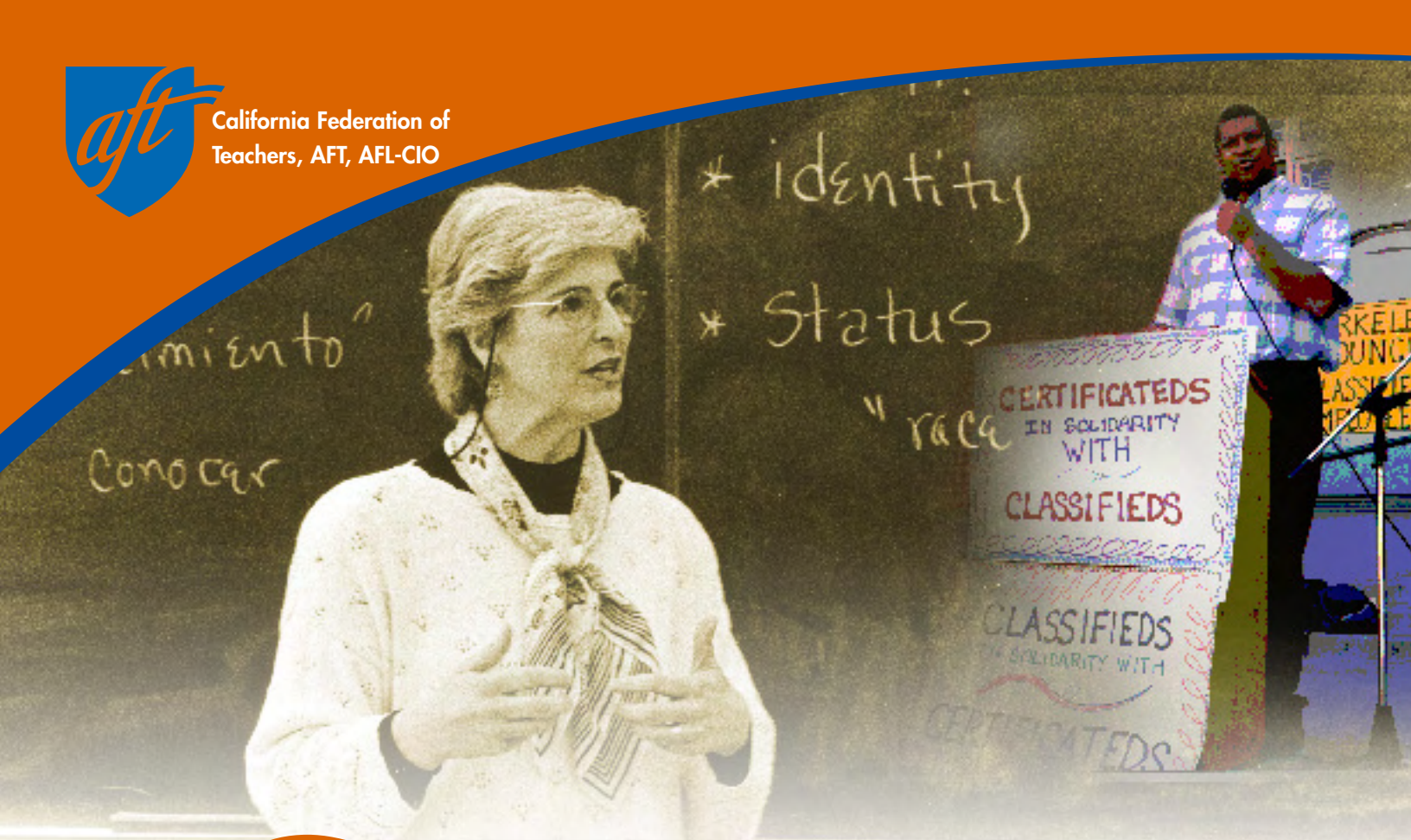




California Federation of
Teachers, AFT, AFL-CIO



CFT

DIGNITY, RESPECT, SECURITY



THE MISSION OF CFT

The California Federation of Teachers represents its members' interests and the interests of the communities they serve through support for local collective bargaining, but also through legislative advocacy, political action, and organizing. By these means, the CFT helps its members to achieve dignity and respect in their workplace, decent lives for themselves and their families, and security in their retirement. The CFT exists in order to bring its members together to act—on behalf of education workplace rights, academic freedom, legislative solutions to educational policy issues, and full access to quality education for our students. The CFT represents public and private sector educational employees.

