



# THE ADVOCATE

March | 2021



## TVEA Guides Members Through Twists and Turns of Twelve-Month Distance and On-Line Learning Period

Greetings TVEA Members,

It feels like we have been on a marathon white-water rafting trip these past twelve months. California schools closed March 13<sup>th</sup> 2020 when students and staff across the state were placed on "Distance Learning". As we reach March of 2021, we have navigated what has been termed On-Line Learning the entire 2020-21 school year. For those who have experienced white-water rafting, our condition as educators have included similar changes in speed, direction, calm waters, bumps, and a few big drops which can be exhilarating and fearful at the same time.

Your association has acted as your "trip guide" over the last twelve months and we pledge to continue to do so as we prepare to return to In-Person Instruction. Fast forwarding to almost one year later, Riverside County hit the mark of under an Adjusted Case Rate of 16.8 per 100,000 population February 23<sup>rd</sup>, meeting the required mark of 25 or less per 100,000 set by the California Department of Public Health return to In-Person Instruction. TVUSD Elementary Sites are set to open the week of March 15<sup>th</sup> and Secondary Sites will follow the week of April 5<sup>th</sup>, presuming the county adjusted case rate drops below 7 per 100,000.

While there has been much uncertainty and progress can appear slow, I can assure you that among others your TVEA Bargaining Committee has had an unprecedented twelve months of steadfast effort in serving the interests of our TVEA members. Ongoing discussions which began over Spring Break in 2020 have never really ceased. Please take a moment and thank your TVEA Bargaining Committee Team: Chair/High School Rep: **Brian Balaris**, High School Rep: **Lowena Manzano**, Middle School Rep: **Patty Casey**, Specialist Reps: **Karen Hogan** and **Nicole Paino**, Elementary Reps: **Mike Brewer** and **Christina Fenney**, Contract Liaison: **Alan Underwood**. Thanks also to our CTA Staff Member **Brian Eldridge** who advises our team, and Vice-President **Edgar Diaz** who has joined the team periodically and has supported throughout.

Our Bargaining Team has steered the "TVEA Raft" through challenging waters this year. Back in Summer 2020 we secured a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which gave members the critical right to work at home during On-Line Learning as schools were deemed not safe for In-Person Instruction. We have many pieces in place on an MOU titled "Hybrid Instruction: Impacts and Effects", which we expect to finalize soon. Our team consulted with TVUSD by providing much carefully considered input and asked

### Do not miss these TVEA Advocate Highlights!

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#### Two Insurance Memorandum of Understandings Inked:

Medical Bridge Eligibility and TVEA Insurance Reserve Rebate Provide Member Benefits

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#### Joint TVUSD/TVEA Cabinet Session

First Meeting Assesses Positives and Needed Continued Growth

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#### Executive Board Elections Coming!

Declaration of Candidacy for 6 Positions is March 8-19th

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#### TVEA Partners with TVC PTA in Community Drive

Food and Toiletries donated by TVEA and Members to Those in Need

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## President's Message Continued

tough questions about the required COVID Safety Plan (CSP), which TVUSD has sent on to the county for approval. We have fought hard for our Special Education members to set limits on when and to what extent Hubs can open and subsequently reopen after the post-holiday surge.

We have ensured those who have pre-existing conditions and are at higher risk for an adverse response to COVID-19 could secure on-line assignments for the remainder of 2020-21.

We have dutifully represented the collective interests of our diverse membership and have responded to the "anti-union rhetoric" which has been a part of the state and national news with a solid position statement not just to members, but to the Temecula community.



Our work is not over, but just beginning once again as we face more twists, turns, bumps, and drops as we prepare for the Hybrid Cohort model. Our teachers and specialists are "Proven Leaders of Student Success" and will demonstrate persistence and resilience once again!

I know I feel fortunate to have a talented and committed Executive Board, Committee Chairs, and Site/Position Leaders in addition to our superlative Bargaining team to help all 1325 of us navigate the new white waters ahead.

