

# Classified Insider

UNION NEWS FOR THE CLASSIFIED SERVICE

Fall-Winter 2014  
Volume 5, Number 1



## Classified Conference

### Support staff wear many hats...proudly

At the annual conference, the Council of Classified Employees celebrated the diverse work of support staff in

a dazzling panoply showing the many hats they wear.

CCE Southern Vice President Carl Williams called out classified job titles one after



JANE HUNDERTMARK

the hat with their job title on it, gradually filling the stage to depict the wide-ranging work of classified employees.

Then the tenor of the call-outs changed. Williams summoned "relationship experts," because the kids come to us for sage advice about their friends and family. Then "crystal ball" was the call: The kids expect us to know everything before it happens. Dr. Phil: The



another. Secretary, paraprofessional, groundskeeper, custodian and media technician. Admissions and records technician, safety officer, library technician, accounting coordinator, and bus driver.

One by one, attendees mounted the stage to collect



PHOTOS BY BOB RIHA, JR

kids want us to be mediators, between them and their friends and family members. ATM machine: The kids want money for lunch or change for the vending machines. Mentors:

We support students during the ups and downs of their lives.

More and more members who resonated with those support roles came forward. By the end, a jam-packed stage demonstrated more clearly than ever before the incredible variety of jobs classified employees do with special skills, kindness, and compassion.



## Members of the year

THREE MEMBERS, nominated by their local unions, were named Members of the Year at the Classified Conference held December 5-7 in Irvine.

**Kathy O'Byrne Shewchuk**, United Educators of San Francisco, (right in photo) is a special education paraprofessional at Balboa High School who works with students in a caring and confident way, especially students who have specific medical needs. She is a master of the union phone bank.

**Robin Watkins**, AFT Guild San Diego, (left in photo) is a library technician at Miramar College and the union's classified vice president there. She represents classified, and sometimes faculty, in grievances, serves on a voluntary benefits association, and coordinates site wellness committees.

**Gary Potts**, a Pasadena City College network administrator, supports students through a mentoring program and coaching basketball. He serves as union treasurer and is a fount of institutional knowledge. He was instrumental in his unit choosing AFT as their union.

## Prop 30 delivers salary relief in recent contracts

After years of stagnant wages, classified employees are finally seeing long-overdue salary relief in recent months.

The raises largely result from the CFT campaign two years ago to pass Proposition 30. This year, the governor's budget included \$5.6 billion in additional funding for K-14 education. Prop. 30 will generate an average of about \$6 billion per year for seven years.

"We still have a long way to

go to restore the cuts to education due to the Great Recession and years of inadequate taxes on the wealthy and corporations," said CFT President Josh Pechthalt. "But we are finally on the right path."

In Merced, the **Weaver Federation of Educational Employees** bargained a 6.5 percent raise retroactive to July 2013, plus another 1 percent for special education aides, and a sweetened shift differential for

custodians who work late.

The **Ventura County Federation of Paraeducators** negotiated a 5 percent pay raise and a \$300 increase to each longevity increment for paras and teachers, with a big bump in the stipend for staff who perform medical procedures on severely handicapped students.

Local President Terri Floros said the contract also clarified the definition of "just cause"

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**SHARED GOVERNANCE MATTERS**

# College classified are partners in accreditation process

**THE CITY OF** San Francisco went to court in October to stop the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges from effectively shutting its beloved City College and ending affordable higher education for 80,000 students.

Statewide, community colleges are fighting for fair accreditation and one college that lost its accreditation is working to get it back. Classified staff are helping.

**Compton College** was losing its accreditation when Amankwa McKinzie began working in the Athletic Department nearly eight years ago. The college now operates as the Compton Educational Center under El Camino College.

Compton and El Camino

officials lead an Accreditation Steering Committee that meets monthly to assess progress toward re-accreditation. Five subcommittees of faculty, students, staff, and administrators evaluate departments.

McKinzie, who is classified president of the Compton Federation of Employees, said the center now meets 10 of the 21 required criteria. “That’s enough for eligibility as part of El Camino, but for independent accreditation, we need to meet the criteria on our own.”

