



Legislation would bring reporting of pesticide use Staff to receive training, schools to develop pest management plans

Legislators are debating measures to ensure that pesticides at California schools don't become a bigger concern than the pests they are meant to exterminate.

Under Senate Bill 1405, schools that use pesticides must designate someone to maintain a complete record of all pesticide use at the site, and submit it to the Department of Pesticide Regulation at the end of each calendar year. Current law requires only professional exterminators to report their use.



PHOTOS BY JANE HUNDELMARK

Mike O'Connor watches the Anzar High campus for pest problems.

organic and don't use pesticides on their crops. Every summer, however, ants infest the school.

"I haven't sprayed a pesticide in years. There are a lot of safe alternatives out there."

— Mike O'Connor, Lead Custodian, Anzar High School

"The garbage cans are starting to crawl again," O'Connor said. "It's only a matter of time until the ants work their way to the classrooms."

Not all effective treatments are toxic. According to O'Connor, it's just as easy to kill ants and erase their scent trails with a disinfectant cleaner. "I haven't sprayed a pesticide in years," he said. "There are a lot of safe alternatives out there."

on site be used safely," said the bill's author, Mark DeSaulnier (D-Concord). "Having schools adopt an integrated plan will promote preventative measures that can lessen the need for toxic pesticides."

The Center for Environmental Health, CFT and Teamsters are among the bill's supporters.

"You need something to stop the creepy crawlies that come out, but you don't want to injure students," said Mike O'Connor, lead custodian at Anzar High School in the Aromas-San Juan district.

Anzar High is surrounded by broccoli farms and lemon groves, but most growers are



Groundskeeper Isaac Rueda keeps up on weed abatement at Anzar High.

The designee must also develop a long-term plan to prevent pest problems with minimal hazard to people and the environment, and post it on the school website. Districts in Los Angeles and Santa Clara already require schools to have a written "integrated pest management plan."

SB 1405 would also require the DPR to annually train everyone who uses pesticides on school sites. "It is imperative that any pesticides

Bill to bring equity stalled in Legislature

Staff seek fair unemployment compensation

Linnette Robinson has worked with special needs students at Berkeley High School for four years, after two years in the district's elementary and junior high schools.

Yet every winter and summer, Robinson and tens of thousands of other classified employees across California scrape by during involuntary "vacations" the best they can. Because while other workers

receive unemployment benefits during seasonal breaks, school staff do not.

"Most of us won't see a paycheck from mid-June to the end of September," Robinson said.

Relief was on the way, but at press time a bill by Assemblyman Raul Bocanegra (D-Pacoma) that would have given staff access to unemployment benefits died in the Appropriations Committee.

Bocanegra's AB 1638 would have created a uniform standard to determine which unemployed employees are eligible for payments and eliminated the "reasonable assurance of employment" letters that school districts use to deny benefits to laid-off staff during breaks.

"This is a question of fairness," Bocanegra said. "Virtually every other employee is

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MORE HELP FOR LOCAL UNIONS!

Small AFT locals get big attention from new task force

ONE IN FOUR of AFT's 1.56 million members belong to a small local, and 90 percent of AFT local unions are considered small, defined as having fewer than 600 members.

While belonging to a small local can foster a sense of teamwork, small locals often come up short of the resources, training and volunteers to effectively represent members, according to a new AFT task force.

Last June, the AFT Executive Council appointed 17 leaders of small locals to examine conditions, assess support from AFT and state federations, and analyze their role in the union's strategic initiatives.

The task force began by studying small locals. Few are as small as the Horicon Elementary Federation of Teachers located in a remote region of Northern California. AFT Local 4415's classified unit only has 12 members.

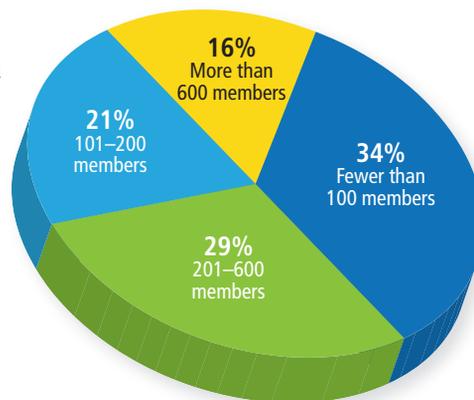
Geographic isolation is a factor. "Our field rep has a 2-hour drive over curvy mountain roads to get to the school for meetings," said Classified Representative Cheryl Spencer. Nonetheless, Spencer gave CFT good marks for support during recent contract negotiations.

