

HOME MARCH 2022 ROOM

Liza Minnelli told us in “Cabaret” that “money makes the world go ‘round.” Interestingly, compensation usually ranks third for teachers in California when they are asked why they remain in their respective districts. The No. 1 reason is often working conditions.

Kudos to the Governing Board for recognizing the dedication and efforts of our members since the dawn of COVID-19. We have been bringing this to the board’s attention even before the pandemic and will continue to do so. These past few months have made the skills and talents our members bring to the profession much more evident.

The board approved one-time money of \$500 for each full time-employee and a prorated amount for others. This money comes from COVID-19 relief funds and has to be used in a short time. We will certainly sign the Memorandum of Understanding. You might want to use this money to start or add to a retirement plan. CTA offers a 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan only available to members with no hidden fees. If you are interested, go to <https://Enroll.CTAretirementplan.org> to schedule a one-on-one appointment with an advisor.

We will return to the bargaining table with management Wednesday. Both sides are determined to reach an agreement by the end of this school year, but we will not shortchange our members by agreeing quickly to a deal

if it is not satisfactory to our membership and does not address our priorities. We can’t let management to think it knows what our members want or will accept.

At the federal level, President Biden has said he will sign House Resolution 5723 if it makes its way to his desk. The legislation will prevent those retiring in the STRS plan from losing two-thirds of their Social Security benefit. Those reductions are known as GPO/WEP. STRS members receiving Social Security survivor benefits will lose that once their STRS retirement begins. Contact me for further information.

Sticking with the money theme, CTA partner California Casualty is offering \$250 grants for art and music. It takes little time to apply, so contact our office at fsutaoffice@gmail.com for details.

Speaking of our office, look across from the Downtown Theater the next time you drive on Texas Street and you will see our FSUTA sign proudly displayed outside of our office. We have a street-front entrance to Suite D at 1000 Texas Street. Send an email to fsutaoffice@gmail.com if you would like to arrange a time to pay a visit.

To end this money-themed letter, I will leave you with two quotes. “Time is money,” so check your clocks to ensure you have sprung forward. And “money will buy you a fine dog, but only love can make it wag its tail.”

Nancy Dunn, FSUTA President

New role calls for Audrey Jacques



FSUTA's involvement with the National Education Association Community Schools Initiative took a giant step forward Feb. 28. To help us progress from a service-oriented association to a union organizing for power, FSUTA is pleased to announce our Organizing Chair, Audrey Jacques, has been released from her classroom for the remainder of the school year to support our work in this area.

This was made possible when FSUTA was awarded a \$75,000 NEA grant to advance this effort. FSUTA was one of 40 chapters in the nation selected to participate in a coalition working toward reimagining schools to be what all students deserve. A foundational idea for Community Schools is bottom-up decision-making by teachers, parents and community members. FSUTA's first priority is to strengthen our power through internal capacity building.

In addition to the NEA grant funding the release for a full-time organizer, FSUTA has awarded 16 \$500 stipends to members who are now trained in organizing techniques. We will offer stipends again to members interested in attending a four-part training in April. Stay tuned for details.

MILESTONES

★35 YEARS Lisa Christensen★

25 YEARS

Ellen Anderson
Valerie Antony
Karin Beebe
Angela Byland
Lauree Carpenter
Lory Carranza
Mark Heins
Lynne Herring
Louise Jacob
Ann Lean
Carla Mochwart
Claudia Olson
Nancy Pearson
Vicky Petersen
Leeanne Purdy-Martinez
Michelle Rippee
Delicia Saclolo
Alicia Salomon
Laurie Schaefer

Sylvia Herrera
Sarah McLaughlin
Michael Mulvihill
Lorraine Nitto
Phillip Nordin
Regina Pitt
Erin Rovanik-Barron
Carol Walton
Michelle Wilcox
Stella Williamson
Eddie Wilson

