



ADVOCATE

Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association

November 2018

IMPORTANT DATES DECEMBER

3rd OMTA EXECUTIVE
BOARD MEETING

6th OMSD BOARD OF
TRUSTEES MEETING

17th OMTA REP
COUNCIL MEETING

21st NON-SCHOOL DAY

24th-31st WINTER BREAK
NO SCHOOL

JANUARY 2019

1st-4th WINTER BREAK
NO SCHOOL

14th OMTA EXECUTIVE
BOARD MEETING

21st MARTIN LUTHER KING
DAY – NO SCHOOL

28th OMTA REP COUNCIL

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

This is an article from an Education Specialist. This is the second of articles I am hoping to print regarding the depth and breadth of our OMTA's workforce. I am offering varying factions of our "specialized" certificated staff to share about their job and the inherent duties and responsibilities their position entails. As stated previously, this is not to say that any one group works harder than another. I know that each and every person employed by OMSD works diligently, and in a variety of ways, to care for our students and to also provide a first-class education for every one of our students. Together We Are Stronger, John Egan, OMTA President

Article by: Chris Scoleri

A question I often get, especially from colleagues just starting out in education, is "So, what is it you do?" The job of an Education Specialist (A resource specialist or special day class teacher) can seem a little nebulous or even plain confusing – even to those in other teaching or even special education positions. What makes it puzzling to others is the variety of duties and responsibilities that differentiate it from other teaching positions. A general education teacher, for example, is responsible for grade-level curriculum, standards, instructional minutes, and assessment. The education specialist has those same responsibilities, coupled with caseload management and assessment tasks which often go unseen.

An education specialist is primarily an instructor. There is a caseload of students seen for instructional purposes similar to all other teaching positions. However, where a general education teacher uses a grade level curriculum and pacing guide to drive their instructional activities, an education specialist uses the Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals and objectives to drive theirs. Instructional minutes and delivery are driven by the offer of FAPE, or Free Appropriate Public Education section of the IEP that describes the amount of time, where, and how special education services will be delivered.

Where the resource specialist position and special day class teachers diverge is the task of case management. All resource specialists and special day class teachers are responsible for managing their caseload. This entails delivery of services, assessment of progress on goals and objectives, and holding annual or triennial IEP meetings for all students on a multi-grade caseload. However, resource specialists are also responsible for the assessment of new referrals. This task falls (and should) primarily on the elementary school resource specialist. Special education services are most effective when started early. This means elementary schools should have an active Student Study Team which identifies students who may require special education services and refer them for assessment. Theoretically, no student who has attended an OMSD elementary school for at least one year should ever be initially assessed at a middle school or junior high.

To this end, the case management aspect of the resource specialist position takes on a significant role. The student study team often collaborates with the resource specialist and the school psycho-

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logist to ensure they are making valid referrals after a period of interventions has been attempted to remedy student challenges. At the point of referral, the resource specialist is responsible for assessment of the student with a standardized instrument they have been qualified to use. The resource specialist will develop a set of scores and a report used as part of the process to determine whether a student qualifies for special education services. In addition, the resource specialist will monitor and ensure timeline compliance, collect general education data, coordinate and schedule the IEP meeting, write the IEP including the goals and objectives and services, develop the agenda for IEP meeting, schedule translation, gather all necessary documents, and facilitate the meeting. All of this must be done within time frames described by law. Failure to meet any of the dozens of legal requirements mandated by federal and state law can result in significant penalties for the school district and, in some cases, for the resource specialist.

While it is easy to observe what a resource specialist does instructionally, it's the case management aspect that often goes unnoticed. The case management component is often half of the job. New assessments can come from the student study team, parent referrals, and at times referrals from other services such as speech. This part cannot necessarily be planned for or controlled. New assessments simply come when they come. It's not uncommon to be at or above a caseload maximum and have several new assessments referred. It's simply an aspect of the job and one that requires some flexibility, the ability to prioritize and manage different tasks and timelines, and a willingness to regularly work beyond the contract day.

I often find new special education teachers like the instructional component of their job but dislike the paperwork, and case management. Those who have entered the teaching profession because they like working with kids, are often surprised and, at times, disheartened by case management demands. New teachers often feel like they spend more time doing paperwork and meeting with adults than working with their students. Some leave because of the management demands and the ever-changing way things are done. It is not what some thought they signed up for. And, for this reason, it is why we have a shortage of teachers with education specialist credentials.

I like doing assessments, IEP development, and working with my special education and administrative colleagues, so this position fits me well. I like the challenge of getting things done quickly and being in front of my workload. I also like that I have students for more than one year. It allows me to get to know the student and family well which makes me better able to help them. What I like best, however, is exiting the student I did an initial assessment of three years prior (every three years there is a triennial reevaluation). One thing I tell each family I hold an IEP meeting with is, "I don't want to keep your child in RSP forever. I want to work hard with them and get them to the point they don't need RSP any longer." We're always pushing students toward the mainstream; they get as much help as they need, but in the end, the goal is to return them to general education because they no longer require special education help. 🍏

WELCOME TO THE NEW BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Congratulations are due to the re-election of Elvia Rivas, and the election of both Kris Brake and Sonia Alvarado to the Board of Trustees of Ontario-Montclair School District. All three of these candidates were endorsed by OMTA. Elvia was seated for another term as she ran unopposed For Trustee Area 2. Kris Brake, a familiar name to many of us, will be the Trustee for Area 3, formerly represented by Sam Crowe. Trustee Area 5, was claimed by Sonia Alvarado, who will be new to the Board of Trustees.

