

# ADVOMTACATE

**CTA**

**Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association**

417 West "E" Street, Ontario, CA 91762 (909) 986-2414

nea

August 2011



## OMTA REPRESENTED AT 2011 NEA RA

**OMTA delegates to the NEA RA, Melody Kelly, John Egan, Rick McClure, MaryKay Scheid, Amy Tompkins, Tracy Taylor, Brad Richards and Leticia Martinez**

OMTA members Rick McClure, Amy Tompkins, Melody Kelly, MaryKay Scheid, Tracy Taylor, John Egan, Brad Richards, and Leticia Martinez were delegates at the 2011 NEA Representative Assembly, held in Chicago from July 2 – 5. The RA is an annual meeting where the policy of the NEA is set for the next year. Virtually everything the NEA does is a result of action taken at the RA. This year we heard from Vice President Joe Biden, voted to endorse President Obama's reelection campaign, and voted to adopt a new policy statement on teacher evaluation.

Perhaps the most controversial issue at the RA, especially in the California delegation, was the vote on making an early endorsement of President Barak Obama. Two issues were primarily at play against each other with the delegates. One was what most delegates considered to be President Obama's abysmal record on handling educational issues. The other was the assault on public employee unions in some parts of the country, perhaps best exemplified by Wisconsin and the legislature and governor there stripping public employees of the collective bargaining rights they'd had for over 50 years. The issue ultimately came down to whether or not to endorse now when it can make a difference, or wait until next year when it probably won't matter.

In the California delegation the vote was very close, but we did vote to support the early endorsement on the grounds that it is critical to the future of public employee unions, including our own, to have a Democrat in the White House when we may have part or all of Congress controlled by Republicans that seem bent on destroying our unions. In the RA as a whole the vote was 72% in favor of endorsing early.

The RA also adopted a new policy statement on Teacher Evaluation\*. Initially controversial, the statement was amended so that it easily passed. The controversial issue was the use of student standardized test scores as part of evaluations. The adopted final language dealing with test scores reads, "Unless such tests are shown to be developmentally appropriate, scientifically valid and reliable for the purpose of measuring both student learning and a teacher's performance, such tests may not be used to support any employment action against a teacher and may be used only to provide non-evaluative formative feedback." As was emphasized by NEA Secretary Treasurer Becky Pringle, who headed up the committee that developed the statement, no such test currently exists. Only if and when such a test is developed, and adopted by a district or state, will NEA support using standardized tests in teacher evaluation.

Both the highlight, and lowlight, of the convention was having Vice President Joe Biden come and speak to us. It was the highlight simply because it's always exciting to hear from the President or Vice President. The last time we heard from a Vice President at the RA was in 1999 when Vice President Al Gore came and talked to us. The last time a President came to the RA was in 1996 when President Bill Clinton addressed the RA. It was the lowlight of the convention because the secret service screening caused lengthy delays in getting into the convention hall. Many delegates waited in line for up to 3 hours before getting in and some missed the Vice President entirely –making for both an exciting and frustrating morning.

\*To read the policy statement for yourself go to "<http://www.nea.org/grants/46326.htm>" <http://www.nea.org/grants/>

## FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

*Rick McClure*



The school year has gotten off to a very calm start here at the OMTA office. I'm attributing that to a good start for all of you, since I usually hear from teachers if it isn't. Personally, I'm feeling good about where we are as a district and the support that is being provided to classrooms. I'm not happy with the increase in class sizes in grades K – 2, and I'm sure you aren't either. On the other hand, given the economic climate schools are facing right now, it's to be expected. We have yet to experience furlough days here in OMSD while virtually every other district around us has. We got a significant increase in benefit money last year, and while it is uncertain that it will be a permanent increase, I'm confident that it will at least be repeated this year. All in all, we're in about as good a place as a district could be expected.

The bad economic news for schools may not yet be over, though. The budget that was passed in June did contain level funding for schools, meaning that we got the same amount of money as last year. Unfortunately, to come to that agreement the legislature had to hope for an additional \$4 billion in revenue not originally projected. If that money doesn't come in, there will be additional cuts in three different tiers. If the state gets at least \$3 of the \$4 billion in anticipated revenue, it will not impose any cuts this year and roll any shortfall over into next year. If the state gets \$2 to \$3 billion, it will impose cuts to higher education and health and human services. If the state gets \$0 to \$2 billion, it will impose proportional cuts of up to \$1.5 billion in cuts to K – 12. For OMSD that could mean a cut of up to \$250 per ADA, or about \$5.5 million.

