



ACTION NEWS

President's Perspective

by Brenda Walker



Unity is Strength

We are mid-way through the year, and we are still navigating, pivoting, and adjusting because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As of this writing, we are waiting to find out when and how educators in our district will be able to get the vaccine. We are waiting for word on when we will all return to in-person instruction. We are also waiting to find out what the governor's budget proposal will mean for public education overall, but more specifically, for our members and our students.

As we wait for all these answers, we have educators already back in school, working directly with students and navigating the challenges of staying safe and trying to instruct. Not to mention

the providers that are assessing students. I know it has not been easy for anyone, whether you are in-person or working remotely, but we will continue to advocate for everyone's health and safety.

What can we do as an association? It has never been more important for us to not only stay connected, but to stay united. Staying connected means continuing to reach out to your site reps, directors, and association officers. Staying connected means communicating and sharing through social media and personal email addresses. I feel like things are going to move very quickly for us in the coming weeks.

Above all else, I think staying united is just as critical. Just like the families we live with and are close to us, members

January 2021

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Together, we are ACT!

Questions? Comments? Concerns?
 Ideas? Please contact us at:
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of our association family have different opinions and points of view. I think it's important for us to hear all sides with honor and respect. The most important thing I would like us to remember is that what unites us – protecting member rights and promoting positive relationships is our greatest strength.



Would you like to participate as a delegate in the NEA Representative Assembly this summer?

To run as a state delegate, complete the online form located at <https://www.cta.org/about-us/leadership/state-council/ra-delegate-declaration-of-candidacy-form> or you can find the form in the Dec/Jan issue of the California Educator. The deadline is January 29, 2021.

The announcement for NEA RA local delegates will be publicized by ACT in the month of February. This year's NEA RA will be virtual.

UPCOMING VIRTUAL CTA CONFERENCES

New Educator Weekend - North

February 19, 2021 - February 21, 2021

Equity and Human Rights Conference

February 26, 2021 - February 28, 2021

CTA/NEA Retired Conference

March 3, 2021 - March 5, 2021

Summer Institute

July 25, 2021 - July 29, 2021

To get more information about these events visit [this link](#).

Contract Corner



Article 8.20.1 Personal and Academic Freedom

Unit members shall have reasonable freedom in classroom presentations and discussions, and may, consistent with existing Board Policy, introduce political, religious, social or otherwise controversial material, provided that said material is appropriate and relevant to adopted course content and is within the scope of the law.

Meet School Board Member Don Bridge

by Bonni Gallegos



Third time's the charm! If at first you don't succeed, try again. Don Bridge was sworn in as a Chino Valley USD school board member by his friend, Senator Connie Leyva, this past December. After running for school board three times, retired teacher and former ACT member has a seat on the board.

Before his decision to run for school board, Don Bridge has had a long career in education. He began teaching in 1976 for Hacienda-La Puente Unified School District, but because after four years he hadn't received a permanent contract, he made a move to CVUSD in 1981. He earned a Masters and Credential in Special Education from Cal Poly Pomona. He was an RSP teacher at Don Lugo for a few years, but was asked to return to the general ed classroom and teach history.

Mr. Bridge moved to Ayala the second year after it opened and was there until he became ACT President in 2000. He was president from 2000-2004. He became involved with ACT far before his presidency. He has served in many roles as a union

member, including bargaining, site rep, and state council representative. Mr. Bridge was also elected to go to the NEA Convention in 1982.

Mr. Bridge attended the NEA Convention in 1982 at the L.A. Convention Center and that was where he met his wife, whom was there representing her teacher's union in South Dakota. Less than a year after meeting at a union event, they got married and will be celebrating 38 years of marriage this June. Mr. Bridge's wife left South Dakota and moved to California, where she quickly found a job at CVUSD.

After Mr. Bridge finished his final term as ACT President, he returned to Ayala for a school year and was elected to serve on the CTA Board of Directors. He served on the CTA Board of Directors for 9 years and then retired from teaching.

Mr. Bridge loves the cities that CVUSD serves and he has lived in

all three at some point in his life. He decided to run for school board because he wanted to continue to be involved in education and the community. He spent the last three years as an at-large member of the Measure G Bond Citizens Oversight Committee (2017-2020), but had to resign when he was elected to serve on the school board.



