



Jefferson Elementary Exceeds S&CF Goals

I am proud to report that our local Jefferson Elementary Federation of Teachers, Local 3267 has gotten off to a strong start with our Schools and Communities First signature gathering campaign. So far, we have reached 117% of our goal!

We began by reminding our members of our district's dire financial situation: declining enrollment, deficit spending and impending budget cuts. We talked about the need for substantial financial relief from the state in order to adequately serve the needs of all of our students. We have also built a reliable communication network within our local. Every site has at least one site representative. Our site reps attend monthly meetings, receive regular email updates and



Ernest Camacho

Pictured from left to right: Local 3267 members Melinda Dart, Paul Hagen, Erin Durham and Lucky Camacho collect signatures for the Schools and Communities First Initiative.

reminders. This has been key to our success.

Before beginning our signature gathering effort, we worked with CFT staff to conduct trainings for our site reps around the Schools and Communities First initiative, and to create a goal for our local.

Our goal reflected the number of members our local has, so the plan was that each site rep would get signatures from all members at their sites. Site reps were able to get most of their signatures during CFT time at staff meetings. In addition, many mem-

bers were able to collect signatures of friends and family members over winter break. We have also collected signatures at school site events, such as union funded family education nights. We have also sent out weekly reminders to site reps and members to continue collecting signatures.

Although we have reached our initial goal, we have not stopped collecting signatures. We plan to have petitions at future school events and are planning to get teams out on the sidewalks at a few shopping centers in February. Individual members are continuing to collect signatures at their book clubs and yoga classes. Every signature helps!

-Local 3267 President Paul Hagen

PFT Faculty Stand Together

Faculty at the Peralta Federation of Teachers, Local 1603 (PFT) have been working without a contract for the past seven months. During this time, members have engaged in escalating actions geared towards winning a strong contract. Their central contract demands are parity pay



Kayla Lewis

PFT faculty demand a fair contract during the chancellor's opening speech.

for part-timers and guaranteed cost of living adjustments for all members. The union's call for "equal pay for equal work" has garnered increasing member participation and community support at each action throughout the last year. At the district-wide professional day on January 16, PFT members arrived wearing their union t-shirts and buttons. The event began with a number of speeches by leaders from the district, including PFT President Jennifer Shanoski. During the chancellor's morning address, PFT members in the audience silently stood up and held "Fair Contract Now" signs. This silent show of solidarity, rooted in the moral reality that faculty working conditions are student learning conditions, demanded the attention of everyone in the room. With the new semester now officially beginning, PFT activists and members will continue fighting so that every student in the Peralta District will have access to the sorts of colleges that our communities deserve.

-CFT Project Organizer Andrew Pagan

Advocating for Schools and Communities First Initiative

Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers

Advocating for public education and student needs is our priority. Our students need teachers, counselors, nurses, librarians and special services. Schools and Communities First is an important reform measure that will ease the financial burden on many districts, allowing schools and students to receive the services they need. For instance, although we have some library assistants, our school district does not have any certificated teacher librarians. Not even one. Research shows that reading gains or losses are tied to the availability of teacher librarians in a school library. Another educational gain for student health and learning needs from the Schools and Communities First initiative funding is the ability to hire more school nurses and counselors. Currently, our more than 19,000 students share 10 school nurses among 32 school sites. The benefits of this initiative are profound, so the advocacy and support for it is important. We have a wonderful membership of teachers, nurses, psychologists, speech and language therapists, counselors and education specialists gathering signatures from their



PVFT teachers working hard to get more funding back into their classrooms

colleagues and their families. I have participated in a coalition of local unions at a press conference to educate the community, and have also interviewed with Radio Bilingüe to reach the Spanish speaking community. Our board has signed the petition and will hopefully approve the Schools and Communities First resolution at an upcoming board meeting. Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers, Local 1936 (PVFT) will continue to reach out to friends, families and organize signature gathering at local farmers' markets to ensure we reach our goal, because our students and our community are our first priority.

-PVFT President Nelly Vaquera-Boggs

West Valley-Mission Federation of Teachers

West Valley-Mission Federation of Teachers, Local 6554 leaders have been working hard to collect signatures for the Schools and Communities First initiative. Winning more funding for schools and forcing corporations to pay their fair share in property taxes is key to social justice for students and community members. It is critical that we increase funding for community colleges throughout the state to give students the resources they need for more funding to pay for college to decrease student debt, more funding for faculty to teach and less class cancellations.

Union leaders have been gathering signatures by doing walkthroughs and having one-on-one conversations with faculty and staff about the initiative, engaging their students in the discussion about the Schools and Communities First initiative and even at their jazzercise classes. More signatures are needed from our local to reach and exceed our goals and we are planning to collect more on flex day, spring semester walkthroughs and tabling and talking to more people wherever we go in the community!

- Local 6554 Executive Director Karen Chan



Local 6554 leaders gear up to collect Schools and Communities First signatures from colleagues, staff and students.

Palomar Faculty Federation

When our local was asked to collect 200 petition signatures for the Schools and Communities First initiative by March 1, we knew we needed to get to work immediately. Our community college faculty is off campus from mid-December until the very end of January, leaving little time for the one-on-one connections essential to signature collecting. Our first step was to invite CFT staff to present the initiative to our Palomar Faculty Federation, Local 6161 (PFF) Executive Board at its regular November meeting.

At that introduction, four executive members took petitions to personally collect signatures over Thanksgiving week. In December, we set up a signature collection table in our union office because we'd already asked members to come by and pick up a holiday goodie. We didn't mention the petition in the pick-up announcement, but once we were comfortably chatting with members in the office it was easy to mention the need to get Schools and Communities First on the ballot. With just one or two outliers, everyone asked signed.