Enjoy your coming two weeks at Spring Break later this month, Jeff

## Advocating on Your Behalf: January and February 2021

TVEA's primary function is to provide full and fair representation to members while bargaining for fair pay, benefits, and working conditions through our contract. Here are some examples of this in early 2021:

### Committees:

- Our Ad Hoc Budget Committee met with TVUSD on January 26<sup>th</sup> as a follow-up to the California State Budget Proposal for 2021-22 by Governor Gavin Newsom. They are to meet again with TVUSD March 3rd to discuss the impacts of the 2nd Interim Budget Report.
- The TVEA Special Education Committee resumed its business on January 28 in a meeting conducted by Exec Board and Bargaining Representatives. More than thirty-five TVEA members attended and participated.
- TVEA Bargaining continues to work with TVUSD and consulted with them over the course of several sessions on the completed COVID Safety Plan (CSP) required by the state of California for district eligibility for Return to Person Instruction.

### Representation:

- TVEA provided representation for two employee investigatory interviews on January 8th and February 18th.
- We also represented two members in interviews on January 12th and February 2nd involving a Uniform Complaint under Board Policy 1312.
- Two members were provided representation in meetings with Risk Management related to the Reasonable Accommodation Process on January 27 and February 5
- The week of February 16th, TVEA attended and represented three meetings for probationary status members who were informed by TVUSD they would be Non-Reelected to return to TVUSD for the 21-22 year. Employees were consulted and provided options on how to respond.

### Collaboration with TVUSD:

- TVEA coordinated and had representation at three Medical Bridge Benefit Meetings on January 20 and 25, and February 3 for potential retirees to learn about the nuances of declaring their retirement and qualifying for this important benefit.
- On January 25, five TVEA Executive Board members represented TVEA in a Joint Cabinet session with the TVUSD cabinet to initiate discussion of what is trending positively and what needs continued improvement as well.

### Advocacy/Public Speaking:

- On January 19th, TVEA recorded and released a video message to members highlighting the key elements of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Guidance (Released January 14), regarding requirements to return to in-person instruction.
- On February 3rd at the Governing Board Meeting, the TVEA Spotlight spoke to the above guidance and suggesting the need for a sound internal and external infrastructure to sustain any return to school sites.



## **TVEA Members to Receive Health and Welfare Insurance Credit Through Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) With TVUSD**

TVEA member's contribution to their insurance premiums will receive a credit of \$600 over a four-month long period as the result of an MOU signed between TVEA and TVUSD on February 8<sup>th</sup>. This was a joint effort between the TVEA Insurance Advisory, Ad Hoc Budget, and Bargaining Committees. The TVEA Insurance Reserve, a fund held by TVUSD which accrues when the cost of a member plan falls below the contractual TVUSD plan contribution of \$10,647 per year had been growing since the last disbursement in 2017. The reserve had reached a sum of nearly \$900,000. The MOU allows \$150 a month to be credited to eligible members. For 1300 eligible bargaining unit members the cost would be \$780,000, leaving an account balance of about \$120,000 for future use including assisting members to receive the Retiree Medical Bridge Benefit.



Eligible members will receive this credit against the cost of their member premiums in their pay warrants March, April, May, and June. To be eligible, a bargaining unit member must be an active employee (not retired) and have paid into a TVUSD Health and Welfare Plan since at least October 2020. The amount of the credit may not exceed the amount the member pays into their respective plan.

The impact of this agreement will result in a higher than usual monthly net pay in the upcoming 2021 Spring Semester months.

## **TVEA/TVUSD January 2021 Memorandum of Understanding on Retiree Medical Bridge Lessens Eligibility Qualifications for Insurance Benefit**

The Medical Bridge Benefit located in Article 7.5 was added to the TVEA/TVUSD Contract in 2016 and is a means for Retirees to get assistance from TVUSD toward their medical insurance until they reach Medicare age (65).

A bargaining unit member can receive the benefit (\$739.00 a month for 2020-21 Retirees) for up to five (5) years depending on the age which they retire. This benefit may be used toward the cost of employee health insurance, though the employee may add a spouse or eligible child dependent at their own cost.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) loosens two important qualifications to gain eligibility for the benefit:

- The sum of the number of years of required employment in TVUSD has been reduced from fifteen (15) years to (12) years.
- The previous requirement of being on a TVUSD Health and Welfare Insurance Plan for the last ten (10) years before retirement has been waived.