INSIDE THIS PAMPHLET

This booklet is meant to provide you with an overview of the California Federation of Teachers, AFT/AFL-CIO, so that your participation in the union will be informed by a broad perspective on what the organization is and does—and might, with your help, become. You'll find useful information on:

- » Support for local unions
- » Political action
- » Legislative advocacy
- » Training
- » Communications/publications
- » Member benefits and services
- » Statewide union structure
- » Affiliations
- » Educational policy
- » CFT history, and
- » Where to find CFT offices.

These pages contain brief descriptions of the purpose of the CFT, its governance bodies, its working committees, and staff services. You will find out what CFT departments do on behalf of the members, where to find CFT staff around the state, what member benefits are available, and how CFT is connected to the broader labor community. You will also learn about CFT's member-centered philosophy, embodied in the slogan, "Education for Democracy, Democracy in Education."



Introduction

YOU ARE THE UNION A successful union is member-centered—it focuses on the development of the skills of its members so that they—you—might effectively participate in the organization’s activities, including democratic governance, defense of the collective bargaining agreement, organizing new members, legislative initiatives and political action. Your participation is essential because the power of the union stems not from its leadership alone, or its staff, but from collective action.

The CFT is committed to helping its locals meet the needs of their members. As educators, our first priority is making sure that we deliver quality education to the public we serve. But to do so our members must be able to concentrate on that task. The best guarantee of quality public education is a robust union of educators, with informed, active members constantly reminding the public of the best steps we can take together to enable our students to achieve success. That process begins with you, but you don’t stand alone. The CFT stands with you.



Support for local unions

The CFT offers many forms of support for its 145 locals. From the moment a group of educators decides to organize, through recognition or an election, past the creation of local governance structures, bargaining a first contract, and beyond, the CFT is there to help.

The duty of representation that a bargaining agent legally and morally owes its members requires assistance that only the largest union locals can provide on their own. While each local is autonomous, the “per-capita” affiliation fees paid to the CFT and AFT (a portion of locally-determined dues) ensure that advice and hands-on assistance is just a phone call or email away.

For many locals, a CFT field representative functions as the chief negotiator in collective bargaining. CFT field representatives help to guide the local union bargaining team’s strategy and let management know the local does not go to the table alone. The work of the field representative is backed up by the CFT’s Research Department, available to analyze district budgets and train local bargaining team members to understand the budget themselves.

The work of the contract doesn’t end with negotiations. Enforcing the contract requires vigilance and attention. CFT field staff helps smaller locals with grievances and arbitrations. For larger locals with their own staff, CFT field staff can provide advice based on a vast range of contractual experience.

The direct assistance of the CFT field representative for collective bargaining is bolstered by other forms of support. The CFT Training Department helps locals help themselves. Through workshops designed for individual locals, at statewide CFT events, and through the Union Leadership Institute offered each summer, the Training Department enables most locals, if they choose, to become self-sufficient in bargaining.

Organizing remains a top priority for the Federation. The CFT actively seeks organizing opportunities because there

is strength in numbers. Each new unit enrolled under the union banner represents greater potential power for already existing units through coordination of collective action and other forms of mutual assistance.

The CFT’s Staff Formula Funded program allows many locals to hire their own full- or part-time staff through rebate of a percentage of local per-capitas. Close to half of the CFT budget is devoted to the Staff Formula Funded program, and more than forty locals participate. For many locals, their own formula funded staff person serves as chief negotiator and grievance handler.

But no local can operate at maximum efficiency through collective bargaining alone. CFT’s Legislative and Political departments provide various types of support for locals. Common examples of CFT support for local political action include helping a local to elect education-friendly school board members, and tax and bond elections.

The CFT Legal Defense Fund stands ready to help locals defend their members from actions that violate the contract and/or the Education Code.

Still more broadly, you will find CFT leaders, staff and rank and file members providing their special areas of expertise wherever you turn in the world of California education. In front of the Regents of the University of California, or at a first-level grievance hearing in a middle school; before the various commissions and task forces of the Legislature or the State Board of Education; at a Public Employment Relations Board hearing, or delivering testimony to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing: the CFT is there for education and for you.





Political Action

A portion of CFT's monthly per capita affiliation fee is directed into our statewide Committee on Political Education (COPE) Fund. Just as individual workers cannot hope to challenge the power of large employers without collective bargaining, COPE allows people who would otherwise have little say in the political process to find a powerful voice.