"Our rep gave us insight into what other units were doing to help their members," Spencer said. "CFT provided us with legal opinions on contested issues, updated information about current contractual language, and changes to Ed Code and laws that affect our current contracts."

The AFT task force recommended new programs, changes in existing projects and approaches, and leadership training.

Carl Williams, head of the

Smaller classified locals predominate in California



250-member Lawndale Federation of Classified Employees and a member of the task force, is enthusiastic about reviving the annual Local Presidents Conference. "Sometimes a small local president's biggest support is another president from a small local,



Carl Williams

who can give you an immediate answer to a problem because they've already faced it," he said.

The most common problems that small classified locals face are financial. "We all hope we never face a problem that will

require a major expenditure," Williams said.

The task force recommended expanding access to the Legal Defense Fund to defray the high cost of important arbitrations. If an AFT local receives a legal defense grant, the cost is split three ways between the AFT, CFT and the local.

"Even with that help," Williams said, "it's still easier for a larger local to pay their third than a smaller local, and it's easier for a small certificated local to pay than a small classified local."

The task force also suggested creating "leave banks" so more local officers can be released during periods of intense activity; having an upgraded database linking all AFT locals and presidents by mail, phone and email; and improving how AFT provides training and tools to incoming officers.

The Executive Board will present the task force's recommendations to the AFT Convention this summer and, if adopted, the AFT will convene a working group to implement the changes.

By the numbers: All AFT local unions

- 3,370** Locals chartered by the AFT
- 3,019** Locals with fewer than 600 members (90 percent)
- 1,819** Locals with fewer than 100 members (54 percent)

Your local union values your work all year long



By Paula A. Phillips
President, CFT
Council of Classified
Employees

EVERY MAY, DISTRICTS from San Diego to Susanville take time to recognize the contributions of their staffs. Classified School Employees Week is the third week of the month and pays tribute to staff members who play key roles in creating environments

that promote student achievement, safety and health.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson described classified employees as "hard-working and devoted school employees who exemplify what commit-

ment to school and student really is," and as workers "who make the extra effort to support their students, schools and communities." Torlakson is right. Annual recognitions are wonderful.

However, your biggest booster is actually your AFT local union. Local unions negotiate contracts that provide the tools necessary to perform our classified jobs effectively, and to ensure that the classified voice is heard at work — all year long. That's the ultimate recognition of the invaluable services we provide to California's students.

Security aides fight for return of hour

FOUR YEARS AGO, school security aides in San Francisco gave up an hour from their eight-hour day when their supervisor told a roomful of the workers it would save the jobs of two young women. The hours were to be restored in two years.

Along with the hour-a-day layoff, the safety workers — known as “T-10s” for their job designation — also endured five furlough days per year.

“We cover each other’s back,” said A.J. Frazier, a T-10 and sergeant-at-arms for United Educators of San Francisco. “We did our part so younger workers



A.J. Frazier

could retain their jobs, on the grounds that we would eventually get that hour back.”

Between the furloughs and the seven-hour workday, T-10s took a 14 percent hit in the wallet. Frazier felt the \$500 loss every month. “At the time I had just married a woman with four children and we bought a home. It was very hard to make the mortgage payments. We survived as a family, but we sacrificed a lot.”

In current negotiations, UESF has proposed the return of the lost hour and other moves to regain lost economic ground.

“This was supposed to be for two years and it has gone on for four,” said local President Dennis Kelly. “The district lied to these workers. It’s time to give back the hour.”

Connecting with kids in need



TOM MORAN

For Robert Chacanaca, the highlight of the recent AFT Paraprofessional and School-Related Personnel Conference in Orlando, Florida, was reading a Cherokee story about the origin of strawberries to elementary students, many of whom are homeless and transitional. The visit to the Westside K-8 School in nearby Kissimmee was part of AFT’s Reclaim the Promise and First Book programs. It gave hundreds of visiting paras a chance to read stories, plant trees, and find other ways to connect with local kids and wrap-around services.

LocalAction

»**AFT College Staff Guild – Los Angeles** has launched a new mobile app for the local.

»**Aromas-San Juan Federation of Classified Employees** negotiated a 3 percent raise and 1 percent off-schedule, plus lowered health insurance premiums and out-of-pocket costs.

»**Gilroy Federation** paraprofessionals will see a 4.5 percent salary increase and 1 percent off-schedule, as well as a reclassification study to compare the pay in surrounding districts.

