



ADVOCATE

Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association

March 2019

IMPORTANT DATES

APRIL

1st OMTA REP
COUNCIL MEETING

5th OMTA SPRING SOCIAL

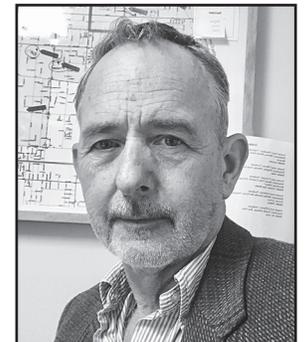
15th OMTA EXECUTIVE
BOARD MEETING

18th OMTA BOARD OF
TRUSTEES MEETING

29th OMTA REP
COUNCIL MEETING

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

I have visited most school sites as of this point in time and been able to converse and listen to you, our valued OMTA members, share your thoughts, suggestions, and concerns regarding our profession. Some of you have heard me talk about myself and my own experience growing up in Garden Grove, reminiscing about what public education was for me, and that I struggled in school. I was a low-performing student. I was a quiet kid who sat toward the back of the room, quiet, in my head, doodling in the margins. If we had “screeners” back then, well, you know who I was. I was that insecure, shy kid all the way past high school. I still am in a lot of ways. If you’ve ever heard me speak at a board meeting, you’ve probably witnessed me stumbling over my words. That little kid still exists inside of me. But I needed school. Thank goodness there was a dearth of assessments back then. I don’t know how I would have fared.



I needed the other part of school... the part where there was a wealth of fun and experiential learning; the socialization. We students got to create dioramas, do story writing and poetry, where we got to play with words and language and not worry about mechanics so much, and make pictures to accompany the stories. We had Show and Tells, and more performances and events, than we had academic and attendance assemblies (which we actually had none of). We had band and fairs and holiday pageants, and sometimes we even had movies during the weekends at school. We made crafts, cut and pasted things about history and field trips, and some kids just ate the paste. Unbelievably, we got to use technology and listened to the World Series with our transistor radios tucked into our pants pockets with wires reporting about Bob Gibson striking out Tigers. We had classroom potlucks. We weren’t ferried off the campus after school but were allowed to stay and play football and soccer with Mr. St. Amour and Mr. Forgey. I’m not going to lie, we were expected to do well in school, but it wasn’t the benchmark and assessment driven learning we’re subjecting our students to now either. This isn’t an indictment of what we do now, but it seems a lot of the joy has been taken from teachers and invariably the students.

I may be wrong, but I have a feeling that the all the assessing teachers are doing, including the litany of professional development and training that teachers are being subjected to (PBIS, Kagan, MTSS, amongst other items entertained by district and/or sites), not to mention the curricular pieces as well (Common Core, Wonders, Eureka, NGSS, Social Studies adoption), is conceivably undermining the “Why” teachers’ teach, and actually challenging some teachers’ notion of their choice of vocation. Am I wrong in believing the above items listed that teachers have been asked to implement, and “master”, these past few years is anxiety provoking? Is it possible that teachers are feeling stressed from this wealth of district directives and are possibly projecting this anxiety onto

Continued on Back Page

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A COMPLIANT SCHOOL SITE COUNCIL

School Site Councils are the single most important way for a school's teachers and community to implement, establish, and sustain the academic and social-emotional needs of any given school site. If SSC rules and procedures are not followed it is very easy for a school to lose its bearings educationally and collegially.

California Education Code **EC64001** (a) and the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requires schools that receive state and federal funds through the Consolidated Application and Reporting System (CARS), and ESEA Program Improvement Funds consolidate all school plans into a School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), which is developed by a School Site Council (SSC). The SPSA's purpose is to improve academic performance of all students. The School Site Council recommends the proposed plan to the local governing board for approval, monitors implementation, and evaluates results. Every year the SSC must revise and recommend the plan, including *proposed expenditures of all funds* allocated to school via the Consolidated Application, to the governing board for approval.