Note that the age requirement of being at least fifty-five (55) years of age still is in effect.

The deadline to declare intent to retire at the end of the school year and claim the bridge benefit starting in July was February 15<sup>th</sup>.

There have been various MOU's over the last few years when extra windows were created to offer unit members the chance to declare their retirement and claim the bridge benefit. This MOU goes further in that states TVEA and TVUSD will review and assess this expanded opportunity for members and subject to that review, plan to incorporate these new requirements into the next collective bargaining agreement pertaining to the 2021-22 school year as ratified by TVEA in a contract ratification vote.



## **Member Survey on Site Administration Support During Pandemic**

The TVEA Executive Board has set direction to seek feedback from members related to the level of support provided by Site Administration Teams over the period of Distance Learning (2020 Spring) and On-Line Learning (2020-21) School Year

The intent of the survey is to gather feedback on the efforts of each site administrative team rather than assess a single person such as the site principal. TVEA fully understands that the challenges of serving students, parents, and staff have been intensified during this last year and we seek to thank and recognize exemplary site administrative teams. The feedback will be utilized for mostly internal TVEA purposes, though Site Leader(s) will be encouraged to have follow up conversations with their site administrative teams.

TVEA is conducting the survey the first week of March and will synthesize the feedback before Spring Break. We hope to be able to conduct a virtual recognition ceremony in late April to recognize the work of exemplary site administrative teams for their resilience and support during this challenging time.



# TVEA Issues Statement on Behalf of Members Regarding Return to In-Person Instruction in TVUSD



On February 9<sup>th</sup> TVEA issued a statement in a blast to membership and to the community through a post which appeared on Temecula Patch and Facebook. It was also published in the weekly Valley News. The intent of the message was to share TVEA's stance on Return to In-Person Instruction.

Our message released by President Jeff Kingsberg after consultation with the TVEA Executive Board is below:

TVEA, which represents the Teachers, Nurses, Counselors, Social Workers, Psychologists and Speech Pathologists of the Temecula Valley Unified School District, has been planning with the District since March 2020 for a potential return to in-person instruction. We have worked vigorously in a collaborative manner with district administration to ensure that when allowable, this transition will be successful for both students and staff.

**First and Foremost, TVEA Members Desire to Teach and Provide Services to their Students In-Person.** Our 1325 teachers and specialists miss the in-person teaching and learning they were accustomed to which was abruptly halted by the COVID-19 pandemic last March. As trained professionals, they committed to a career in education embracing the interaction which comes from working with students in the regular school setting.

**TVEA and its Members Do Not Determine When Temecula Schools Return to In-Person Instruction.** This determination is made by meeting guidelines set by California and Riverside County Public Health officials and subsequent authorization from the TVUSD Administration and the TVUSD Governing Board. We continue to closely follow and respect the guidance issued from state officials, the latest issued January 14, 2021 as a series of Executive Orders from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). This guidance sets eligibility for in-person instruction based on Riverside County Adjusted Case Rates of 25 new cases per 100,000 people in grades TK-6, and 7 new cases per 100,000 people for grades 7-12.

**TVEA Believes that any TVUSD Return to In-Person Instruction Must Include a Sound Infrastructure to Ensure Sustainability.** We want to see any return be successful and sustainable. It is critical that supports are in place. TVEA has consulted with TVUSD in its COVID -19 Safety Plan (CSP). We continue to meet with representatives of TVUSD to solidify and finalize a Joint Memorandum of Understanding on "Hybrid Instruction: Impacts and Effects". Considerations in building a sound infrastructure include 1) Developed Safety Procedures and Protocols Must be Clearly Communicated to Parents, Students and TVUSD Employees. 2) Costs Associated with Potential Weekly Asymptomatic Testing as Required by the CDPH must be Addressed. 3) Vaccines Provide a Critical Barrier against the COVID-19 Virus and should be Available to any Person Assigned to a School Site for In-Person Instruction.

