditation is endangered at all campuses; while CCSF is under fire now, any campus can be next. The campaign buttons that everyone is wearing say it well: "We Are ALL City College."

Shannon Lienhart, Co-President of the Palomar Faculty Federation, said "We brought the CCSF panel to our campus because what happened to them could happen to any community college. That's what we do; we stand up for each other when one of us is wronged."

As part of this campaign we will also

be pushing for bills in Sacramento. Last month members from CFT Community College locals at Peralta, Cabrillo, Coast, San Jose/Evergreen, Los Rios, and San Diego joined CFT President Josh Pechthalt, CFT Local 2121 President Alisa Messer, CCSF Student Trustee Shanell Williams, and San Francisco Deputy City Attorney Sara Eisenberg for a press conference in the Capitol announcing the introduction of AB 1942, Fair Accreditation Practices for Community Colleges Act, sponsored by Assemblymember Rob Bonta. AB 1942 would help restore fair accreditation for California's community colleges by:

- Restoring transparency and accountability in the accreditation process, and
- Restoring fairness by requiring due process and providing an opportunity for colleges to appeal decisions.

AB 1942 is the centerpiece of a multi-faceted approach to address concerns raised by actions of the ACCJC, which will be discussed further at forums this spring. To host a forum and pass resolutions on your campus, contact your CFT Field Rep, call the CFT office, or email fairaccreditation@gmail.com.

fact in need of additional expertise and support from a larger organization like the CFT.

The CFT organizing staff met with the Lycée Français union leadership and after deciding that the CFT was the right fit for

them, we collaborated to set up three informational meetings in members' homes, for members to learn about the benefits of CFT affiliation. These informational meetings were very well attended. Susan Solomon, a mem-

ber of United Educators of San Francisco, also took part in these meetings, and shared her experience as a CFT member and answered questions. Following the meetings, on March 6, 2014, the bargaining unit

of 150 individuals voted unanimously to affiliate with the CFT. We are excited to welcome the Lycée Français Association Lapérouse to the CFT family and look forward to helping them prepare for bargaining.

Morgan Hill Federation of Teachers Wages Successful Effort to Stop Additional Charter Schools



Experts, parents, educators, and community members participated in a panel at the MHFT Educational Summit.

Earlier this year, after months of grassroots organizing, the Morgan Hill Federation of Teachers (MHFT) and their community allies were successful in stopping two charter school chains from opening schools in their district.

Navigator Schools and Rocketship Education petitioned to open elementary schools in the Morgan Hill Unified School District next year (2014-15), but their petitions were denied at

the local school board level in October. Unfazed, both charter corporations then set their sights on obtaining charters from the Santa Clara County Board of Education through the appeal process.

The community fought back. The CFT engaged and actively supported the MHFT in their efforts to stop Navigator and Rocketship. The Federation efforts included organizing, petition-signing and

planning for the Santa Clara County Office of Education Board Meeting on November 20, where over 250 people turned out to register their opposition. MHFT leadership worked with the South Bay Labor Council to educate County Board Members about local public schools and the limitations of the two charter management organizations. More parents and community members came out on December 3 to show their

support for local public schools at an Educational Summit organized as part of AFT's national actions to "Reclaim the Promise" of public education.

Keynote speaker David Berliner provided data and led the discussion on how poverty is the issue and charters are not the answer.

One week before the county vote, Rocketship withdrew their appeal and dropped efforts to open a K-5 charter with 600 students. Navigator persisted, however, and so too did the outstanding organizing of community, parents, district administration and MHFT members. The district had lobbied vigorously against the charter petition. In addition, a legal analysis was sent to the county office outlining possible civil rights violations if the county board granted the appeal and approved the charter which would further segregate the student populations. At a packed meeting, Morgan Hill, cont. next page

Morgan Hill, cont. from previous page

Hill Superintendent, Steve Betando and other district officials made the clear statement that their schools were improving education for all students, including poor and Latino students. In addition, the County Office of Education staff

itself recommended denial of the appeal after careful review of the original petition and district rationale for denial. Ultimately, Navigator's petition was voted down completing this resounding victory.

Navigator Schools has

now appealed at the State level and the Morgan Hill Federation of Teachers and their allies will continue to organize and fight for what is best for their students and their local public schools.

On her first day as Executive Director of UC-AFT, Amy Hines and VP for Legislation, Axel Borg joined a picket line at the UC Davis main campus in solidarity with AFSCME, Local 3299 striking for equitable treatment at University of California.

"The UC-AFT congratulates AFSCME on a job well done and a great contract for custodians, food service workers, groundskeepers and bus drivers at UC. We will likely be asking for solidarity support when our Non-Senate Faculty contract expires on June 1, 2015!"
-Amy Hines



CFT Organizers Enhance Skills and Share

On February 21 and 22, organizers representing 15 locals around the state came to Oakland for the biannual Strategic Campaign Initiative organizing training. The training

included a broad range of topics chosen by participants, including presentations by Emerge CA President, Kimberly Ellis, and 50+1 Strategies Principle, Nicole Derse, about how

to identify, recruit, and support strong candidates for local and state office. Melinda Dart, President of Local 3267, shared a case study about how her local worked hard with parents and the community to elect education and labor champions to their school board.

It was a great opportunity to bring all the SCI organizers together to learn some new skills, share success stories, and brainstorm together about local and statewide challenges.



From left, SCIO Organizers: Shannon Lienhart, Britt Dowdy, and Rob Schneiderman.

California Federation of Teachers

AFT, AFL-CIO
A Union of Professionals

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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