By combining individual contributions, COPE gives CFT members the ability to wield an influence in the political affairs of California. Since education is a highly politicized institution, it is crucial for educators to be part of the political world.

CFT COPE (the elected state officers of the CFT) votes on distribution of political funds following candidate interviews, analysis of the issues, and often lengthy discussions. The funds are used for contributions to candidates for legislative districts and statewide offices, as well as ballot measures. CFT COPE may also contribute to local school board and college trustee candidates at the request of locals.

While at first blush Sacramento seems remote from the classroom, and decisions made there appear to have little relationship to the day-to-day activities of your students, nothing could be further from the truth. Close to two-thirds of the funding for your classroom comes from the California state budget, as determined by the governor and elected members of the Assembly and Senate.

The CFT participates in labor and community coalitions that support pro-education candidates and initiatives, and oppose those who would harm education. COPE funds are used not only to make contributions to candidates and proposition campaigns, but in order for CFT to have a seat at the table in the governance bodies of these electoral coalitions.

This is not inexpensive. As the number of statewide elections has expanded in recent years, so too have the number of coalition organizations. The CFT participates in statewide coalitions advocating for best practices in education, defending public employee pensions and health care, defending public sector jobs against outsourcing, and working to defeat anti-education, anti-labor ballot initiatives.

CFT encourages its locals to create and maintain their own COPE committees and funds. In addition, the CFT statewide COPE contributes to local races, and helps locals develop their own political operation. But the bottom line is that the local retains complete control of its own political action committee funds, and may call upon the CFT for additional assistance if it decides to do so.





Legislative Advocacy

The work of an education union does not begin and end at the bargaining table. Educators' ability to speak their minds freely depends on laws spelling out the rights implied by the term "academic freedom." Part-time community college instructors might be able to negotiate for paid office hours in one district, but not in another.

The ability of classified employees to work enough hours to qualify for health care or retirement benefits may depend on statewide laws if a local school district administration is unable or unwilling to provide those hours. And the enemies of public education have always attempted to undermine us through legislative action.

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CFT members are often called on to discuss and pass resolutions dealing with policy matters in their local, and at the annual statewide CFT Convention. Some resolutions become legislative proposals. What moves these proposals before the Legislature and turns them into law?

The CFT maintains a lobbying office in Sacramento in order to bring the perspective of the classroom into the legislature. Our three full-time lobbyists make sure

legislators hear from K-12 teachers, classified employees, community college instructors, adult educators and University of California lecturers and librarians on the issues that concern us. It matters to legislators when CFT lobbyists talk with them, because lawmakers know they represent the collective voice of more than 75,000 educators across the state. And that voice is multiplied still further, since the CFT, affiliated with the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, also brings the weight of the organized labor movement to bear in its lobbying efforts.

With term limits, legislators often are just becoming conversant with educational issues when they are termed out. The role of the CFT as institutional memory in the Capitol is critical for helping lawmakers and their staff to understand what is important and what isn't, what works and what doesn't in public education, based on the actual accumulated experiences of educators.

CFT legislative advocates also work closely with the Training and Communications departments to give local activists and officers the tools to make effective presentations in their home legislative offices.

In addition, CFT works with our national union to involve members in AFT's Activists for Congressional Education (ACE) program to inform members of Congress, who act on federal legislation affecting public education.





STATEWIDE UNION STRUCTURE

UNION DEMOCRACY

The highest decision-making body of the CFT is its annual convention. At the convention, hundreds of delegates elected in locals throughout the state come to debate and decide issues and policy questions facing the organization and its membership.

Every other year the convention elects statewide officers to the Executive Council. Between conventions, organizational decisions are made by the State Council, to which all CFT locals may send delegates and which meets twice a year. Between State Council

meetings, governance takes place in meetings of the CFT Executive Council. Officers include the President, Secretary-Treasurer, Senior Vice-President, twenty-three Vice-Presidents, and the presidents of the CFT's division councils.