The teachers and specialists of the Temecula Valley School District look forward to the time they can be face to face with their students in a safe and sustainable manner. We will continue to work diligently with TVUSD to be prepared for the day our schools can resume in-person instruction. On Behalf of the TVEA Executive Board, Jeff Kingsberg, TVEA President

## 6 Things to Know & Expect About a Return to In-Person Instruction in TVUSD

As COVID-19 case rates decline, TVUSD schools are planning to return to in-person instruction on March 15<sup>th</sup> for elementary grades and April 5<sup>th</sup> for secondary grades. On January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the California Department of Public Health issued guidance for such a return. Below are six (6) highlights from that guidance which provide a sense of what to expect upon a return. This guidance has become a guide for TVUSD in developing their COVID Safety Plan (CSP) and for TVEA in ensuring public health guidelines are followed in any Memorandum of Understanding Agreement with TVUSD. Note that this guidance is subject to change through Executive Order and/or Legislation.

1. **COVID Safety Plan** Schools Must Complete and Get County and State Approval and post the document on District and school site websites to be eligible to return to In-Person Instruction
2. **Adjusted COVID-19 Case Rates:** Must Drop Below 25 new cases per 100,000 population for elementary schools to return and below 7 new cases per 100,000 for secondary students to return. A requirement of maintaining this status for 5 consecutive days was eliminated on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, and in addition, schools have 3 weeks to reopen from one day after achieving these adjusted rates.
3. **Stable Groups or Cohorts:** Schools may not jump to full in-person instruction immediately upon reaching the adjusted case rates. Stable Groups are achieved by using cohorts such as AM/PM (Elementary) and AA/BB (Secondary)
4. **Face Coverings:** Face Coverings are REQUIRED for all staff AND Students K-12. The only exception is a medical exemption.
5. **Asymptomatic Testing:** This can provide an additional tool used in conjunction with other virus mitigation strategies. It can be used for Surveillance to gauge school community rates or for Screening when rates are higher. TVUSD is following CAL/OSHA guidelines in which testing is offered to employees at no cost, yet not mandated at a cadence based on tier and adjusted case rates. State officials and legislature continue to consider testing policy.
6. **Vaccines:** While vaccines are not mandated, the CDPH "Strongly Recommends that all persons eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccines receive them at the first opportunity". Educators have been identified by a priority group and Governor Newsom gave an Executive Order effective March 1, 2021 that 10% of vaccine supply in counties be utilized for workers in education and childcare.



## TVEA Executive Board Advocates in TVUSD/TVEA Joint Cabinet Session

On January 25<sup>th</sup>, TVEA Executive Board Members Anastasia Bortcosh, Dana Portis, Doug VomSteeg, along with Vice-President Edgar Diaz and President Jeff Kingsberg met with the TVUSD District Cabinet in an inaugural “Joint Cabinet Session”. The TVUSD Team included Dr. Jodi McClay, Superintendent, along with Assistant Superintendents Dr. Karen Valdes, Curriculum and Instruction, Frank Arce, Human Resources, Nicole Lash, Business Services, and Kimberly Velez, Student Support Services. This idea of both teams coming together at least once a semester in the first month of each term was brought forth by TVEA and welcomed by the TVUSD team. For TVEA, this provides an opportunity for our Executive Board team beyond the President to have two-way communication with TVUSD and promotes parity in TVEA's relationship with TVUSD.

After introductions, the group discussed expectations for such meetings which included 100% team Attendance, Starting and Ending on Time, Open and Honest Conversations, and Balanced Participation. The theme for the first meeting included identifying examples of progress as we have moved through a year of on-line learning as well as areas needing continued focus and improvement.

To the Positive, the Following Areas were Identified:

- Apple Core Certification and Technology Opportunities
- Revamping Special Education Protocols and Procedures in a Pandemic Year
- Adjusting the Second Semester Secondary Schedule with Intervention in the Afternoon
- Ongoing Two-Way Communication Between TVUSD and TVEA including discussion of Fiscal Impacts through the Joint Ad Hoc Budget Committee



Areas of Continued Focus and Improvement Included:

- Lack of Consistent Messaging Shared by Elementary Principals at Various Sites
- Continue to Foster Clear Communication Regarding Potential Return Regarding In-Person Instruction at Various Instructional Levels including all Safety Protocols.
- Expand Secondary Common Platforms in the Canvas Learning Management System as is done at the Community College Level
- Clarifying Testing in 2020-21 while housed in an on-line learning format including Elementary CAASP Testing and High School Advanced Placement Testing



TVEA expects that this Joint Cabinet Model will continue in Fall 2021 and intends to seek an April or May follow up meeting to facilitate ongoing two-way communication with district leaders.