Don Bridge has participated in Principal for a Day and was often seen at school events when he was a high school teacher. He has a passion for teaching, teachers, and students. He's looking forward to serving our community and is trying to take everything week by week considering how much is changing everyday.

Featured ACT Member: Michele Houska

by Bonni Gallegos



Michele Houska serves in the ACT Executive Board as secretary. Michele began her career in education in 1975 teaching K-1 in Baldwin Park. She took a break and began raising a family in 1978, and after 19 years decided to return to teaching. She taught German, English, and math at different locations within Chaffey School District.

In 1999 she joined the Don Lugo Conquistadores, where she currently teaches math, but has also taught German. She has been a part of the ACT family for 21 years now.

Michele began getting involved with ACT when she was one of 14 members nominated to be site rep for Don Lugo. Thirteen of those nominees declined, but Michele decided to take on the role because Rep Council meetings are only once a month. She began attending school board meetings and getting more involved. Michele stated that she likes learning about the contract and how things work within the district.

Michele was asked to be Elections chair and a Voting Rep to Service Center One. She slowly began getting more involved and is now in her fourth year as ACT Secretary. She is

also the Scholarships/Recognition chair.

In her years as site rep, she has represented many teachers in meeting with administrators. Michele believes that it's important for teachers to have backing and support. She has also sat on many interview panels for selection of teachers and administrators. She believes that every member is able to gain the knowledge she has about our rights, contract, and working of the school district,

Even with teaching and union obligations, Michele has time for church activities, choir, gardening, and yard work.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- January is National Mentoring Month
- January 18 is Martin Luther King, Jr Day
- January 30 is State Council

- February is Black History Month
- February 1-5 is National Counseling Week
- February 15 is Presidents' Day

- March is Women's History Month
- March is California Arts Education Month
- March 2 is Read Across America
- March 7 is Arbor Day
- March 8 is International Women's Day
- March 31 is Cesar Chavez Day

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

WHEN & WHERE

Virtual meetings streamed on YouTube CVUSD channel at 6:00 pm.

- **February 4, 2021**
- **February 18, 2021**
- **March 4, 2021**
- **March 18, 2021**
- **April 15, 2021**
- **May 6, 2021**
- **May 20, 2021**
- **June 3, 2021**
- **June 17, 2021**

[Scan code for CVUSD YouTube page](#)



Reflections on My First Year Teaching

by Valerie Vera-Mineer



This is my first year of teaching- VIRTUALLY! Actually, it's my 29th year as an educator but it feels like my first year all over again. Like most of you, I have had to adapt to this format of teaching. It was a HUGE learning curve for someone like me who was not tech savvy in the first place.

When we learned on March 13, 2020 that we would not be returning to the classroom for the remainder of the year, I was filled with anxiety. Thank goodness for my fellow colleagues, especially my History Department, who guided those of us who struggled at the start. They were my lifeline- via group texts and/or emails, when I had a quick question or when I needed to meet online for a demonstration. This experience really opened my eyes to the student perspective and what is it like to learn something new for the first time.

During the summer, I continued to educate myself to prepare for this coming virtual year. I attend online district trainings with our technology department. I read books, listened to podcasts, attended Zoom events, and participated in a voluntary group with my school site led by teachers where we learned more about and discussed the social injustices of our country and how we could be more prepared to help our students. To prepare for my Renaissance Class where I lead student leaders, I attended the Jostens National Virtual Conference and invited my

students to attend this free event. Following this conference, Canyon Hills Junior High Renaissance had our own virtual leadership camp. Adjustments were made to create a virtual leadership camp after having a weeklong in person camp for many years.

Adapt, change, grow...Seems to be the theme of this year! At the beginning of August, I made the decision to be a teacher that wanted to go to our school site daily. Teaching from home did not work for me. I missed seeing my staff and interacting with other people. I missed my classroom and the resources I had there to teach. This was also a challenge because my classroom was under construction. I ended up purchasing a camera and sound system and borrowing an extra monitor that has been instrumental in my daily instruction. I wish the district would have offered all teachers a stipend to help with our extra costs this year regarding technology. I am sure many of you have picked up added costs to your virtual instruction whether it be hardware or software. But we make it work, right?