15 YEARS

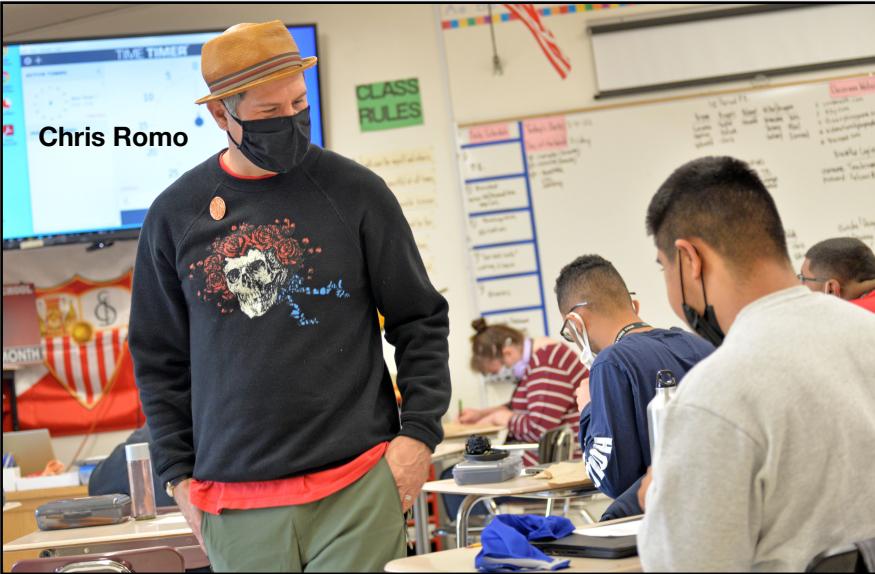
Carlos Aguilar
Allison Ankerstar
Ryenn Bonnett
Denise Brown
Stephanie Bundenthal
Shirley Cavasos
Annette Cottman
Aaron Cyr

Christine Hunt
Jennifer Johnson
Victor Llaguno
Kimberly Matteson
Kimberly McGuire
Katie Molina
Navroop Purewal
Brenda Rough
Christian Stoll
Adrienne Thomas
Anna Vieria
Christine Wickliff
Jani Wright
Jeffrey Wurth

20 YEARS

Eugene Bondy
Margaret Borbely
Lisa Burke
Robert Byland
Theresa Campi
Emile Castanon
Shareen Choy
Debbie Cook
Julie Davis
Christy Emig
Jennifer French
Karen Gill
Shawna Hafner

Ex-custodian wears it well as a teacher



Chris Romo



Six years of working as a night custodian at a Vacaville elementary school convinced Chris Romo to pursue a career in education. He has nothing against scraping gum off of desks or restocking toilet paper in the bathrooms as his father Jose did for 33 years as a custodian at schools in Vacaville, but Chris was determined to become a teacher rather than follow in his father's footsteps.

Chris did much more than push a vacuum in those six years, when he worked nights so he could take classes at Sacramento State. He took a minute or two whenever he could after school at Orchard Elementary to get to know all the teachers. It did not take very long for Chris to realize how much "they love their jobs. It was so important to them. That was really inspirational."

To say Chris loves teaching the Special Day Class at Fairfield High would be akin to saying his wardrobe is a bit quirky - unless a Grateful Dead sweatshirt, green cuffed pants, black and red striped socks and a straw Fedora are the latest fashion trend. Chris will come to his own defense in regards to his choice of clothing by saying his "peers have gotten used to it" - not that they could have done anything about it.

At least Chris can count on his wife Jennifer to go along with his choice of clothing - except for that one day when he wore turquoise socks and shoes that Chris said Jennifer knocked for "looking like they were made in the 1920s." Clothes do not make the educator, especially one who was honored in January as FSUSD's Teacher of the Year for 2021-22.

The plaque Chris received from the district is proudly displayed in his classroom alongside posters of Grateful Dead frontman Jerry Garcia (hence the sweatshirt), the Wizard of Oz and Mary Poppins. Chris will have to pack all those items in June when he leaves his classroom with a sliding door that opens to a patio, picnic table and "Romo's Garden."

Renovation of Fairfield High's cafeteria is why Chris will be moving, but he does not mind one bit because the project will benefit students. Nothing is more important to Chris than doing everything he can for students, including those in his Special Day Class who have moderate to severe disabilities.

Changing classrooms goes with the territory of teaching. "I'm confident we can recreate the magic somewhere else," Chris predicted. "The magic is really with the students."



Time to climb on board

Laura Obando has stepped forward to serve on the FSUTA Executive Board, so who will follow the second-grade teacher at Fairview Elementary? You can do so by submitting a Declaration of Candidacy form for Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary or Member at Large. The form can be downloaded from the Members page at www.FSUTA.org. The deadline to submit it to fsutaoffice@gmail.com is 5 p.m. Monday, April 4. Voting will begin on Tuesday, April 5.

((POSTERS PROMOTE UNION PRIDE))

Please display all the posters in your staff room. Email us at fsutaoffice@gmail.com if your school missed one and we will send it to you as soon as possible. Two more will come your way in the next two months.