## TVEA “Organizing 101” Full Day Workshop Draws Participants Across TVEA Instructional Groups

On Friday January 29<sup>th</sup>, a group of twenty-one TVEA members and leaders gathered to participate in “TVEA Organizing 101”, a workshop facilitated by CTA Region IV Organizer David Partida, CTA Primary Staff Member Brian Eldridge, and TVEA Governance/Contract Liaison Alan Underwood. This workshop was a result of two informal group meetings held in November and December in which the themes of Time, Transparency, and Infrastructure were developed for our own internal communication and externally with TVUSD.



The morning session included vigorous discussion over broad topics such as reviewing an article titled “What is Organizing”? and the theme of “Power”. Organizing was analyzed as a form of leadership and defined as “Accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve purpose under conditions of uncertainty”. Considering who has power over our workplace issues and what people or group act as influencers in this area also created much discussion.

Participants were asked to chart a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) for TVEA as an organization. Some of the perceptions shared by workshop participants were: Strength- “Strong Executive Board”, Weakness- “Members Not Seeing Themselves as Part of the Union”, Opportunity- “A New Year to Seize the Moment and Run with It”, Threat- “A Negative View of Unions in General by our Community”.

The afternoon allowed the cohort to split into 3 “Breakout Groups” and develop potential GOST (Goal- Objective- Strategies) plans. Two ideas which emerged here are

- 1) Building Positive Parent and Community Communications through Developing TVEA Site PTA Liaisons, and
- 2) Increasing TVEA Social Media Presence for Staff/Student Recognition and Messaging.

Organizing is ongoing. The work is never complete yet attention to it develops persistence and resilience. Remember, “Don’t Agonize, ORGANIZE!” If you are interested in joining this cohort, contact TVEA Governance Liaison Alan Underwood at [tveagovernance@gmail.com](mailto:tveagovernance@gmail.com)

# TVEA Executive Board Seeks Continuous Improvement at 2020-21 Virtual Spring Planning Workshop

On Wednesday February 10<sup>th</sup>, the TVEA Executive Board committed to a day away from their on-line classrooms to assess our progress and plan for the months ahead. This extended Spring Meeting has become an important part of the board's ongoing efforts in steering the association.

After a review of the agenda for the day, each team member had the opportunity to share an update from their role and responsibilities. Subsequent focused discussions ranged from an examination of proposed 2021 Executive Board Core Values including Accountability, Cohesiveness, and Resilience to a review of the TVEA Organizing 101 Member Workshop which was conducted January 29<sup>th</sup>. The group also considered how we might generate greater two-way communication with members, particularly if there is a return to in-person instruction. The group set direction for a member feedback tool to gauge Site Administration Support over the last year during Distance and On-Line Learning. It is TVEA's intent to recognize site administration teams which have been exemplary in providing support for our members. This feedback is scheduled to be requested from members before Spring Break.

Two study session topics went into more depth: 1) Developing the 2021-22 TVEA Budget. This budget will continue to be discussed and prepared in March and April before sharing with the larger Leadership Council for review in April and ratification in May. 2) Review of TVEA's Needs Regarding Organization Space. The board acknowledged that while we have not been able to utilize this space over the last year as we have in the past, that it is still in our interest to renew our lease, yet perhaps for only one year. This will provide TVEA the opportunity to assess our needs as we move toward more expected face to face meeting interaction rather than exclusively virtual meetings.

The day was characterized by robust engagement and balanced participation with all twelve board members contributing.

## TVEA Conservative Caucus Blazes New Path for Member Connections

TVEA has established its first caucus, the "TVEA Conservative Caucus". A Caucus is an informal group of like-minded members or those with a common interest. It has no role within the TVEA Governance structure. The Caucus Structure had been discussed a few years back as an offshoot of the caucus system CTA utilizes. The Executive Board discussed adding caucuses last Spring and language was drafted in August 2020 and approved within our TVEA Standing Rules.

