



Right for the job: When classified and paras become teachers CFT-sponsored AB 2122 helps staff transition to certificated status

CARLOS HOWE began working as a security officer for the Hawthorne School District in 2000, but he wanted more. After earning his bachelor's degree in criminal justice administration, Howe joined the Santa Monica Police Department. It wasn't a good fit.

"My hair was on fire every-day. I had recently married and was a brand new father, but it was dangerous and I was always gone, so I switched gears."

Howe returned to school, this time following his wife, brother and sister into teaching. He earned a multi-subject credential at Cal State Dominguez Hills and was soon back at the Hawthorne district, where he has just finished his first year teaching math and science to sixth graders. He also coaches football. It's a great fit.

"It's a rewarding career and the schedule can't be matched. I think I made an excellent decision."



Middle school teacher Carlos Howe started work in the district as a security officer.

Howe's timing was good too. "Almost everyone in my college class who applied for work was offered a job. It wasn't like that before, when school district budgets were short. And some of my fellow students went on to get their masters degrees."

CFT-sponsored legislation

could assist many more classified employees like Howe and help stem the statewide shortage of teachers. Assembly Bill 2122 by Kevin McCarthy (D-Sacramento) would provide grants to school districts and county offices of education to help classified staff earn

four-year degrees and teaching credentials.

The districts and county offices would apply for competitive grants. Those that receive a grant would be required to notify classified employees that funds are available. Each district would determine how to award grants to applicants based on criteria from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

"It's a rewarding career and the schedule can't be matched. I think I made an excellent decision."

—Carlos Howe, teacher and coach, Hawthorne Federation

Economic factors are one of the hardest obstacles for returning students. As envisioned now, participants would receive up to \$4,000 annually to pay for tuition and books.

CFT champions bills to benefit classified employees

Create teacher credentialing program: AB 2122 would offer grants to districts and county offices of education to assist classified employees who want to complete four-year degrees and obtain teaching credentials. Program participants could receive up to \$4,000 annually to pay for tuition and books. *McCarthy, D-Sacramento*
>Passed the Assembly on June 1 with strong bipartisan support in an 80-0 vote.

Increase survivor benefit: AB 1878 would increase the death benefit for classified employee members of CalPERS and allow the benefit to grow over time by tying it to inflation. *Jones-Sawyer, D-Los Angeles*
>Passed the Assembly on June 2 in a 57-19 vote.

Expand family leave: AB 2393 would provide new mothers and fathers up to 12 weeks of paid leave. When a staff member on parental leave has exhausted all available sick leave, he or she would receive "differential pay," which is calculated by reducing salary by the amount paid to his or her substitute. *Campos, D-San Jose*
>Passed the Assembly on June 2 in a 53-22 vote.

Provide unemployment insurance during breaks: AB 2197 would remove the prohibition that prevents classified staff from receiving unemployment benefits during the summer months when schools are out of session. *Garcia, D-Downey*
> Passed the Assembly on June 2 in a 51-27 vote.

MAUREEN PEACOCK went from paraeducator to credentialed teacher. When Peacock was young, she aimed for a health-related career. She earned a bachelor's degree in nutrition with a minor in gerontology and worked with seniors until her first child was born. She and her husband then launched a business in Mexico and didn't move back to Tuolumne County until 1998.

"I could have easily returned
(Continued on page 4)

Local Control Accountability Plans create new jobs

Engaging families helps close student achievement gap

THE FIRST TIME most parents or guardians of a Berkeley student meet Jocelyn Foreman is soon after bad news has knocked on their door. Be it a death in the family, an eviction notice, a pink slip, or any crisis that throws a household into chaos, she is there to help.

Foreman belongs to a five-person team of family engagement coordinators whose academic mission is to close the achievement gap by ensuring that students have the resources they need to succeed. First things, however, must come first.

“How can you discuss academics when you don’t know where your next meal will come from? How can you discuss attendance when you don’t have shelter?”

Once Foreman and the parents resolve the family’s basic needs, they get around to facing the student’s challenges at school.