In short, the responsibilities of the SSC are to develop/revise and approve the SPSA, review student achievement data (SBAC, API scores, ELA and Math benchmark results, CELDT results, attendance, suspensions, school safety reports, etc.), on-going review of the implementation of the SPSA, and the on-going review of the effectiveness of the strategies implemented, and modifications if needed.

Any school that operates a program that requires a School Plan for Student Achievement, pursuant to **Section 64001**, must establish a School Site Council. **Education Code 65000** states the members of a SSC must represent the composition of the school's pupil population. The composition of the SSC is to also ensure parity between the two groups composing the SSC.

A School Site Council at an elementary school must consist of the two following groups to insure parity:

One group consists of the principal of the school or designee; classroom teachers employed at the school, selected by classroom teachers employed at the school; and school personnel employed at the school who are not teachers, selected by school personnel employed at the school who are not teachers.

The second group has parents/guardians of pupils attending the school, or other members of the school community, selected by parents of pupils attending the school.

The number of persons selected for the school community shall equal the number of persons selected for the parent/community member community. A School Site Council can be as small as 10 people with 5 representatives in each group, or as large as 20, with 10 being in each group.

At secondary schools, the School Site Council shall consist of both of the following groups:

The principal of the school or his or her designee; classroom teachers employed at the school, selected by classroom teachers employed at the school; and school personnel employed at the school who are not teachers, selected by school personnel employed at the school who are not teachers. The classroom teachers selected shall constitute a majority of the persons selected to this group.

Parents of pupils attending the school, or other members of the school community, selected by parents of pupils attending the school; and pupils attending the school, selected by pupils who are attending the school. The number of persons selected to represent the parent/student community shall equal the number of persons selected to the school community.

There is no law specifying how to select council members, except that members are to be chosen by peers.

The School Site Council consists of: A chairperson to organize and lead meetings; A vice-chairperson to serve in the absence of the chairperson; A secretary to record events and actions taken at council meetings; other officers as needed to support the work of the council. The principal is not to be the chairperson of the School Site Council; it is also important to note that the principal has no administrative authority over the School Site Council. The principal's role is to work closely with, and assist the chairperson to plan SSC meetings, provide needed documents, and serve as a primary source of information for the SSC, as well as explain state, district as school policies.

School site Councils must adhere to the following rules:

Meetings must be open to the public, and the public may address the council on any item within the council's jurisdiction.

A notice of the meeting, including the agenda, must be posted at the school site, or other accessible place at least 72 hours before the meeting, and the notice must specify the date, the time, and location where the meeting is taking place.

The council cannot act on any item not posted on the agenda, unless by unanimous vote, the council finds a need for an action unknown when the agenda was posted.

The School Site Council as you can see gives a great deal of input and control to the people delivering and supporting instruction as well as to the constituents receiving instruction: the surrounding community. Who better to know the needs of the students in the classroom other than the parents, and the teachers? It is imperative that we fill our SSCs with knowledgeable and committed teachers and community members to insure our schools using school funds wisely and are compliant with the state's education code.

For further reference go to:

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/co/ssc.asp> 

GOT UNION?

A union is built on its members. This is the first guiding principle of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union. I couldn't agree more. I've gotten to talk to a great deal of people this past year and gotten to get their opinion of our local association, the Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association. We have 1,090 members. Some of our members think we have a strong union, others don't. I would like to think we do, but honestly, I don't know.

I know a lot of you pay your dues. But I do not know if you know what your dues pay for. Some think that dues are primarily for me, other executive board members, and reps to look up contract language when you feel you have been unfairly treated. Unfortunately, it's not really for that, but we do it, nonetheless. It shows we value you and want to help you.

Union dues actually uphold and support everything we do. We, meaning all teachers. We pay dues to three associations. The largest association, The National Education Association uses the money received to perform representational activities (litigation costs, recruiting and organizing, staff education), political action (ballot initiative spending, lobbying, issue advocacy, and political communication with members), and contributions and gifts (supporting like-minded organizations, helping local affiliates bargain contracts, handle grievances, and provide other member services) as well as tackle other issues around the nation.