A blast was sent out to members this fall suggesting if they would like to form such a group. A Google Form Application is required to be reviewed by the TVEA Executive Board. At least five TVEA members must be interested in participating in the group and they need to declare a purpose or mission statement.

TVEA received one such application from Steve Campos, who serves on the CTA State Council for TVEA and is a former Executive Board Member. The caucus was approved in October and held their first meeting December 16<sup>th</sup> before winter break. Steve was seeking an opportunity for like-minded conservative members to gather and discuss issues. Steve shared: *"I wanted to start this group because I felt that many conservative teachers/members felt like they did not have a voice within education. Many felt like they could not express their views around other colleagues without creating a hostile environment. They simply want to have a conversation. I wanted to make sure that all our members had a place where they could share their perspective as every voice should be heard to strengthen our collective union"*.

The second meeting took place February 17<sup>th</sup> with 13 members participating. TVEA President Jeff Kingsberg was on hand to answer questions from members in the first part of the meeting. Steve had each member briefly introduce themselves and share what brought them to the group. Steve spoke of members considering participation as a TVEA delegate in the NEA Representative Assembly for the experience of getting various perspectives of educators across the country and ensuring member participation from TVEA in this national event.

The session included attendees offering their perspectives on a return to in-person instruction, with many stating their willingness and readiness to do so. Other subjects discussed included TVUSD Equity Training, CTA State Council, and the CTA Republican Caucus.

Kudos to Steve Campos and the participants for implementing the TVEA caucus structure. Hopefully more such groups within TVEA membership will find ways to connect!

## TVEA Prepares for Executive Board 2021 Spring Elections

Six positions on the TVEA twelve-member Executive Board will be elected this Spring. On January 14<sup>th</sup>, the TVEA Executive Board approved an elections calendar and then sent it to the TVEA Leadership Council for approval on January 21<sup>st</sup>.

**The six Executive Board Positions to be elected for a term of July 1 2021- June 30, 2023 are:**

TVEA Treasurer  
1 of 2 Elementary Area Representatives  
Middle School Area Representative  
1 of 2 High School Area Representatives  
1 of 2 Specialist Area Representatives  
TVEA Contract Liaison

**Key dates regarding this election are:**

Monday March 8:  
Formal Announcement of Election  
Friday March 19:  
Declaration of Candidacy Deadline  
Monday April 5:  
Announce Candidates  
Mon April 5- Fri Apr 16:  
Candidate Campaigning Period  
Mon April 19- Thu Apr 22:  
Electronic Voting Through Our Vendor Big Pulse  
Fri April 23- Mon Apr 26:  
Notify Candidates of and Announce Results

Make a difference in YOUR association by declaring for an elected Executive Board Role! If you have questions about this election or you would be interested in serving on the TVEA Elections Committee, please contact Michelle Nelson (PVES) at [tveaelections@gmail.com](mailto:tveaelections@gmail.com)



## 2 TVEA Members Are Named TVUSD Employees of the Year

In January, TVUSD announced their first group of 2020-21 Employees of the Year. This group included two TVEA members, with teachers being named and submitted to the county in March. TVEA is proud to recognize Amanda Chapman, District Lead Nurse and Erin Nelson, Counselor at Gardner Middle School. Here are their responses to questions TVEA sent their way:

### Amanda Chapman

**How long have you served in your role?** This year is my first year in this position. Here in TVUSD? This is my 4th year in the district. I started my school nursing career in TVUSD at Great Oak High School.

**Why did you become and continue to serve as a School Nurse?** My prior work as an ER nurse and as a mother of a child with significant special needs, has given me a unique perspective on both sides of health care and education. School nursing has collided both of my passions into one setting. It has been the perfect fit for me to express my knowledge of acute care practices as it relates to the school setting, while also allowing me to apply my knowledge of student health. I am right where I need to be and am meant to be. I am extremely thankful for my job and TVUSD.