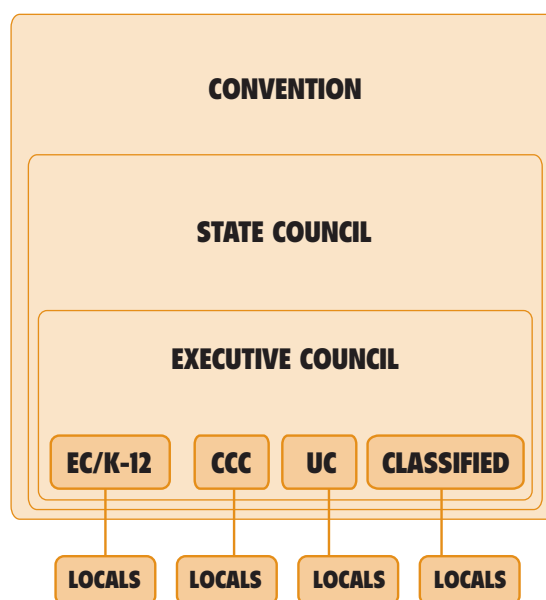
DIVISION COUNCILS

The CFT's governance structure divides the federation into four councils corresponding to the major divisions of education employees:

- » Early Childhood/K-12
- » Community College
- » Classified, and
- » University.

The four division councils meet quarterly to share information relating to their constituencies and to develop policy proposals to bring before the State Council, Executive Council, and the annual convention. The principle is that every CFT member deserves representation, whether they are full-time, part-time, classified or certificated, higher education or pre-school.

CFT STRUCTURE



In addition to these division councils, the CFT is proud to include two dozen K-12 and higher education bargaining units from the private sector in our federation. All educators deserve

the protection that a union contract provides, and CFT assists private sector educators in their quest for dignity alongside the public sector majority of our membership.

COMMITTEES

Adult Education Commission

Monitors issues, activities, statutes and regulatory policies relating to adult education; produces reports and policy recommendations; testifies on behalf of CFT before legislative bodies, and keeps CFT locals and members informed on adult education issues.

Civil, Human and Women's Rights Committee

Works to ensure and protect the civil and human rights of all CFT members and the students we serve, regardless of color, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, or political affiliation.

Early Childhood Education Committee

Monitors issues and activities relating to pre-school, Head Start, child care and nursery school programs before state and federal legislative and regulatory committees.

Educational Issues Committee

Identifies, analyzes and monitors significant educational issues that affect delivery of quality instruction in the state.

Educational Technology Committee

Monitors the emergence of educational technology in order to formulate appropriate CFT policy and guidelines.

Labor in the Schools Committee

Helps CFT locals and union members to make the study of the labor movement a part of the curricula of California schools and colleges.

Part-Time Faculty Committee

Advances the interests of contingent faculty in higher education, public and private.

Retirement Committee

Monitors activities of the California State Teachers' Retirement System (STRS), Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), and University of California Retirement System (UCRS).

Safe and Non-Violent Schools Committee

Monitors issues relating to school safety at the State Board of Education, the California Department of Education, and other state education agencies.

Special Education Committee

Keeps the Federation and its members informed regarding special education trends and programs that affect school employees and students.

Health Care Task Force

Monitors legislation and coalitions relating to the health care cost crisis, recommends policy to CFT governing bodies, and works to educate members and the public about health care issues.



TRAINING

The CFT provides as much local assistance as it can. But it is preferable, from the perspective of building local union power, for every local to be as self-sufficient as possible. The CFT Training Department helps locals build and strengthen their capacity to represent members in increasingly complex and difficult times.

Training can be accessed in a number of ways. Various training opportunities are scheduled during statewide CFT events like the Convention and State Council meetings. The CFT Secretary-Treasurer provides local treasurer and finances training. The Information Technology Department assists locals in managing their member database and IT systems, and in creating

and managing local websites. Stand-alone regional trainings take place on a variety of topics throughout the year, and locals may request customized trainings held at the local site. Each summer, the national AFT works with the CFT Training Department on the Union Leadership Institute, held at Asilomar. Training available from CFT includes (but is not limited to):

- » Creating and maintaining active members
- » Collective bargaining and negotiations
- » Contract enforcement
- » Education issues
- » Communications
- » Legislation and politics
- » Leadership development, and
- » Strategic planning.

The Training Department is also available to assess your local's training needs and work with your local leadership to create a training plan to address those needs.



COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLICATIONS

A union's effectiveness depends to a great degree on its communications program. The CFT Communications and Publications departments are responsible for bringing information about the CFT's activities to its seventy five thousand members, to the two million members of the state labor movement, and to the general public.