California Teachers Association uses dues to fund its Association for Better Citizenship (campaign funds for school board races), Communications (California Educator magazine), Crisis Assistance Fund, which helped those teachers with need in wake of the California wild-fires, Governmental Relations, Human Rights (immigration rights), Instruction and Professional Development, Legal Services, Negotiations and Organizational Development, Regional Services (Ontario RRC), Training Information and Development, and other internal agencies within CTA.

Locally, dues help support and uphold the contractual language we've bargained for since our contract was first negotiated and ratified many years ago. Dues help to provide services to members that we can't provide. Every year, we get to edit and modify the contract through bargaining for the betterment of all membership, and sometimes the niche groups of our membership as well.

Sometimes we don't get what we want in a contract because we have to bargain in good faith with management, and management

doesn't always agree with our intent, our concerns, and/or needs. If we have dire and specific needs that need to be in contract to help support our students, as well to improve our profession, myself and a few other teachers at a board meeting, doesn't necessarily paint the picture of a strong union, no matter how pointed a message we deliver. Last spring, I was truly humbled by an amazing turnout of our members at Central Language Academy, which was still just a fraction of our membership. I do not know how amenable management is for a change to contract this year.

A union is built on its members. If we truly desire change, we need to demonstrate that we want change. 🍏



KNOW YOUR CONTRACT ARTICLE IX – MATERIALS

ARTICLE IX always seems to be a point of confusion at some school sites. Class-appropriate consumables are separate from the \$15.00 per enrolled child allotment given to teachers, and consumables should not be subtracted from this allotment.

- A. Allotment for Materials: Teachers will be provided basic class-appropriate consumables, such as paper, pencils, pens, crayons, markers, erasers, glue, tissues, etc. In addition, the District shall annually allot to each school an amount equal to \$15.00 per enrolled child for the purchase by teachers of discretionary instructional materials. Teachers new to a site will also be allotted classroom materials and supplies, such as stapler, scissors, rulers, etc. necessary for classroom set up. The method of apportioning such funds among the elementary teachers shall be on a per pupil basis. The method of apportioning such funds among the middle school teachers shall be by dividing the amount on an equitable basis. 🍏



Message from President Continued from Page 1

the students? A fair question is what is the right amount of rigor for both student and teacher?

Another fair question is, are we meeting the needs of the whole child? Are we really addressing all the needs of our children with the amount of testing and academic rigor we are foisting onto our students? One of the concerns I hear the most, is the prevalence of behavioral issues in class that supplants instructional time. Are these behavioral issues teachers are witnessing a manifestation of the academic rigor our students are exposed to, or a “snapshot” of the conditions of the community we live in? Either way, we must ask ourselves if we are meeting the needs of these students, or just putting a band-aid on the affliction? Regardless, teachers cannot and should not be made responsible, or culpable for the actions of the students, or shortcomings of their parents.

I am not denying that Ontario-Montclair School District does great things. We do have exceptional students in our schools who represent our schools and district well. There is no doubt there. But we must remember, learning is developmental. We can introduce certain concepts to our students, but we can't force feed students who aren't ready for the rigors of the academic learning placed in front of them. I believe we need to slow down our teaching and make it more meaningful and impactful for those learners,

so that it enables us to take the time and invest in addressing the needs of the “whole child” that is our language learners, our homeless and foster children, and those children who exhibit challenging behaviors, as well as others who struggle in our classes. I believe we can still provide a first-class education that engages all learners while decreasing the pace of learning and implementing a caring community within our schools that supports both students and teachers. 🍏

WHAT WONDERFUL THINGS ARE YOU DOING IN CLASS?

I want to thank those teachers that have invited me to their classes to see the gifts they, and you bring to our students on a daily basis. I'm still taking invites. 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
P. S. I'll bring a little something for your students

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Music: Daniel Salcido
PE/APE: Daryl Durston
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Speech: Ulla Tang Larsen