**How has the COVID -19 pandemic impacted your role?** I stepped into my current role in July of 2020. While there is a steep learning curve stepping in any new position, I had the added pressure of deciphering and writing protocols and processes to ensure that everyone was kept safe, for all possible scenarios which may occur. Developing relationships with staff and administrators across the district virtually has been less than ideal. Yet everyone has been amazing and made a difficult situation so much better with their willingness to accept and understand the health care perspective. Covid-19 has caused continual county guidelines to change and with each change, new procedures must be adapted, and all personnel must be re-trained.

**Who in TVUSD has inspired you to be the best you can be in your respective role?** I am extremely lucky to work with an amazing team of Registered Nurses and they inspire me daily to be better. I will forever appreciate my GOHS family and I will always be a part of the Wolfpack!! Aimee Ricken and Keith Moore have lifted my spirits more times than I can count. Lisa O'Steen is the champion of all things "Health Services" in this district and I am in awe of all that she does. Donna Lione works endlessly for the betterment of this district. Her willingness to listen to my perspective and guide me in all areas of this new position has meant the world to me. Kimberly Velez inspires me to lead with grace and empathy.



### Erin Nelson

**How long have you served in the role?** I helped open GMS in 2003 - so I am on my 18th year at Gardner Middle School, TVUSD, and my counseling career.

**Why did you become and continue to serve as a School Counselor?** I am passionate about helping students navigate through the ups and downs of middle school. I also love working with the amazing staff at GMS!

**How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your role?** It has been quite difficult. I really miss interacting with the students. It seems so impersonal to counsel via video. I also miss going into work and seeing everyone. So many of our staff are my good friends as we have known each other for years!

**Who in TVUSD has inspired you to be the best you can be in your respective role?** So many people at Gardner Middle School have inspired me. Specifically, my co-counselors Heather Polk and Kim De La Cruz are so supportive and are wonderful to work with each day!



## TVEA Membership Update and Welcome New Members!

TVEA's membership continues to remain strong! This is critical to maintain a united bargaining unit in our efforts with the district and community. As new employees are hired throughout the school year, TVEA provides a welcome and seeks to meet with each person one on one and share why our association is an essential component of being a professional educator. Here is an update as of February 28, 2021:

Total Members: 1321 (95%)  
New Members in 2020-21: 40  
Potential New Members in 20-21: 29  
Non-Members: 37

### Welcome to Our Most Recent TVEA Members:

Amy Garza, SDC Teacher PES  
Jesus Mondragon, School Psych CHS (Rejoined)  
Taylor Morris, School Psych /Behavioral Health TVHS/DO  
Vivian Ochoa, SDC Teacher CHS  
Charlene Samuelson, Supplemental Instruction Support MMS

## TVEA and Members Serve as Community Contributors for Community Mission of Hope (CMOH) Drive for Local Residents in Need

TVEA continues to seek ways to link to our community through Community Engagement efforts. In January, TVEA partnered with the Temecula Valley Council PTA to participate in "Kind Heart Donor Days" to support those who rely on CMOH donations for food and toiletry items.

Under the direction of our own TVEA Member and Community Engagement Coordinator Belisa Guerrero (TLES), TVEA contributed \$100 worth of toiletries from our approved Community Engagement Budget to the drive. Belisa helped to spread the word and in joining with Temecula Valley School Site PTA's to support our community and families.

Members were also encouraged to participate in a "no contact" drop off on the last two Sunday's in January and they stepped up to the plate! The CMOH received donations from Temecula Valley Council of PTA's, Crowne Hill Elementary PTA, and TVEA members from Redhawk Elementary, French Valley Elementary, Temecula Luiseno Elementary School, Bella Vista Middle School, and Temecula Valley Adult School.

According to Andi Heim Vice-President of Programs for Temecula Valley Council of PTA's, "It's amazing what we can accomplish when we work together. I'm looking forward to working with TVEA again soon".

TVEA President Jeff Kingsberg commented on the effort: "When we work with other key groups for a common purpose to do some good in our community, those positive efforts reflect well on our public educators".