So, what is working for me this school year? I feel more comfortable with technology. I can use Google Classroom, Google Meets and Zoom. I still have many more things to learn like Padlet, Canva, Pear Deck, Ed Puzzle, but it will come. I have

moved back into my new and improved classroom at the beginning of January and next week will learn how to use my ViewSonic Smart Board. I have learned to ask questions and seek out the information I need. I used to be embarrassed about my lack of knowledge about technology but now have no problems asking for help. That is growth!

In conclusion, I hope my reflection brings something of use to you. Please know that I have had days where I have been mad, angry, sad, weepy, anxious, nervous, and frustrated by our current situation. I too want things back to "normal" and to have this pandemic end. In the meantime, I have learned that if I cannot change the circumstances, I must change my attitude. I need to focus on the things I can control and let everything else go. I must take care of myself first before I can be of service to others. You are all doing amazing things everyday by just showing up for our students! We can get through this year together. I believe in you!



ACT COMMITTEE NEWS

Equity & Human Rights



ACT members have the pulse of what is important and relevant in the classroom. Thank you to the members that provided valuable feedback in the November, 2020 survey. Responses showed you would like the committee to watch for the developments of the ethnic studies curriculum. An Ethnic Studies subcommittee will develop a plan to introduce Ethnic Studies courses to the district. Interested members can reach out to Larry Casias: scienceman59@sbcglobal.net

Our members expressed interest in racial justice training as well as restorative justice practices provided for racist/hate speech victims. The committee researches and disseminates

information via email and on our social media pages concerning racial justice trainings offered by our local, Service Center One, California Teachers Association, and the National Education Association. Visit the EHR Committee page on the ACT website for up-to-date and relevant resources that can be implemented in the classroom: associatedchinateachers.com/human-rights

California Teachers Association organizes conferences addressing issues highlighted in the survey ranging from diversity and representation in the curriculum to identity politics dealing with race, culture, and gender. Consider attending a CTA conference and consider the benefits:

- All CTA conferences this year are free
- Earn university credit/professional development credit
- CTA will reimburse the \$75 fee

for credit if enrolled through Chico State

- Attend amazing workshops and trainings conducted by passionate educators and professionals
- Get involved and visit the website: ctago.org

The work of the EHR Committee is ongoing. We would like to welcome Walter Ford, Keane Misawa, and Michael Rolland onto the committee. We look forward to growing the committee to move important priorities like those listed above onward. To connect in solidarity,

Health and Welfare

Do you have questions about your health benefits?

Visit the following sites for information:

Kaiser: <https://my.kp.org/cseba/>
Blue Shield: <https://blueshield-prod.modolabs.net/bsca12>

New Budget Committee Looking for Members

The following are the functions of the committee:

- To develop the Association's annual budget for consideration of the next fiscal year.
- To hold meetings and conduct periodic informational surveys in order to receive

membership input during all phases of its preparation.

- To make recommendations to the Executive Board on any items of proposed expenditures which are not included in the current budget of the Association.
- To review proposals, upon referral by the Executive Board

and/or Rep Council, which have implications for future budgets of the Association.

- To provide continuous review of the fiscal status of the Association.

If you are interested, contact Brian Lawhorn: act.treasurer2019@gmail.com

Congratulations to Our Beloved Olivia

ACT office manager, Olivia Esparza, retired on January 20, 2021 after 21 years and 8 months with the association. Many members have had the opportunity to meet her or just speak to her when calling the office with questions. She has worked with many presidents and served as a helping hand to many. The dedication that she had for her job is tremendous and all of her hard work will truly be missed. Best wishes Olivia!



Welcome All New Members to the ACT Family

Valerie Alvarez
 Marisela Banuelos
 Christina Herrera
 Leslie Warn
 Kurt Klassan
 Joseph Macdonald
 Cory Powlowsui
 Janice Lipsey
 Steven Makorow
 Kyle Martinez
 Cynthia Guzman
 Eduardo Peraza

Community Outreach

For many years, ACT has thrived to give back to the community. Even with the pandemic, we were able to give back to a few causes this holiday season.

Assembly member Freddie Rodriguez hosted an annual toy drive and open house for the community. This year we were able to donate \$150 in toys.

ACT also helped with a donation of \$200 to Make A Child Smile.



Make A Child Smile



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COMMUNICATION

Join in on the conversation- join us on Facebook. A great way to share with, and encourage other ACT members!



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Questions? Comments? Concerns?

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