“The primary goal of family engagement is to create systems that produce equitable outcomes for all students,” Foreman said. “We can’t close the achievement

families to preschool, middle and high school. Foreman draws on broad personal experiences. She worked in Alameda County group homes for 20

Jason Arenas of the Alameda County Office of Education estimates there are about 55 family engagement positions for the 225,000 students in the county’s 18 school districts. Arenas said the coordinators have helped districts make more authentic connections with families, especially with low-income and non-English-speaking households and students identified as foster youth.

The trend is growing thanks to Sacramento’s emphasis on parental involvement. This is the second full year that Foreman’s team has been funded under Berkeley’s Local Control and Accountability Plan begun in 2014.

“The district can’t put a dollar figure on how I feel when a family thanks me because they’ll be able to eat or have a place to sleep tonight,” Foreman said. “I feel like I’m the lucky one.”



Family engagement coordinator Jocelyn Foreman at work in her Berkeley office.

gap with fear-based or punitive-based approaches.”

While focusing on elementary grades, the engagement coordinators connect within

years before coming to the school district and has served as a vice president of her union, the Berkeley Council of Classified Employees.

Mission critical: The November ballot Extending Proposition keeps vital funding in place

MORE THAN A MILLION Californians signed petitions to extend Prop. 30, the tax measure that has pumped up to \$7 billion a year into public education since voters passed it in 2012. The measure has helped restore funding slashed during the Great Recession.

About \$1 billion of that revenue came from a one-quarter of 1 percent increase in the sales tax that will expire at the end of 2016. Higher taxes on Californians making more than \$250,000 per year generated the other \$6 billion in revenue.

In May, CFT and other groups

turned in more than a million signatures to qualify a more progressive version of the initiative. The new measure would extend the tax on the wealthy for 12 years. If voters don’t pass the ballot measure in November, that provision will expire in 2018.

“We can’t afford to lose Prop. 30,” says CFT President Joshua Pechthalt. “Public education would return to the devastating years of budget cuts, layoffs, skyrocketing class sizes and tuition increases.”

>Find out how much money your district or county received from Prop. 30 at www.trackprop30.ca.gov.

SNAPSHOT

How much money does Prop. 30 bring to education?

	FROM PROP. 30*	TOTAL REVENUE*
K-12 SCHOOLS Statewide	\$6 billion	\$53.9 billion
Smallest county: Alpine <i>3 schools in 2 districts with 105 students</i>	\$50,000	\$3.8 million
Largest county: Los Angeles <i>2,184 schools in 99 districts with 1.56 million students</i>	\$1.6 billion	\$13.6 billion
COMMUNITY COLLEGES Statewide	\$770 million	\$7.1 billion
Smallest district: Lake Tahoe <i>1 campus with 1,511 students</i>	\$2 million	\$12 million
Largest district: Los Angeles <i>10 worksites with 101,073 students</i>	\$76.2 million	\$579.4 million

*All data for the academic year 2012-13; numbers are rounded to one decimal place. Source: www.trackprop30.ca.gov

AFT honors San Diego organizer, Lawndale Federation

Tina Solórzano Fletcher of the AFT Guild, which represents nearly 6,000 employees at San Diego and Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community Colleges, was honored with the Talking Union Award at the annual AFT Paraprofessional and School-Related Personnel conference in April. Fletcher is a member-organizer for AFT Local 1931.

This year, the local prioritized one-on-one contact with non-members, and from September 1 through May 31, signed up 506 new members.

“With the threat of the Friedrichs lawsuit,” says Fletcher, “we took the opportu-

nity to use every Guild event as a way to promote membership. And now we are organizing during summer classes.”

Also this spring, Local 1931 took first place CFT honors for largest growth in new members; and in 2015, the local took first place for adding 219 new members.



Tina Fletcher

The Lawndale Federation of Classified Employees received the Union Building Award for its successful organizing of noon duty supervisors.

“We went outside the box,”

said local president Carl Williams, referring to the campaign that brought in 60 new members in 2014. Pay is the issue that motivated the noon



Carl Williams

duty supervisors to join the union.

“Classified staff often feel like second-class citizens; for noon duty staff, it’s more like third-class citizens,” says Williams. “Some noon duty staff have been doing this for 20 years and their pay scale wasn’t moving. They know the work we’re doing for classified, and want to be with us.”

