



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

TOM TORLAKSON

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

April 28, 2016

Dear County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators:

MAY IS LABOR HISTORY AND SAFE JOBS FOR YOUTH MONTH

Preparing students with critical skills to understand and actively participate in the world of work is an important, ongoing goal for educators.

May is Labor History Month. Enacted by legislation in 2002 and amended in 2012 to cover the full month of May, *Education Code (EC) Section 51009* encourages schools “to commemorate this month with appropriate educational exercises that make pupils aware of the role the labor movement has played in shaping California and the United States.”

Labor Code Section 6359 establishes a statewide young worker health and safety resource network to “coordinate and augment existing outreach and education efforts and provide technical assistance, education materials and other support to schools, job training programs, employers and other organizations working to educate students and their communities about workplace health and safety and child labor laws.” This network supports these efforts during Safe Jobs for Youth Month.

I am pleased to join Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the State Assembly; the California Partnership for Young Worker Health and Safety; the California Federation of Teachers; the California Teachers Association; the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO; the State Building and Construction Trades Council; and other members of the Speaker’s Commission on Labor Education to encourage California’s public schools to participate in this educational effort.

Labor History Month

A growing number of agencies have resources about the historical achievements of the labor movement, including those listed below. Please disseminate this information as widely as possible.

- The State Board of Education-approved *History-Social Science Content Standards* make multiple references to labor or unions. *EC Section 60040(c)* also

calls for study of “the role and contributions of the entrepreneur and labor in the total development of California and the United States.”

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>

- *Work, Money and Power: Unions in the 21st Century* is a 24-page pamphlet from the University of California, Berkeley, Center for Labor Research and Education that explains what unions are and do, including an overview of labor history. It is a supplementary history/social science text approved by the California Department of Education (CDE).
<http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/publications/index.shtml>
- The California Federation of Teachers Web site offers information about kindergarten through grade twelve (K–12) labor curricula, downloadable PDFs of lesson plans for all grade levels, and connections with California and Common Core standards. One example among many is *Farmworker Comix: A History of Farm Labor Struggle in California*.
<http://www.cft.org/member-services/labor-education/labor-history-month.html>
- The California Federation of Teachers Web site also features an award-winning 10-part video series on the history of the California Labor Movement: *Golden Lands, Working Hands*. You may view sample clips and ordering information online. The series is available on DVD with a CD of lesson plans. It is a CDE-approved supplementary history/social science text.
<http://www.cft.org/member-services/labor-education/golden-lands,-working-hands.html>
- The Los Angeles Unified School District and United Teachers Los Angeles support the Collective Bargaining Project, which brings role-playing and simulations about labor history and collective bargaining to middle and high school classrooms and assists teachers in other districts.
<http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/offices/cbep/>
- The CDE created a model K–12 curriculum on the life and work of César Chávez. This site also includes a bibliography and other resources on Chávez and farm labor issues.
<http://chavez.cde.ca.gov/ModelCurriculum/Intro.aspx>
- Calisphere is a Web site of primary sources and more for educators that was developed by the University of California, Berkeley. Teachers and students are able to see documents and images of California’s labor history from the Gold Rush to the 20th century.
<http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/>

Safe Jobs for Youth Month

The California Partnership for Young Worker Health and Safety is a project funded by the California Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation and led by the Labor Occupational Health Program at the University of California, Berkeley. It offers materials and activities for Safe Jobs for Youth Month, including the following activities for schools:

- Join the annual public awareness campaign, which highlights the importance of educating and protecting California's young workers. Get your programs involved by following the Young Workers Project on social media.
<http://youngworkers.org/safe-jobs-month/>
- Use the Resource Kit to teach about health and safety or organize other educational activities to introduce students to their workplace rights and responsibilities. Download the *Are You a Working Teen?* app and play this year's *Are You a Working Teen?* Game Show activity. Other teaching activities that link specifically with Labor History Month include "There Ought to be a Law" and "Triangle Tragedy."
<http://youngworkers.org/safe-jobs-month/resource-kit/>
- Display Safe Jobs for Youth posters or use video public service announcements created by California teens.
<http://youngworkers.org/posters/> and <http://youngworkers.org/videos/>
- Hold lunch parties, health fairs, and assemblies with workplace focus.

We hope these resources will provide instructional opportunities to support student participation in Labor History Month and Safe Jobs for Youth Month. If you have any questions regarding this subject, please contact Alyssa Hanou, Special Advisor, Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, by phone at 916-324-1597 or by e-mail at ahanou@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Tom Torlakson

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