

ADVOMTACATE

The logo for the California Teachers Association (CTA), featuring the letters 'CTA' in white on a red oval background.

Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association

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The logo for the National Education Association (NEA), featuring the lowercase letters 'nea' in a stylized font.

May 2012

BEING SAFE ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

We have written before about teachers and social media sites like Facebook. New York City Education Department has just come out with guidelines for their teachers and this provides a good opportunity to revisit the issue here. Because in some districts teachers have been disciplined, and in some cases dismissed, as a result of what are deemed to be inappropriate posts on social media sites, this is an issue that is very important.

New York City school officials say on the one hand that social media has a role in modern education. On the other hand, they say that teachers need to keep separate their personal and professional interactions. Therefore, they prohibit teachers from "friending" students on their personal sites. Instead, teachers who want to use social media are directed to create school-related accounts solely for that purpose. Furthermore, if teachers wanted to use Facebook to interact with students, not only should they create a professional only Facebook account, but they should also have a professional-only email address to link it to.

They also recommend that administrators frequently monitor social media sites that are established for educational purposes. This is for the protection of the school system, the students and the employees. The purpose is to see to it that social media sites are used responsibly by everyone.

Inherent in all of this is the acknowledgment that social media offers powerful tools for engaging students in their education. Used properly, they can enhance any classroom and make learning more meaningful as well as increase student achievement. The ultimate goal of the guidelines is to help teachers use these resources and at the same time draw a line between personal and professional socializing.

Because teachers have suffered serious consequences for improper use of these tools, often innocently, it's important that teachers who want to use social media do so in ways that keeps them safe. OMTA does not want to find itself defending teachers from disciplinary action due to something they did on Facebook. The simple rule to follow is to *always* use a separate account for email and Facebook (or similar sites).

A final word of caution, particularly for our teachers on temporary contracts. What you put on Facebook and other social media sites is in the public domain. An unfortunate fact of life today is that what you post there can have consequences for you professionally. A teacher with permanent status has due process rights, particularly in terms of having employment on an ongoing basis, that a temporary teacher does not have. Unless you're using a fictitious name on your account, be careful what you put there. There have been teachers around the country who have lost their jobs simply because they had a picture of themselves on Facebook drinking an adult beverage. You never know when a parent is going to take exception to something you've put there and make an issue of it with the district. The old expression of an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure definitely applies here.

From Your President

Rick McClure



I have spent 9 of the last 14 years serving as President of OMTA. During that time, I've seen education go from Whole Language to Reading First to what today is, I hope, a more balanced approach to reading instruction. When I first became president in 1998, California was just starting the accountability movement with the development of API and decile rankings of schools. Shortly after that, No Child Left Behind was passed and we all know what that has brought.

We have gone from a time when it was perfectly acceptable for children to pass through the educational system and never learn to read to where today we are held to account for wholly unrealistic standards for every student, putting undo stress on everyone, perhaps especially the children we serve. Much has changed in 14 years, some for the better, some for the worse. The one thing that hasn't changed is that teachers show up for work everyday determined to do the best they can for the kids that have been entrusted to them. For that I salute each and every one of you.

The role of the union in education is to support you in what you do. Whether it's negotiating a wage and benefit package that allows you to support your families, or seeing to it that you have working conditions that treat you like the professionals you are, I've always believed it was my job as President to represent all teachers so you could focus on your work: educating children. I hope I've done this well. I've certainly tried in my time as President to represent each and every one of you when you've needed it, and to help provide an environment in which all of us can be successful in what we do.

This year OMTA was successful in negotiating a significant increase in benefits, laying the foundation for a future in which the district will provide enough money for benefits that every teacher will be able to receive a fully paid benefit plan for themselves and their families. The additional money bargained this year makes a down payment on that process, but will require that the district continue over the next few years to make additional monies available. We have the assurance from the district that they intend to do just that. Of all the things we've bargained in my time as President, I think this may be the most significant. The cost of benefits has risen so much over the last 10 years, and the district contribution towards that has been so inadequate, that some employees were being faced with the unacceptable choice of covering their dependents or letting them go uninsured. I'm happy to leave office knowing that the foundation has finally been laid to do something meaningful about this.