It is uncertain at this point if the cuts will happen. Tax revenue was down in June, but it's also true that the state actually had on hand, just not in the bank, tax revenue for July that was actually above what was projected. It only counted what was in the bank. The state will determine in December if the cuts occur, but we'll probably have a pretty good idea by October what's going to happen.

Here in OMSD we have enough reserves to get through this fiscal year. Mid-year cuts will cause more cuts for us for next year though. You can count on me and your bargaining team to be very involved with the district on these issues.

Elsewhere in this Advocate is a report on the NEA Representative Assembly held this year in Chicago. I was privileged to be a delegate for 16<sup>th</sup> year in a row. I mention it here because I want to explain the reason the Assembly voted to endorse President Obama a year early. One of the criticisms of that decision is: Why now? Why couldn't it have waited so that we could see if we could encourage the President to change some of his education policies? The reason we endorsed now is that if we didn't, we would have to wait until next summer. That's because only the Representative Assembly can make that decision, and we only meet once a year. The thinking was that waiting a year would cause the impact of our endorsement to be negligible. Another criticism was why not wait to see who the Republican nominee was going to be? I'll admit I'm a partisan Democrat so perhaps my judgment here is a bit prejudiced, but I honestly can't see any way that any of the current Republican candidates could possibly be any better for education than Obama has been, and he's been pretty bad. I can't imagine, though, a Republican today having better policies on things like accountability, merit pay, teacher evaluations, and tenure. His education policies aside, though, the prospect of having a Republican in the White House given the attack on public employee unions is a scary prospect for those of us who care about our union. I'm supposed to be passionate about it since I'm the President, but I hope most of you agree that belonging to the OMTA/CTA/NEA makes a significant difference in your profession. Imagine things if your union didn't exist. I, for one, don't want that to happen.

## BARGAINING FOR 2011 – 2012

The master contract negotiated last year provides that the Association can reopen on two articles this year. OMTA submitted to the district a proposal to reopen on Articles VIII, Hours of Work, and XI, Evaluation. In addition we are reopening on Salary and Benefits.

For Evaluation, the issues we want to discuss with the district about are pre and post observation meetings and the scheduling of formal observations. For Hours of Work, the issues are the difference between Tuesday and Wednesday meetings, school site committees, extra duties, grade level and department meetings and the expectations of teachers at magnet and distinctive schools.

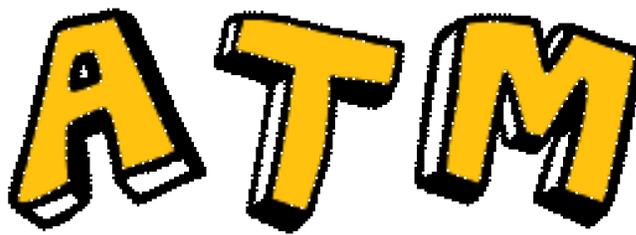
Everyone will remember that we negotiated a substantial increase to benefits last year. We agreed on contingency language addressing whether or not the increase would be one time or permanent, and the first issue we need to settle is that. We do have reason to believe that the district is interested in finding some more permanent solutions to our benefits problems in OMSD. Our ability to do that will depend a lot upon the state budget situation, especially whether or not we get hit with mid year budget cuts again.

Because we use interest-based bargaining, issues are kept vague and open-ended on the part of both the association and the district until we reach agreement. Our goal is to improve not only working conditions for teachers, but also to improve conditions for learning for our students. The district will be submitting its formal proposal at the board meeting on Aug. 18. Until that happens, we will not be scheduling any formal meetings. We do expect that negotiations will begin sometime in September.

We would also like to remind everyone of some changes to the contract we negotiated last year. The first is the elimination of Objectives as part of the Evaluation process. We trust everyone will appreciate not having to do them again. Another is the language we negotiated on IEP meetings, namely that it is the expectation that they will be held during the school day, and that no one will be required to spend more than 60 minutes past their work day at an IEP meeting. The first part of this is to ensure that it is rare that anyone has to stay after their workday at all for an IEP meeting. The second part is to ensure that—especially for difficult meetings—there is a reason to put a time limit on them and, if necessary, to schedule a time to finish meetings on another day.

We also negotiated language for RSP teachers that they will get the equivalent of one full day a week to hold meetings, and do assessments and paperwork. They will get this time on one full day (i.e. a team day) unless there is mutual agreement between the teacher and the site administrator to do it some other way. The default is doing a team day. Any questions or concerns can be directed to the OMTA office.