Our next face-to-face opportunity is plenary, the campus-wide back-to-school event held each semester. Executive members will have petitions at our welcome/information table, circulating at lunch and ready at our workshops. February gives us a chance to collect signatures at our college's highly attended monthly governing board meeting, then leaves executive members a few weeks to take petitions to other campus meetings, to their classrooms and to their communities.

We've kept the signature gathering to a few executive board members at a time so our organizer can reasonably track who has petitions, when they come back in and when they return to our field representative. We're on track to exceed our signature goal, and just as importantly, we've made new and stronger connections with our members during the organizing!

-PFF Organizer and Communications Director Debbie Forward

Local 1521 Builds Power With CAT and Open Bargaining



Local 1521 negotiations team and CAT celebrate after a successful first session.

Los Angeles College Faculty Guild, Local 1521 members are gearing up for a contract fight. June 30 marks the contract's expiration date, and negotiations are already underway.

Leaders began preparing for negotiations over a year ago when the executive board held an organizing training in place of the traditional back-to-school retreat. Since then, leaders and organizers have

identified new activists on each campus to form the Contract Action Team (CAT). These members support bargaining by sharing updates with 10 to 15 colleagues and mobilizing members for collective

actions demonstrating the union's visible people power.

In a bold change to their traditional strategy, the local opted for open bargaining this year —union members and supporters

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UC-AFT Lecturers Organize for a Fair Contract

UC-AFT locals across the state organized their members against the backdrop of ongoing negotiations with the University of California.

At UC Berkeley, 17 lecturer leaders from across the state joined CFT organizers to kick-off the 2019-2020 school year with a massive week-long organizing effort. Through one-on-one conversations, organizing volunteers signed up 34 new members and invited members to upcoming contract negotiations at Berkeley. With such an exciting start to a semester of organizing, Berkeley lecturers and organizers brought in a total of 103 new members during the fall 2019 semester.

At UC Merced, UC-AFT leaders and staff joined CFT organizers to sign-up

new members ahead of contract negotiations at their campus. Over three days, 10 new members signed union cards and 22 members attended an open bargaining session that week.

At UC Santa Barbara, UC-AFT leaders and staff joined CFT organizers in the south to sign up new members and existing members to attend bargaining on the campus the following week. It was especially powerful because bargaining had never been done before at UCSB. Six member volunteers showed up the first day to do class visits with the organizers!

Negotiations were held at UCLA on December 3. UC-AFT set up a table with information about negotiations and the reality of being a UC lec-

turer. Throughout the day, students stopped by to get information and fill out a "postcard of recommendation" for one of their lecturers. The purpose of this was to highlight the unpaid labor that lecturers perform in the general service of their job, writing letters of recommendation being one of these. Over 150 postcards were filled out by students.

With their contract set to expire on January 31, 2020, UC-AFT lecturers are continuing to organize outside of the bargaining room as they know it is the only way they can win a contract with dignity and respect for their profession.

-CFT Project Organizers Charlotte Bowman, Audrie Francis and Laila Molina



UCLA Lecturers standing in solidarity with AFSCME-3299 workers at rally.

Local 1521A Identifies LACCD Personnel Commission as a Major Problem for Members

Members of AFT College Staff Guild-Los Angeles, Local 1521A are continuing to build a strong union through membership participation in their contract campaign and have identified the personnel commission as a major problem. The personnel commission administers the merit system at Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD).

In preparation for negotiations, the local has collected 872 surveys - over 70% of the membership! On this survey, the local asked for feedback on the personnel commission. The overwhelming response was negative.

Recognizing this as a key issue for members, the lo-

cal has made the decision to improve the personnel commission by selecting their own commissioner. Currently there are three commissioners and all are appointed by the board of trustees. However, California education code outlines the right for the largest classified unit to appoint their own commissioner. There is a process to enforce this right and includes gathering signatures on a petition, presenting those signatures and then holding a vote on whether or not the classified employees want to select their own commissioner. In just one week, union leaders and activists gathered over 500 signatures to qualify for

the vote! At the January board of trustees meeting, 50 members from across the district and supporters from the other classified unions at LACCD presented the petition. The district now has 90 days to hold an election.

Chapter Chair Hazel Alonzo stated, "Though the majority still acknowledges that the personnel commission is an integral part of LACCD, our members have had concerns for years and I believe gaining the ability to select our own commissioner is a step towards increasing accountability, transparency and trust in the commission."

-CFT Project Organizer Charlotte Bowman

Local 1493 Leads the Way with Flex Day Outreach



Valarie Bachelor

Outreach in Action at Skyline.

In the midst of an extended contract campaign, February marks one year in negotiations for San Mateo Community College Federation of Teachers, Local 1493. The local was eager to make the most of their flex day opportunity by talking to as many members as possible. They worked closely with CFT and were able to speak to almost every faculty member who attended. Building on the success of last's year board of trustees' action, members were asked to complete pledge cards and commit to an escalating series of actions to secure a fair contract. Seventeen volunteers

led simultaneous efforts across the three campuses and collected 120+ pledge cards and 41 Schools and Communities First signatures.

-CFT Project Organizer Lachlan Batchelor

Local 1521 continued from page 3

are able to be in the room observing negotiations as they happen. Open bargaining is a strong tactic for demonstrating visible people power and making negotiations more transparent.

At the first open bargain-

ing session in December, 34 members attended negotiations at City College. January opened with a bargaining session on January 18 at Pierce College, and 8 members showed up throughout the day. Additionally, four

new CAT members were recruited on bargaining day to join this contract fight!

-CFT Organizer Erin Conley and Project Organizer Laila Molina



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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