It has been a tremendous honor to have been able to spend 9 of my 26 years in teaching as President of OMTA. I thank all of you for entrusting this important work to me and hope that I have lived up your expectations. I will continue to be involved in OMTA both as an advocate for all of you, but also as support to our new President, Amy Tompkins. I've been working hard with Amy over the last 2 years to see to it that she's ready to take over on July 1. I'm confident she will be and hope that she receives the same support from all of you that I have.

Next year I'll be working in the PPS office as a special education teacher on assignment. I'm told my primary responsibility will be to conduct assessments on private school students within the district, in order to identify possible learning disabilities. I will also be assigned to fill in for special education teachers who must take extended leaves to see to it that their IEPs are done in a timely and compliant fashion. I'm looking forward to the next stage in my career. Nothing will top, though, serving all of you as President. Thank you again for the honor.

CTA MEMBER BENEFITS

Do you ever receive solicitations from companies claiming to be a CTA endorsed vendor? If so, you're not alone. Many vendors target school district employees for sales of their products and services. In order to gain access to you, they sometimes give the impression that they are approved or endorsed by CTA. Because so many vendors misrepresent themselves in order to garner your trust, it is good for you to understand whether they have been endorsed by CTA.

CTA does endorse the following companies:

The Standard Insurance Company – Life and Disability Products

California Casualty – Auto and Home Insurance Program

First Financial Credit Union (branches in Southern California) - Financial Services

Provident Credit Union (branches in Northern California) – Financial Services

TSA Special Member and Insurance Services, Inc. – Travel, Entertainment and Discount Services

Bank of America – Credit Card Services

VSP – Discounts for vision services – for retired members only

CTA also has agreements to recommend the following companies:

NEA MEMBER BENEFITS

Mayo – Well-Baby Program

Enterprise Rent-A-Car – Rental Car Program

CalSTRS 403(b)Comply

Companies endorsed by CTA must go through a rigorous screening and review process, and must be approved by the Vendor Evaluation and Screening

Committee and the CTA Board of Directors. Those companies who receive endorsement by CTA must agree to be subject to the processes of the CTA Advisory Panel on Endorsed Services. The Panel provides advocacy for our members should they have a concern or be unhappy with the products or services of an endorsed vendor.

If you receive information from a company claiming to be CTA endorsed and want to verify whether it is true, or just want to know what companies and products and services are endorsed, visit the Member Benefits section of the CTA website at www.cta.org, or call the Member Benefits Department at (650) 552-5200.

If you have been contacted by a vendor representing themselves as CTA endorsed or approved and they are not, please refer this information to the Member Benefits Department at (650) 552-5200. We take our endorsements very seriously. Vendors should not take advantage of your trust in the CTA endorsement.

Limited Opportunity to Switch Your Insurance to CTA Endorsed Income Protection and Life Insurance

From **April 1 through May 31, 2012**, CTA members who have disability and/or life insurance coverage through another provider have a special opportunity to make the switch to the only CTA-endorsed Disability and Life Insurance plans. To start the change-over process, call The Standard's dedicated CTA Customer Service Department at 800.522.0406 from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Pacific time.



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Speech: Kimberly Cieslik
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Early Ed Center: Leticia Martinez
HFB: Vacant



Enjoy your summer vacation

CTA AND OMTA RECOMMENDED CANDIDATES FOR JUNE ELECTION

If you live in the following legislative districts here are the candidates recommended by either CTA or OMTA:

CD 27 – Judy Chu
CD 31 – Pete Aguilar
CD 35 – Gloria Negrete McLeod
AD 40 – Russ Warner
AD 41 – Chris Holden
AD 52 – Norma Torres
AD 62 – Jose Medina



**OMTA
Executive Board Meeting
August 13th
Rep Council Meeting
August 27th**

**OMSD
School Board Meetings
May 17th
7 pm at Central Language
Academy**

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Rick McClure
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2nd Vice President
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