## PROTECT YOUR ATM/DEBIT CARD FROM ATM SKIMMING



In today's fast-paced world, almost everyone is in a hurry to complete daily and weekly tasks, including getting "fast cash" from an ATM to quickly filling up their tanks at the gas station. Using an ATM/Debit Card makes these errands quick and easy.

While an ATM/Debit Card is designed to make our lives more convenient, ATMs have increasingly become a target for criminals. ATM skimming is one of the ways criminals commit fraud with your ATM/Debit Card and steal your information.

According to Bankrate.com, theft from ATM skimming is approaching \$1 billion annually. Below is more information about ATM Skimming and tips to help you avoid becoming a victim of ATM skimming.

### What Is ATM Skimming?

Criminals attach devices onto ATM machines in order to copy an ATM/Debit Card number, the information encoded on the magnetic strip and even the Personal Identification Number (PIN).

### Risk Reduction and Protection

**Inspect the ATM Before Use.** Before you use an ATM, take a moment to examine the machine. Does anything look out of place or not original? Is there anything taped to the machine? Do some parts look loose or in a different color (for example, the ATM is silver and the card slot is black)? Is there a brochure rack or other promotional materials on the ATM or near the machine that seem out of place? Are there mirrors on the ATM? If you find anything that looks suspicious, don't use the ATM.

### Recognize a Skimming Device

Many skimming devices are stuck onto the machine or near the ATM with two-sided tape or even Velcro. Some skimming devices are inserted into the ATM (in the card slots). Once it is loaded, wireless cameras are often attached to the ATM key pad. This is how criminals capture not only the ATM/Debit Card number, but the PIN as well. Once this information is obtained, criminals can reproduce a fraudulent ATM card and begin withdrawing funds from the account.

### Protect your PIN, Your Card and Your Account

Don't share your PIN with anyone. Be sure to cover the screen and the key pad when you're using your PIN.

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## OMTA REPRESENTATIVES

**Arroyo:** Karen Hirschfeld  
**Berlyn:** Crystal Cook, Erik Kobulnick  
**Bon View:** Wayne Bradley, Nancy Mason  
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**Montera:** Erine Ames, Kelly Cook  
**Moreno:** John Hamman, John Ross  
**Oaks:** Lora Dahms, Vickie Hami  
**Ramona:** Trudy Cowan,  
Olivia (Borrero) Craig  
**Serrano:** Dalia Aref, Brad Holtan  
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**Vina Danks:** David Hennessee, Glenn Wong  
**Vineyard:** Lesia Beasom  
**Vista Grande:** Helen Cieslik  
**Wiltsey:** Ken Aven, Linda Boren  
**Music/PE/APE:** David Moody  
**Speech:** Kimberly Cieslik  
**Health/Nurse:** Marissa Sitz  
**Early Ed Center:** Leticia Martinez  
**HFB:** Vacant

## PROTECT YOUR ATM/DEBIT CARD from page 3

If your card is not returned after you completed your transaction or after pressing cancel, immediately contact the financial institution that issued the card and report the incident. Always check your monthly statements to ensure there are no unusual withdrawals.

A further word of caution.

When a credit card is used fraudulently, the credit card issuer is responsible. That's why banks have so many procedures in place to spot credit card fraud when it occurs. This is not true for a debit card. If your debit card is used fraudulently by someone who has stolen your number, such as by skimming, and if you don't catch it quickly enough, you can be responsible instead of the bank. For that reason, keep a close eye on your accounts that have debit cards. Having online access is a good way to keep an eye on your money.

Article from CTA member services (last paragraph from OMTA)



## OMTA OFFICERS AND OPERATIONS

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**Rick McClure**  
1st Vice President  
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**Bruce Sarver**  
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**Chris Scoleri**  
**Tracy Taylor**

Bargaining Chair  
**Shari Megaw**

PAC Chair  
**Melody Kelly**

Office Manager  
**Cindy Newey**  
[officemanager@myomta.org](mailto:officemanager@myomta.org)

Advocate Design  
**Dann Dunst**

Advocate Editor  
**MaryKay Scheid**

OMTA Office  
417 West "E" Street  
Ontario, CA 91762  
Tel: (909) 986-2414  
Fax: (909) 983-0585  
E-Mail:  
[President@myomta.org](mailto:President@myomta.org)

**OMTA**  
**Executive Board Meeting**  
**September 12th**  
**Rep Council Meeting**  
**September 26th**

**OMSD**  
**School Board Meetings**  
**September 1st & 15th**  
**7 pm at Central School**