CFT communications and publications staff utilize the CFT website, several award-winning periodical newsletters, an electronic newsletter, direct mail to members' homes, news releases and updates to AFT locals and their publications, informative videotapes, brochures and leaflets, and mailings to local officers—in short, whatever it takes to keep the members apprised of education, professional and labor issues that affect them. This is a two-way process. We learn from members what they need to know, and try to meet those needs.

The Communications Department also reaches out to the general public through work with the mass media. Through news conferences, media advisories, and coalition activities with

other education and labor groups, we inform the public about CFT's positions on education-related issues and our actions to protect and improve the quality of education. While sometimes the CFT needs to make clear or forcefully distinguish our own position on a given issue, more often we work with groups of concerned parents, educators, unionists and others to build a broader community of education support.

Mindful that a few top officers and staff cannot on their own respond to the full range of statewide and local events, the Communications department places a high priority on training local leaders, activists and staff to meet the communications needs of their members.

Publications include:

- » *California Teacher*
- » *Community College Perspective*
- » *UC-AFT Perspective*
- » *Community College Part-Timer*
- » *Media Report* (for education reporters and editors)
- » *Inside CFT* (electronic newsletter)
- » www.cft.org (CFT's Web site)





MEMBER BENEFITS AND SERVICES

Members of the CFT enjoy access to a range of valuable services and benefits that come with belonging to a large organization. Insurance programs, publication subscriptions, entertainment discounts, credit cards, and more—CFT is a gateway to the savings and financial advantages that accompany union membership. And as a member of the national AFT, there are even more benefits available.

CFT/AFT Member Benefits include:

Low-cost group insurance plans

- » Homeowner, condominium, and renter’s insurance
- » Auto, motorcycle, and boat insurance
- » Long term care
- » Disability income
- » Accidental death
- » Pet insurance
- » \$1 million occupational liability insurance
 - provides security while performing your job
 - protects members in the event of a suit by a parent due to a child’s injury
 - malpractice protection

Retirement planning services

- » Tax-sheltered annuities

Credit Union

Legal Defense

Scholarships

- » CFT assistance for children of members through annual Raoul Teilhet scholarships
- » Access to other labor-based scholarships for children of members

AFT discount services

- » Mastercard
- » Home mortgage
- » Education loans (and debt consolidation)
- » Prescription drugs
- » Legal
- » Loans
- » Theme parks
- » Flowers
- » Plus more...at www.aft.org/aftplus/



AFFILIATIONS

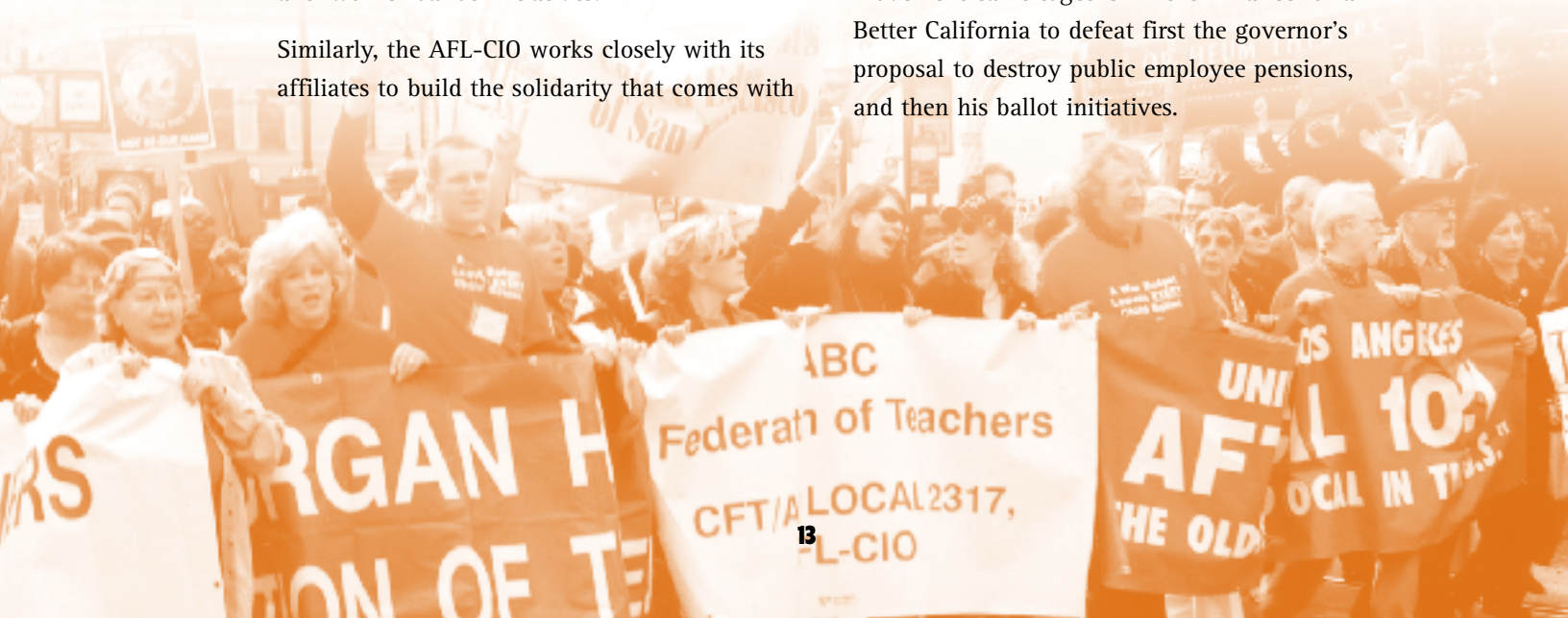
(THE IMPORTANCE OF SOLIDARITY)