Job Corps advisors win back positions

ON MAY 17, the National Labor Relations Board ordered the Sacramento Job Corps to return four more residential advisors to their jobs with full pay and benefits. The NLRB decision makes nine AFT Local 4986 members who have been reinstated and made whole more than 26 months after their initial terminations.

The NLRB also ruled that six residential coordinators were unlawfully removed from the bargaining unit, and adopted an administrative law judge’s finding that the employers are liable for the unfair labor practices.

How we made history at Classified Lobby Day

APRIL 20 WAS a historic day for us. We attended the Assembly Committee on Public Employees, Retirement and Social Security to speak in support of our sponsored death benefit equity bill, and we were there when the bill passed out of committee for the first time.

Raising the death benefit to parity with faculty has fallen short in nearly a dozen previous attempts. The increase contained in AB 1878 would provide survivors of classified staff more money for the funerals of their deceased loved ones by increasing the death benefit for classified employee members of CalPERS.

We initially sought an increase

STEVE YEATER



from \$2,000 to \$5,000, but the

Council of Classified Employees voted in May to accept a lower threshold combined with automatic increases for inflation. AB 1878 would allow the CalPERS Board to increase the benefit by adjusting

for inflation to better keep pace with the rising cost of funerals.

We also lobbied for two other priority bills on April 20: AB 2393 would provide 12 weeks of

paid parental leave, and AB 2197 would allow classified employees to receive unemployment insurance when schools are out of session during summer.

—By Tina Solórzano Fletcher, Secretary, Council of Classified Employees

ClassifiedCalendar

July 1 is the deadline for continuing college students to apply for **Raoul Teillet Scholarships**.

July 17-21 is when our national union celebrates its 100th birthday at the biennial **AFT Convention** in Minneapolis. Travel to the heartland and join the celebration. Learn more at aft.org/convention.

September 23 kicks off a union weekend in Sacramento with a Friday meeting of the **Council of Classified Employees**. On **September 24**, the **Standing Committees** meet and the **State Council** convenes... all at The Hilton Sacramento Arden West.

October 7-9 is the **Council of Classified Employees Conference** at the Kona Kai Resort & Marina in San Diego. Mark your calendars! See page 4 for more information.



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

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OUR ANNUAL conference will be held October 7-9 in San Diego and we would love to see you there!

You can join panel discussions on legal issues and racial equity education. Workshops will cover technology in the workplace, workload management, community engagement, retirement under CalPERS, and labor history. Saturday night, come to our evening soirée dressed as a "Super Hero for Justice."

Scholarships are available to members attending from small locals and from locals attending the conference for the first time. Register online now.

ONLINE REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

Classified Conference 2016 • October 7-9 • Kona Kai Resort San Diego

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

INSIDE!

- Help extend Proposition 30!
- Classified build communities

Classified Insider
UNION NEWS FOR THE CLASSIFIED SERVICE

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CFT legislation helps classified and paras become teachers

(Continued from page 1)

to a hospital or licensed care facility, but I needed a job that fit our daughter's schedule and kept weekends free for our family."

While looking for work, Peacock volunteered at her

agency credential and worked as a substitute teacher for six local elementary schools, then accepted a permanent position as an aide working one-on-one with special education students for the Tuolumne County Office of Education.

When her director suggested looking into internships, Peacock found a three-year program through the San Joaquin County Office of Education that allowed her to continue working full-time while earning her teaching credential

with a speciality in moderate-to-severe disabilities. It also meant a three-hour commute for class

two or three nights a week.

"The \$4,000 would have been an incredible help. Every round trip to Stockton was over 100 miles, and gas cost up to \$5 a gallon then."

Peacock and Howe aren't alone. Each year, growing numbers of classified staff and para-educators overcome a range of academic and economic challenges to earn teaching credentials. In the process they are raising their incomes, diversifying faculty ranks, and helping to fill the teaching shortage.

"This path was out of my comfort zone, but I learned how strong I am," concluded Peacock. "I know I've made a difference in the lives of my students, and I'm a better person because of what they have taught me."



Teacher Carlos Howe in the job he was meant to have.

daughter's school and found her time with the students very rewarding. She earned an emer-

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

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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

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