

We're in this together

BY CTA PRESIDENT BARBARA E. KERR

It's certainly symbolic of our times. This school year has ended the way it began, with a statewide election.

There is simply no other way to say it. This has been a tremendous and historic year for CTA. Working together, we beat back an all-out assault on public schools, the teaching profession and our association. We got a revised state budget proposal that repays all the money owed to public education. And as we move into the next statewide election in November, we have a candidate whom teachers can trust to do what's right for our public schools and students.

All of you — who are the California Teachers Association — made this happen. We didn't agonize. We organized. We mobilized. We built strong local chapters. And we did it together.

The Legislature still needs to approve it, but the governor's budget proposal provides an additional \$5 billion for public education. That's all the money our schools are owed under Proposition 98. It's the money the governor took and refused to pay back. It settles the lawsuit we filed against him. And it's education's fair share of new revenues coming into the state.

Under the settlement agreement, \$2 billion will be paid this year. An additional \$3 billion will be paid over seven years, and that money will be used to help our schools of greatest need.

For years, CTA has led the fight for assistance, rather than sanctions, to those schools that have been labeled low-performing. By targeting additional money to those schools that serve low-income students and English language learners, we'll be able to close the achievement gap and better provide a quality education to all students.

The repayment money will be used to help these schools reduce class sizes, improve teacher and principal training, in-



crease parental involvement programs and hire additional school counselors. A portion of the money will also go to our community colleges to expand career education programs and improve student transfer rates to state universities.

We are putting money where our hearts are — with our students.

In the June primary election, CTA again came out on top. While we are disappointed at the defeat of the preschool initiative, the victory of Phil Angelides is a real boon for public schools. He has the guts and the integrity it takes to be governor and to do what's right for California.

In fact, almost all of the CTA-endorsed candidates prevailed on June 6. Particularly gratifying were the victories of Los Angeles teacher and CTA member Tony Mendoza in the 56th Assembly District, and CTA staff member Kevin de León in the 45th District.

Finally, I'm so proud to close this school year by welcoming more than 5,000 education support professionals who have been working in California schools and who have been members of the National Education Association into our CTA family. The vote by the State Council of Education to extend CTA membership to education support professionals was a bold step for CTA's future. These are people who work side by side with us in our schools every day. CTA has always celebrated its diversity, and now, we're truly in this together.

Have a great summer.

Barbara E. Kerr

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