The CFT is the statewide organization of local unions affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Every AFT local in California is affiliated with the national AFT, the statewide CFT, and with the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) through local central labor councils and the statewide California Labor Federation. Portions of our dues dollars (the amounts determined democratically through your vote in local, statewide and national meetings) underwrite the activities of our affiliated groups.

Just as the CFT provides services and support to its locals, the national AFT supports both its state federations and in many cases its locals as well. As a national organization the AFT can draw upon deeper resources than a state federation. For instance, during the 2005 special election, the national AFT contributed more than a million dollars, and several professional staff for many months, to the campaign against the governor's anti-education, anti-worker ballot initiatives.

Similarly, the AFL-CIO works closely with its affiliates to build the solidarity that comes with

strength in numbers. This might mean that local union members and central labor council activists join an AFT rally at a school board to protest slow progress in negotiations; or that the clout of two million California union members stands behind the officers of the California Labor Federation when they accompany CFT leaders to testify on proposed education legislation. A good example of what this solidarity can accomplish occurred in 2005 when the labor movement came together in the Alliance for a Better California to defeat first the governor's proposal to destroy public employee pensions, and then his ballot initiatives.





Educational Issues

EDUCATION REFORM As a union of educators, the CFT has always stood at the forefront of thinking and action to improve education for millions of children and adults. Far from the “obstacle to reform” that enemies of public education typically say we are, the CFT, like the AFT, works hard, apart from any academic or politically motivated fad-of-the-day, to figure out

which education reforms—research based, and rooted in best practices—make sense and which do not, from pre-school through university. Our concern for educational issues, and the philosophical basis for our assessment of education reforms, may be summed up in three broad principles:

High Standards

The CFT supports rigorous, world-class academic standards, which can only be attained through equally rigorous standards for conduct in the classroom, and realized through systematic coordination with curriculum development and appropriate assessments. All students must be encouraged to achieve at the highest possible level. CFT and AFT are acknowledged leaders in the state and national movements for high standards.

Adequate Resources

The CFT works incessantly to defend and improve the quality of education through legislation, political action, and other

forms of public advocacy for students. We want our students to be able to compete in a global marketplace for jobs. Even more crucially, we want them to be able to take their place as active citizens in a democracy. This requires full funding, smaller class sizes, and adequate supplies of instructional materials. It also means decent compensation, reasonable working conditions, and the very best professional development programs for practitioners—because our working conditions are the learning conditions of our students.

Equity

All of society is the classroom. So long as children come to school hungry or ill, in fear of violence, or suffering from economic want, universal quality education will not and cannot occur. The CFT cares about fair and adequate public spending priorities not just due to moral considerations (essential though they are), but also because we know that unmet social needs eventually impact teaching and learning, whether in early childhood or the halls of academia.





CFT **A proud** **history**

The California Federation of Teachers emerged from teachers' recognition that they lacked a voice within their own profession. Public education in California dates back to the Gold Rush. But no early education association was led by teachers, and the leaders of such organizations—superintendents, school board members, school administrators—routinely ignored teachers' ideas in education policy discussions.