»**Weaver Federation of Educational Employees** negotiated a 6.5 percent raise for all workers and an additional 1 percent for some.

L.A. County closes Kedren Head Start

AFTER MONTHS OF mobilizing staff, parents and community allies from Watts and Koreatown to East Los Angeles, Early Childhood Federa-

education program drew broad support. In March, Rep. Maxine Waters called on the U.S. Health and Human Services Dept. to investigate the Los Angeles

“We put up a great fight against the county office, something the Head Start field never saw before.”

— Ruben Siguenza, President, Early Childhood Federation

tion President Ruben Siguenza recently sent supporters some bad news. “I regret to inform you that our fight is over,” Siguenza wrote in an April 18 email. “We have lost Kedren Head Start.”

The fight to save the early

County Office of Education for forcing Kedren CEO John Griffin to relinquish the 49-year-old agency’s Head Start contracts.

“We put up a great fight against the county office,” Siguenza said, “something the Head Start field never saw before.”

ClassifiedCalendar

Council of Classified

Employees, the division of CFT representing classified and paraprofessionals, meets **September 27** from 4 to 10 pm at the San Jose Marriott. Members are welcome. Earlier that day, Committees meet at 10 am. And on Sunday, **September 28**, State Council, to which all locals may send delegates, meets from 9 am to 1 pm.

Classified Conference, the annual event for paras and classified in the CFT will be held **December 5-7** at the Irvine Marriott. This three-day conference is packed with professional learning opportunities and social events. The **CCE** meets during the conference on **December 5**. Learn more on page 4 and at cft.org/your-work/classified.

Save the date!

Building Classified COMMUNITY

December 5-7 Marriott Irvine



CCE Conference 2014

California Federation of Teachers
Council of Classified Employees
1330 Broadway, Suite 1601
Oakland, CA 94612

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Sacramento, CA

Three reasons to attend the Classified Conference

One, there will be learning and networking opportunities with workshops, a panel of lawyers, speakers and other empowerment tools.

Two, the Council of Classified Employees will recognize classified employees and paraprofessionals for excellence at work under the conference theme, "Building Classified CommUNITY."

Three, it's a lot of fun!

EASY REGISTRATION ONLINE!

Classified Conference 2014 • December 5-7 • Irvine Marriott

>Learn more about the conference and register at cft.org/your-work/classified/conference.

The registration fee is \$100 for one attendee, \$75 each for two, and \$50 each for three or more attendees.

Classified Insider

UNION NEWS FOR THE CLASSIFIED SERVICE

Summer 2014
Volume 4, Number 2

Staff fight for unemployment benefits during breaks

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allowed to apply for unemployment benefits when they are out of work. Why is this one group excluded?"

Twenty-five years ago, the CFT won a landmark legal victory that provided unemployment benefits to many part-time temporary instructors. At that time, the State Court of Appeals agreed with the San Francisco Community College Federation of Teachers that a teaching assignment dependent on enrollment, funding or programming is not a "reasonable assurance" of a job.

The court's 1989 decision, *Cervisi v. California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board*, however, gave no relief to unemployed classified employees. Current law allows staff to



Lynnette Robinson, left, and other union members lobbied for passage of AB 1638 during CFT Lobby Days in April.

file for retroactive payments if they were denied benefits at the start of summer, then laid off when classes resumed in September. But many districts fight employees who apply for unemployment insurance.

To right this wrong, the

Council of Classified Employees called for legislation to expand eligibility in a resolution passed by CFT Convention in 2012.

Robinson — a mother of four who still has two teenagers at home and has gone on food stamps during summer layoffs — broke down in tears when describing the fight to make ends meet to a state senator.

"It hurts when I work this hard at a government job and still qualify for public assistance," Robinson said.

California Federation of Teachers
AFT, AFL-CIO
A Union of Professionals

Classified Insider is published by the California Federation of Teachers, 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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Secretary Tina Solórzano Fletcher, AFT Guild, San Diego and Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community Colleges

Publications Director Jane Hundertmark
Reporter Steve Weingarten

Design Kajun Design, Graphic Artists Guild

Direct correspondence to:
Classified Insider 1330 Broadway, Suite 1601
Oakland, California 94612
Telephone 510-523-5238 Fax 510-523-5262
Email jhundertmark@cft.org

Classified Insider is printed by union workers at Pacific Standard Print in Sacramento, using soy-based inks on paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council™ containing 10 percent post-consumer waste.