

Union Notes – November 1, 2021

COVID Leave Continues For SDEA Members, Even While It Expires For Most CA Workers

California's paid COVID leave law expired on September 30, but paid COVID leave continues for those covered by the SDEA union contract. That's because back in June, in anticipation of the law's expiration, SDEA members bargained our own COVID leave. [Under Section 2.g. of the agreement members bargained](#), **you are entitled to paid COVID leave if you are required to quarantine** either (1) as the result of a positive COVID test, or (2) as the result of District or County contact tracing identifying you as a close contact. There are no limits on the number of days or occasions it can be used.

If you met the eligibility criteria, but had to use your own leave balance to quarantine, this may have been a violation of your rights under the SDEA agreement. If you think your rights have been violated, a good first step is to collect the facts -- dates, test results or contact tracing notice, and so on -- and talk to your school's or program's AR.

If you're not yet a member of SDEA, you are still protected. But it's dues-contributing members that fund the fight for things like COVID leave and safer working conditions. More than 90% of those eligible join SDEA. Now's a good time for you to do that too. [Join online now to be part of your union.](#)

VT Shortage

The visiting teacher shortage is something that is hampering our schools' operations, not only here in San Diego, but throughout the state. One good thing is that federal COVID relief funds can be used to further incentivize people to apply and become visiting teachers in the District.

Your elected educator leaders, and the bargaining team are going to work with the District to fashion new agreements to help potentially increase the number of people who are working as substitutes. The general membership may need to mobilize for this effort, so stay tuned for further updates on this matter.

Temporary Contract Union Member Support

Induction Support:

Since the District is able to use federal monies for ensuring staff retention, there is a possibility for them to use that money to help cover the costs of an approved induction program. SDEA has proposed to the District the coverage of induction costs for temporary contract union members who have 4 or more years with the District. The District has yet to respond, but it is likely that we will have an agreement on this support in the near future.

Legal Efforts to Investigate How SDUSD Uses Temp. Contracts:

Attorneys with our union's retained law firm are actively investigating the district's utilization of temporary contracts. While the law provides school districts the ability to give out temporary contracts, it is unclear whether or not SDUSD has over-identified SDEA members. Unfortunately, the District has not been able to furnish the necessary evidence to show that they are using temporary contracts correctly. That doesn't necessarily mean they are doing anything wrong, it just means that the union attorneys aren't currently able to verify that SDUSD is following the law correctly. Future *Union Notes* emails will have further updates on this effort.

As this matter moves forward, it's absolutely important that all temporary contract educators are members of the union so that they may be able to access individualized legal services if necessary. [Join online now to be part of your union.](#)

VEBA Open Enrollment & Other Benefits

It's open enrollment time! [You can change health benefit plans now through November 12.](#) As union members, we fought to protect our fully paid family healthcare, so when you're choosing a plan, you don't have to worry about paying a premium. Still, choosing a health plan can be confusing. What's the difference between an HMO and PPO? What's a deductible and how is it different from a copayment? What's an out-of-pocket maximum? To empower you to make the best decision for you and your dependents, [check out this episode of the NPR Life Kit podcast on how to choose a health insurance plan.](#)

Upcoming Virtual CTA Conferences

CTA is excited to announce our second **Special Education Conference – Home Edition!** This conference has been created specifically for CTA members working in either general education or special education and will have sessions and workshops that were designed to meet the changing and demanding needs of our members as they work to support, educate and serve all students regardless of their circumstance or situation. Registration is free for all CTA members. [Sign Up Here!](#)

CTA's New Educator Weekend (NEW) is a conference for new CTA members. This NEW conference will be hosted virtually and will have a special focus for educators in their first few years of teaching but offers professional development and instruction that is useful for all educators. The conference has everything that educators need to be successful, including sessions about classroom management, creating engaging classrooms, lesson plans and ideas, connecting with your union, student loan forgiveness information, member benefits, project grants and more. [Sign up Here!](#)

Upcoming In-Person CTA Conferences

SDEA offers the opportunity for members to attend CTA conferences each year. The following conferences will be held in-person this year, utilizing COVID protocols and safety procedures.

SDEA offers a limited number of sponsorships for members to attend CTA conferences. We do ask that those looking to receive a conference sponsorship also [apply for a CTA grant](#), if applicable.

The **2022 CTA Issues Conference** provides an opportunity for educators from rural, urban, and ESP local areas, throughout the state, to learn, share, strategize and unite together to determine the future of public education. As members with diverse interests and multiple perspectives, don't miss this opportunity to reconnect with fellow educators, re-energize your skillset and help strategize solutions to confront the challenges we are facing together. [Sign Up Here!](#) **Heads up! The grant application deadline for this conference is Nov. 8th.**

The **CTA Good Teaching Conferences** continue to support excellent teaching and learning practices for classroom teachers via peer-to-peer instruction. Offering a variety of diverse workshops focused on curriculum content areas for K-12 teachers, the conferences provide opportunities for professional development and offer time to network and share ideas with colleagues and experts in the field of education. [Sign Up Here!](#)

University Credit for CTA Conferences

As a benefit only to members, CTA will cover the cost for up to three university credit units with CSU Chico, normally \$75/credit. The professional growth hours can be accumulated by attending conferences live and/or by watching recordings. [Click here for more information on how to claim the credit.](#)