Worse, teachers were at-will employees, able to be disciplined or fired for any reason, or no reason at all.

Arbitrary exercise of authority by administrators knew no limits. Teacher morale—as well as school district compensation prac-

tices—reflected the luck of the draw from one school to the next, rather than open and consistent employment rules.

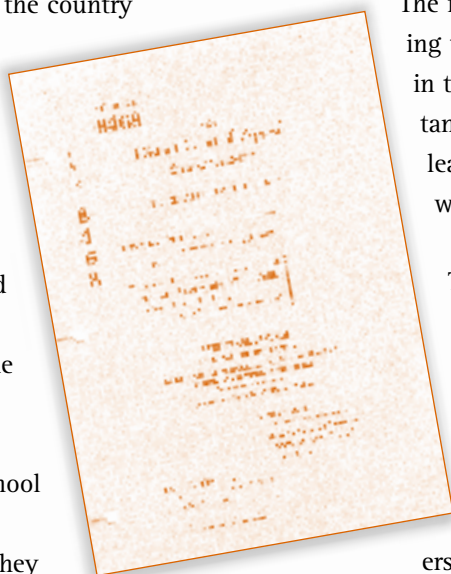
In 1916, delegates from around the country met in Illinois and formed the American Federation of Teachers, convinced that the road to true professional status for teachers ran through the labor movement. Only with collective bargaining could teachers achieve a place at the table where decisions were made that affected their classrooms.

In 1919, teachers from eight school districts founded the California State Federation of Teachers. They faced an immediate problem. No laws existed permitting collective bargaining for public employees. Achieving this legislation became the goal of a decades-long campaign.

Yet, much was accomplished by the new organization. The first tenure law in California, passed in 1921, was supported by the CFT and the labor movement when every other education organization opposed it. In an age when women

teachers were fired for following their own taste in fashion, staying out past eight o'clock in the evenings, or getting married (!), the CFT was so “radical” as to call for the extension of the constitutional rights of U.S. citizens to women teachers, too.

From the 1950s through the 1970s scores of courageous teachers challenged regressive policies with CFT legal support. A body of case law slowly emerged involving academic freedom, tenure, wrongful discharge and discipline, loyalty oaths, and freedom of speech. As the former General Counsel of the California School Boards Association admitted, “Over ninety percent of the court decisions setting forth teachers’ rights in the state of California have CFT’s name on them.”



The first fair labor practices law in California, establishing the Commission on Discrimination in Teacher Hiring in the late 1950s, was written by the CFT to change blatantly racist school hiring policies. When maternity leave for teachers became law in 1975, once again it was CFT that led the way.

Tireless grassroots organizing and activism in the 1960s and 1970s brought passage of the Educational Employment Relations Act, which in 1975 granted collective bargaining rights to employees in public education, triggering elections across the state.

K-12 teachers and community college instructors in more than one hundred districts voted for CFT/AFT representation. Today more community college instructors in California belong to CFT than to any other organization.



Around the same time, looking for effective representation, classified employees turned to the CFT, and were admitted as members in full standing. In 1972, paraprofessionals in San Francisco were the first classified employees to affiliate with the CFT. Today CFT represents classified employees in more than 40 districts, colleges and agencies.

A few years later, with CFT support, the state legislature passed the Higher Education Employment Relations Act, enabling lecturers and librarians in the University of California to gain CFT representation.

Educating California's students remains an enormous task. There still isn't enough money, supplies, or time to do the job as well as we would like. But we don't have to worry about getting fired without recourse, on someone else's whim. There are laws and contract clauses governing administrative behavior, and the union makes sure these rules are followed. Your job may not be easy. But at least now, thanks to CFT's perseverance, it's possible.



CFT OFFICES

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559-225-8553, Fax 559-244-6975

For more information, including how to
join CFT, go to www.cft.org



I want to know more about the California Federation of Teachers.

- ☐ I am not an AFT member.

Please send me membership information (or download an at-large membership form at www.cft.org)-

- ☐ I am interested in organizing an AFT local. Please contact me.

- ☐ I am an AFT member already, and would like to become more active in my union. My area(s) of interest is/are

NAME		
STREET ADDRESS		
CITY	STATE	ZIP
PHONE	EMAIL	
EMPLOYER/DISTRICT		
AFT LOCAL (IF APPLICABLE)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Certificated <input type="checkbox"/> Classified <input type="checkbox"/> Other (check one)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time (check one)		

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