The last five weekends many hours and miles were invested by OMTA brothers and sisters to ensure we could put viable and knowledgeable board members in place to represent the students Ontario-Montclair School District. These candidates also



Sonia Alvarado



Kris Brake

know that the hard-working teachers of Ontario-Montclair School District know and understand the primary needs of their students.

There is still a great deal of work to be done to make sure that teachers' opinions and viewpoints are heard and well represented in the coming years, in regards to what is best for the students of Ontario and Montclair. This is only a start. I will continue to encourage each and every teacher in this district to share their stories with our board members so they know of their students' triumphs and successes, as well as, the frustrations and concerns that demand better support, so that every student has the opportunity to succeed. 🍏

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT

ARTICLE VII - SPECIAL EDUCATION

Continued from October Issue

This is the second part of KNOW YOUR CONTRACT re: Special Education, Article VII, pages 22-24 in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. There will be a final shorter piece to conclude language pertaining to Special Education.

- F. Unit members will be provided support and services as specified to implement the student's IEP.
- G. When an IEP team determines that inclusion will occur, or a student new to the district enrolls with an active IEP calling for inclusion, the district will provide appropriate support (e.g. personnel, equipment, facilities, and training).
- H. On a voluntary basis, a unit member may supervise the administration of medication by a student which has been prescribed by a licensed physician for use by that student at school during the instructional day.
- I. On regularly scheduled minimum days, special education unit members shall be provided time for collaboration, conferencing, preparation, and attending District and site level meetings/in-services.
- J. In order to facilitate the legal requirements of annually reviewing the IEP of each special education student, each special education unit member shall be provided two days of release time each year to engage in such annual review activities as directed by the responsible administrator(s).
- K. The District will make a reasonable effort to hold special education support staff meetings (e.g. SLP, RSP, APE, and nurses) during the duty day.
- L. Under the general supervision of the site administrator, the unit member shall assign instructional aides to perform duties which are consistent with the classified job description and the student's IEP. Where appropriate, the unit member shall be involved in the interviewing and training of his/her aide.

- M. For scheduling purposes (e.g. yard duty, dismissal, lunch, etc.), all special education classes shall adhere to an age-appropriate site schedule. Prior to the assignment of a schedule, the affected teacher shall be consulted.
- N. The District shall provide each special education teacher with designated textbooks, consumables, and/or materials which it deems are necessary to meet district curriculum requirements.
- O. The District will make a good faith effort to provide each SLP, SDC, RSP teacher a room with reasonable space and furniture for students, aide(s) and the unit member subject to possible constraints including the need to provide adequate housing for all students and staff at individual school sites.
- P. Class Size/Caseload

Class Type	Caseload Range	District-wide Target
Mild to Moderate Special Day Class (SDC)	10-14	12
Moderate to Severe Special Day Class (SDC)	9-13	11
Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP)	50-60	55 Grades K-8
Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP)		40 Preschool
Resource Specialist Program (RSP)		28
Itinerant RSP		24-25
Inclusion Program	16-20 (majority of students will be General Education)	18
Adaptive P. E. (APE)	50-60	55

WHAT WONDERFUL THINGS ARE YOU DOING IN CLASS?

I would like to visit classrooms, so I can see all the wonderful things that are being taught and accomplished by all your students. If you are comfortable with a visitor and there is something you are excited about that your class is doing, being academic or elective, I would enjoy seeing it! My goal is not to stay long and/or disrupt your teaching; it's simply to pass along the good word to others. If you're interested in having me as a visitor, drop me a line; give me a call with at least three dates & times. And most important, notify your administrator that I'm coming. Thanks, John Egan • president@myomta.org • 909-986-2414



CLASSROOM VISITS THANK YOU

I wanted to thank both Rosa Ronquillo and Carlos Gonzalez for inviting me to their classroom to see their amazing students. Mrs. Ronquillo teaches Kindergarten at Berlyn Elementary. I had the pleasure of reading "Bark, George" and "Where the Wild Things Are", as well as getting serenaded to "Mary had a Little Lamb" while the students played small hand-made string instruments. It was really a fun morning!

Mr. Gonzalez, a teacher at Edison Academy, asked me to come by and watch his Language Arts Students, perform magic tricks they had to learn and present, critique each other, as well as self-critique their performance and presentation using academic language specific to magic. It was wonderful to see such thoughtfulness put into instruction that included engagement, essential questions, as well as fun. It was a pleasure to be invited to participate. I also want to congratulate Mr. Gonzalez for representing the Ontario-Montclair School District, and being recognized as one of the "Teachers of the Year" in the 52nd Assembly District, represented by Assemblyman Freddie Rodriguez. 🍏

HELP US WITH OUR FOOD DRIVE



Many of our students and families will not have food for the holidays. Please join OMTA in helping those that are struggling to put food on the table by donating to our Food Drive. We will be collecting nonperishable food for local families from November 1st through December 10th and donating on behalf of OMTA (YOU!)

"No one ever became poor from Giving"

~ Anne Frank

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Vista Grande: Monica Lite

Wiltsey: Kim Hunter, Brad Joplin

Counselors/Orcs: Deana Shoultz

Early Ed/Pre-School: Alison Guadalupe

HFB/Hardy Center: Laura Smart

Health/Nurse: Dana Smith

Music: Daniel Salcido

PE/APE: Daryl Durston

Special Ed: Aurora Mejico

Speech: Ulla Tang Larsen