Teams, with at least two classified employees each, are preparing written assessments for each of the criteria. “The report must include all members’ input,” said McKinzie. “Our voices are being heard.”

The **Los Angeles Community College District** undertakes a comprehensive self study every six years as part of the accreditation process. Teams of faculty, administrators, classified, and students assess current institutional efforts and put forth improvements. The next review, for which the district has budgeted \$1

million, is set for spring 2016, and the new chancellor is gearing up to ensure that no campuses are put “on watch” again.

That means the AFT College Staff Guild is mobilizing members to play active roles on campus committees. “Classified employees need to be at the table,” said Guild President Velma J. Butler, “and it’s better for everyone concerned if we’re

involved earlier rather than later.”

The **San Diego Community College District** hasn’t had accreditation problems during the eight years Yvonne Schmelz has worked at City College, but she has seen the process fall short without support staff input and accounting for the history of understaffing and workloads.

Schmelz believes classified must speak up. “We often add our point of view in accreditation committees, but we aren’t always among the members who write the reports later, and those reports are often the basis for important decisions.”

She said districts often miss an opportunity in shared governance committees. “Administrators give classified members of committees important documents at the last minute just to get us to sign off. That isn’t really shared governance,” she said. “A strong union can hold administrations accountable.”



JANE HUNDETMARK

**On the Web**

>Read more about the union’s fight for fair accreditation at [cft.org](http://cft.org).



## Building a classified community



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

**WHAT COULD A** groundskeeper or a guard have in common with a bus driver or a computer technician? More than many people think.

As classified employees, we work with faculty to make schools and colleges the glue that holds our communities together. We helped lead the fight for Proposition 30 and now, two year later, new funding is arriving in districts across California.

And as union members, classified employees have the strength to advance our interests at the bargaining table and at the ballot box. This year our local unions are negotiating contracts that are moving us forward again.

Support staff are our own community, and we are committed to pursuing our common goals. We’re in this fight together, and we’ll only progress when we move in the same direction.

Community is inclusive. We must give new members more to do than sign an activator form. They’re part of our family. “Welcome,” we must say to them. “You belong to an organization that has your best interests in mind.”

No one can carry the burdens of their jobs and personal lives alone, but we can accomplish a lot by lending an ear and giving a hand. Classified employees can build a community by making sure we have each other’s backs.

## “Unsung heroes” of schoolyard organize

**SIXTY UNSUNG HEROES** flexed their union muscle and joined the Lawndale Federation of Classified Employees.

Noon duty supervisors serve as at-will employees and work only a few hours a day at the district’s six elementary and two middle schools,

but the final straw, according to Local President Carl Williams, was not getting a 4 percent raise that faculty and classified received.

“They didn’t get the raise because they’re not part of the bargaining unit,” Williams said. “They were afraid to

speak up because they’re at-will employees.”

Now the noon duty supervisors will have their own contract and the union is working to learn about their issues.

This year the Lawndale district has new money from the Local Control Funding Formula, including about \$90,000 for noon duty supervisors, who Williams called “the unsung heroes” of districts across the country.

“They are the mediators, the referees, the listening ears on the playground. They really are the first line of defense for these kids.”



## Staff pressured to administer EpiPens

**UNDER A NEW LAW**, public schools are required to stock emergency epinephrine auto injectors for students with severe allergies and volunteer

While SB1266 includes some training provisions and civil liability protections, requiring staff to make life-or-death decisions outside of their expertise is a lot

“If they do something wrong and a child loses their life, the emotional burdens will last a lifetime.” — Paula Phillips, CCE President

staff are required to administer the EpiPens. This change came when the governor signed SB1266 (Huff, R-Diamond Bar).

In July, the AFT Convention overwhelmingly approved a resolution introduced by CCE President Paula Phillips asking for federal regulation of medical procedures to protect members.

to ask, said Phillips. “If they do something wrong and a child loses their life, the emotional burdens will last a lifetime.”

CFT’s “Healthy Kids, Healthy Minds” legislation would have assigned a nurse and a mental health professional in every public school, but the bill stalled in the Appropriations Committee.

