

JOE BOYD

CTA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Along with decades of leadership, management and field experience, new CTA Executive Director Joe Boyd brings an organizer's mindset to working with members; A sign that says "Work hard and be kind" is displayed prominently in his office. The maxim ties into advice he received as a labor organizer that still guides his approach today: Don't take yourself too seriously, take the people around you very seriously, but remember that everyone's got their own issues.

"It's given me the ability to give a lot of leeway to people," says Boyd, who began his term as CTA's executive director Nov. 1. "We're all imperfect, but we're all trying to work together to make things better."

A public school pedigree

A former educator and son and grandson of public school teachers, Boyd has been helping people and groups organize around issues they care about for more than 30 years — 23 of them with CTA. In the early 1990s, he headed United Teachers of Richmond, helping the chapter in the wake of a state-imposed receivership. He went on to work with rural, suburban and urban locals across the state, handling political campaigns, negotiations and other advocacy efforts. In 2008, he started his tenure as the executive director for the Teachers Association of Long Beach, which was just coming out of receivership.

In 2014, Boyd left CTA to establish his own advocacy and organizing firm. In 2016 he became executive director of the California Federation of Teachers, statewide affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers.

Now back "home" at CTA, Boyd is in charge of CTA's day-to-day operations, including management of 400 employees and oversight of more than 1,000 local affiliates.

An early path to activism

Fairness and equity were instilled in Joe at an early age. He would carry those values in his work as an organizer both within and outside the U.S.

As a new teacher and baseball coach at Kennedy High School in Richmond, Joe served as a site rep, but was not an activist — until the local superintendent drove the district into bankruptcy. In the wake of the financial crisis, senior students in Richmond schools didn't know if they would be able to graduate. Gutted budgets meant no money for team uniforms or buses. Realizing the situation was affecting his ability to do his job, Joe knew he had to get involved. "I was elected chapter vice president in my second year and became very active. The financial trauma resulted in some 600 teachers getting pink slips. I was one of them. What happened was bad for the community, bad for students."

Rough times in Richmond were both proving ground and learning curve for Joe; "I didn't realize so many things are connected to activism, like retirement and health care."

Honoring our past while pursuing CTA goals

As a child, Joe experienced that time before educators had the rights they enjoy today. "

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What makes us a union is our ability to organize school site by school site. What goes on at that school site on a daily basis is the union, it's where the union starts.

"It's the reason to be involved in CTA is because that's who educators are. This is our community. The work we do has the ability to make our classrooms better and our lives better even if our political, religious, generational views are not the same. That involvement is what keeps us going and makes the world a better place.

Joe knows these values extend to the students we educate and the communities where we educate them. "We need to provide every student with the support, the balance they need — in math, reading, sports, everything. Sometimes that's getting a meal, sometimes it's getting into Berkeley, sometimes it's both. Schools are at the center of that. That makes what we do the center, the core, and the place to build out and create understanding with voters and our communities about why our schools are so important."

Affirming union values

Joe has a deep understanding of what makes unions the bulwark against inequity at all levels of society; "The union is just us — people. It's not a building, it's not support for this or that, it's us figuring out how we can make our work lives and our families better, and also make our larger community better."

"My parents were in the union. They weren't activists, they were supporters. My family in West Virginia has coal mining roots, so unionism was a big conversation — everybody who was living a good life economically was in the union. I understood all that.

Hitting the ground running

Boyd describes priority number one for CTA through November of 2020 is ensuring the passage of the Schools and Communities First Initiative (SCF), the 2020 ballot initiative that would bring in \$12 billion annually for education and basic community services. "SCF addresses the longstanding issue of funding that we've wanted to tackle since corporate property taxes were frozen at 1976 levels. Corporations must start paying their fair share while protecting residential taxpayers, agriculture, small businesses. That's the big focus. We're going to get outspent. The only way we can fight back is to out-organize, to organize our members and our communities."

An eye toward the future

Joe sees our efforts to secure fair funding through the Schools and Communities First as an opportunity for success beyond next year's election; "The power we build through organizing our union for this will serve us well beyond November. It's the fight to have lower class sizes, to have nurses, to have arts and music and sports programs that are funded, to have good technology. This is the start of structural support, not only for our schools but for our communities. SCF deals with all the pieces in communities that are important."

More about Joe Boyd

- Born in Long Beach and raised in Orange County
- Married to his spouse Nancy, (an elementary school teacher) with five children (two still in college)
- Educational background includes a B.A. Political Science, UC Berkeley; California State teaching credential: San Francisco State University
- Passionate baseball fan (at one point coached by his father, Long Beach Hall of Famer Artie Boyd), and the LA Angels. "I went to game after game [in the nosebleed sections as a youth]. I became a diehard Angels fan, because you have to support the underdog."

CTA is proud to welcome Joe back to the family.