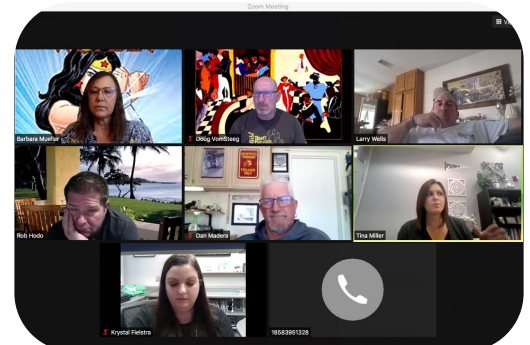


## The Power of 'Pulse Check' Meetings

Your TVEA Site Leaders have been encouraged to have at least two meetings with Site Administration per semester. The purpose of such meetings is to "Take a Pulse" in relation to the climate and culture of the campus. These arguably have been more crucial than ever in 2020-21 in our remote virtual world with lack of physical proximity limiting the ability to have regular informal conversations.

Pulse Check Meetings promote two-way communication between TVEA representatives at a site and build rapport and trust. On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, Chaparral High Site Leaders held such a meeting with CHS Principal Tina Miller and Assistant Principal Krystal Fielstra. The meeting was initiated by Site Leader Barbara Mueller, who was joined by fellow site leaders Rob Clause, Rob Hodo, Dan Madera, and Larry Wells. TVEA Executive Board High School Area Representative Doug VomSteeg also attended the meeting and supported the group compiling information shared from both sides.

The meeting was focused on a central topic: The Use of CHS Measure Y and Modernization Funds. CHS is one of many aging campuses in TVUSD and will become eligible for State Modernization Funds at age twenty-five in 2022. The group agreed to meet again and develop a communication around the needs of the campus to be shared with the District Office and community. Great Job CHS Site Leaders and Doug for his support!!





## TVEA is a Repeat Winner of 2 CTA 2019-20 Communications Awards

TVEA has been informed by CTA that we have been announced as a Winner of both of our entries for the 2019-20 school year:

**Newsletters and Newspapers:** TVEA Advocate, Jeff Kingsberg and Lisa Sisco, Editors  
**Digital Media Award in Honor of Ralph J. Flynn:** tveducators.org, Lisa Sisco, Editor

TVEA is proud of these recognitions as they have been areas in which the association has been recognized repeatedly by CTA. TVEA President Jeff Kingsberg stated, "We work hard to keep our members informed on an ongoing manner. To be recognized as the best in the state suggests that we continue to make salient information available to members and the community through our TVEA Advocate Newsletter and Website. In any sphere of competition, it is hard to get to the top, yet even harder to stay there".

## Virtual Beer Tasting Event a Great Friday Afternoon for All!

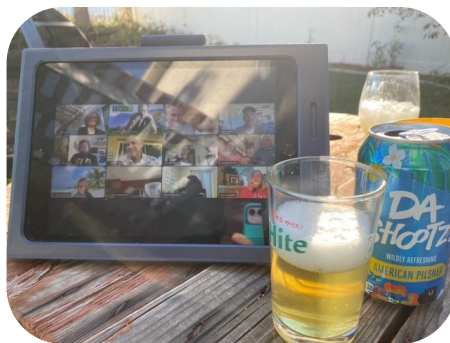
On Friday February 19<sup>th</sup>, TVEA hosted a Beer Tasting- Virtual Style that is! Fifteen members and assorted guests logged in to the event in which seven different beers across the spectrum were shared.

The event was planned by the TVEA Member Engagement Committee which recruited TVEA Bargaining Chair and Brew Master Extraordinaire Brian Balaris as "Master of Ceremonies."

Brian took the tasters from the lighter styles of "Da Shootz", a lower calorie and carbohydrate Pilsner from Deschutes Brewery in Bend, Oregon to fuller bodied beers. These included "The Sixth Glass", a Belgian Ale from Boulevard Brewery in Kansas City and "Peanut Butter Chocolate Milk Stout", a local beer from Garage Brewing in Temecula.

Participants had a beautiful Friday February afternoon to set up their computer outside to taste and tell stories of their travels to many of these breweries as the sun went down.

The inaugural TVEA Virtual Beer Tasting was a good time had by all and is certainly an event TVEA can do again as there are hundreds of more beers which are available for purchase and tasting by the single bottle or can at Total Wine and More in Temecula.



STAY CONNECTED...



## Temecula Valley Educators Association

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