## Pesticide use reporting and training coming in 2016

**AT THE END OF THE** legislative session, Gov. Jerry Brown signed Senate Bill 1405, by Mark DeSaulnier (D-Concord), requiring safe use and accurate tracking of pesticides on school campuses. Industry lobbyists previously blocked two similar pieces of legislation.

With pesticides being common at urban and rural schools, SB1405 is aimed at preventing a tragedy. The National Academy of Sciences recently reported that most high-level pesticide exposures are to children, and that children are affected more than adults.

Under the new law, schools and colleges will need to designate someone to document all pesticide use, develop a long-



SANDY HUFFAKER, JR.

Eduardo Arteaga is a maintenance crew leader at Mesa College.

term plan to prevent pests with minimal hazard to humans, post information on the school website, and provide annual training for everyone who handles pesticides.

SB1405 goes into effect in July 2016, giving districts time to prepare and the state Department of Pest Regulation time to develop a training program.

## Staff workloads increasing as class sizes get smaller

**NEW STATE FUNDS** available to K-12 districts under the new Local Control Funding Formula has led to smaller student-to-teacher ratios, forcing many districts to hire more teachers and use more classrooms.

This expansion will lead to higher workloads for custodial, maintenance, and information technology staff, prompting the Council of Classified Employees to call on the CFT to identify ways to improve staffing ratios and to support legislation that would provide for adequate school staffing in California classrooms.

## ClassifiedCalendar

**CFT Convention** will be **March 20-22** at the Manhattan Beach Marriott. The **Council of Classified Employees**, the CFT division representing classified and paraprofessionals, meets Friday night **March 20** from 7 to 10 pm. All members are welcome.

**AFT’s Paraprofessional and School-Related Personnel Conference** will be **April 16-19** in Washington, D.C. This conference is packed with professional learning opportunities and social events. Learn more at [aft.org](http://aft.org)

**CFT Mega Weekend** kicks off on Saturday, **May 2**, with Committee meetings at 10 am. The **Council of Classified Employees** meets later that afternoon. And on Sunday, **May 3**, State Council meets from 9 am to 1 pm.

## Be a voting delegate to CFT Convention 2015



Organize.



Fight back.



Win the future.

### CONTACT YOUR LOCAL

to run as a delegate to the annual CFT Convention, the union's highest governance body where elected delegates shape union policy. The 2015 Convention will also elect CFT officers.

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### GET READY FOR CONVENTION!

## CFT Convention 2015 • March 20–22 • Manhattan Beach Marriott

>Learn more about **Convention** on the union website at [cft.org/governance/convention](http://cft.org/governance/convention).

Get to know your colleagues across the state at the Council of Classified Employees meeting Friday, March 20 at 7 p.m.

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## Prop. 30 delivers salary relief for support staff

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and added a step to progressive discipline actions.

In the San Joaquin Valley, the **Lemoore Federation of Classified Employees** matched the 3.5 percent on-schedule raise and 4.5 percent off-schedule bonus district teachers had negotiated. The local also raised the cap on benefits by more than \$115 monthly per employee.

"Overall, people were pretty satisfied with the contract, but felt the district could do better," said local President Ed Collins. He expects the district to agree to a new round of pay raises next year, and to

continue backfilling personnel cuts. "We're moving in the right direction," he said.

In San Mateo County, the **Jefferson AFT Federation** agreed to a 4.5 percent salary increase with a 1.5 percent

policies, rules, and procedures throughout all units; enhanced security for staff threatened at work; paid parental leave for non-birthing parents and use of district childcare facilities.

"Personal business is everyone's favorite," said Tina Solórzano Fletcher, membership coordinator for the Guild and

**Prop. 30 works!**

salary bonus and significant increases to all medical caps.

**San Diego's AFT Guild** brought several bargaining unit contracts into alignment in recent negotiations, making significant gains on non-financial issues such as consistent

CCE secretary. "It was bargained away some time back and we've been fighting to get it back. If it's approved by your supervisor, you can go to a medical appointment, for example, and not have to use your sick or vacation time."

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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