



ADVOCATE

Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association

April/May 2016

IMPORTANT DATES

OMTA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

May 2nd

OMTA TEACHER APPRECIATION TACO TRUCK

May 3rd; 3-6pm

NATIONAL TEACHER DAY

May 3rd

OMSD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

May 5th

CALIFORNIA DAY OF THE TEACHER

May 11th

OMTA RETIREMENT DINNER

May 13th

OMTA REP COUNCIL MEETING

May 16th

OMSD SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

May 19th

June – June 2nd and 16th

July – July 7th and 21st

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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR INTERIM PRESIDENT

MaryKay Scheid

I can tell you I have been very busy these past few weeks; this is a busy time of year and I have a lot to learn. I am really enjoying the chance to get my feet wet before starting my official term on July 1. Meeting different teachers from the various sites has been a highlight for me. I look forward to meeting many more of you as time goes on. This is my first Advocate, but it is the last one of the year. Have a relaxing, restful summer, and I will see you in August.

TEACHER APPRECIATION: In honor of Teacher Appreciation Day, OMTA will host a Taco Truck at our office on Tuesday, May 3. From 3:00 pm-6:00 pm, there will be food, drinks, music, and raffle prizes. Our address is 417 W. E Street in Ontario. Come grab some food and enjoy conversations with your colleagues.

TRANSFERS: All of the administrative and voluntary transfers have been completed. I appreciated those of you who shared your experiences with me, as all of your input will help me think of suggestions to improve the process for next year. Individuals who were administratively transferred did not have to participate in the interview process, but many found it beneficial. There were far fewer administrative transfers this year, which is a good thing for our members. There were also fewer openings and not all preferences could be honored. Those who were administratively transferred may not be compelled to move for 3 years; however, those individuals are all free to put in for a voluntary transfer in the event that the new placement is not the right fit.

OPEN ENROLLMENT: Open Enrollment will be from Monday, April 25 through Friday, May 13. There will be two Benefits Fair Days. The first is Tuesday, April 26 at the Robert Hardy Center. Technical help will be available from 8:00 am until 12:00 pm. Vendors will be there from 11:00 am until 5:00 pm. The second fair will be at the Homer F. Briggs building (district office) in Conference Rooms B1 and B2. Technical help is available from 10:00 am until 4:00 pm. Vendors will be open from 10:00 am until 5:00 pm. Vendors scheduled to attend the Benefits Fair are: American Fidelity, Schools First, Voya Life Insurance, Eye Med Insurance, and Delta Dental. You are welcome to enroll yourself online at any point during the open enrolment period. If you would like technical assistance, American Fidelity will be available at either the Hardy Center or the District Office for several hours every afternoon until May 13.

VOYA LIFE INSURANCE: From our new life insurance provider, you are automatically enrolled in a \$50,000 term life insurance policy paid by the district. As a bonus to our employees, you



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KNOW YOUR CONTRACT: END OF THE YEAR INFORMATION

As we come to the end of the 2015-2016 school year, there are a number of things to wrap up. Final Evaluations (Article XII), Tentative Assignments (Article XI), and Transfer Procedures (Article XI) are some of the things that pertain to teachers. The deadline for delivery of the final evaluation report to the employee is April 28, 2016 and the final evaluation conference should occur by May 12. You should receive your tentative assignment for next year by May 5, 2016. Should you be asked to change classrooms, there is language in the contract to compensate you for doing so.

The contract allows for permanent teachers with 10 or more years of experience in the district and a history of satisfactory evaluations to be placed on a 4-year cycle for formal observations. Temporary and Probationary teachers, per education code, must be evaluated using the formal observation method every year. Of course, administration is welcome to conduct informal observations of all teachers at any time.

Your tentative assignment should be made after collaboration with your administrator. An assignment change is a change within the same school between subject areas or grade levels. The contract stipulates:

“After considering unit member assignment preferences for the ensuing school year, the administration will provide each unit member with a written statement of his/her tentative assignment at least 15 duty days prior to the unit member’s last scheduled work day. Prior to making any final decision regarding a change in assignment, the immediate administrator or his/her designee will discuss the proposed change with the unit member. If the unit member objects to the proposed change, the administrator will consider the unit member’s suggestions.

The administration will then provide the unit member a written statement of the assignment, noting reasons for the assignment change, if applicable, grade level/subject, location, and effective date.

It is understood that unforeseen conditions impacting the instructional program may affect the assignment change.”

With regards to relocating to another classroom on the same campus, the contract says:

“When there is an assignment change and/or administrative transfer within the school year, a unit member may request a reasonable period of non-teaching preparatory time of up to three (3) instructional days. At the request of

the unit member, up to the equivalent of (1) one school based minimum assignment day, as defined in Article VIII – section A of this agreement at the work shop rate, may be substituted for two (2) release days. Permission for such release time shall not be unreasonably withheld or unreasonably limited by the immediate administrator.

If a site change occurs beyond the contractual year, the unit member will receive a stipend of up to \$450/\$150 per non-contract day worked.

The District will also furnish reasonable assistance to move personal teaching materials and equipment.”

Another Victory for CTA

Just a few weeks after the Friedrich’s case was decided in favor of teachers, CTA learned of another victory. The Vergara lawsuit was brought by “Students Matter,” an organization founded by multimillionaire David Welch. The suit challenged the California statutes that govern due process in teacher dismissals. The plaintiffs alleged that such protections harm students. CTA released this statement to the media in celebration of the decision to overturn the verdict:

LOS ANGELES – In a sweeping victory for students and educators, the California Court of Appeal today reversed a lower court decision in the deeply flawed Vergara v. California lawsuit. The unanimous appellate opinion is a stinging rebuke to Judge Rolf M. Treu’s poorly-reasoned ruling, and to the allegations made and millions of dollars spent by wealthy anti-union “education reformers” to bypass voters, parents, and the legislature with harmful education policy changes. The reversal affirms the arguments of educators, civil rights groups, legal scholars and education policy experts that the state statutes affirming educator rights do not harm students.

“This is a great day for educators and, more importantly, for students,” said California Teachers Association President Eric C. Heins. “Today’s ruling reversing Treu’s decision overwhelmingly underscores that the laws under attack have been good for public education and for kids, and that the plaintiffs failed to establish any violation of a student’s constitutional rights. Stripping teachers of their ability to stand up for their students and robbing school districts of the tools they need to make sound employment decisions was a wrong-headed scheme developed by people with no education expertise and the appellate court justices saw that.” 

SPOTLIGHT ON BUENA VISTA

by Michael Hatter

Welcome to the wonderful world of Buena Vista Arts-integrated Magnet School! Our school has the distinguished honor of being the first school of choice in OMSD. It was the idea and inspiration of long-time OMSD principal Dr. Carl Schaefer in the 1990s, whose vision was to integrate the visual and performing arts into the general curriculum as a way of promoting a rich well-rounded, meaningful education.

The uniqueness of Buena Vista is that all students participate in VAPA studio classes as a part of their weekly instruction. In their classes, students explore the four strands of the arts: music, dance, theater, and visual arts. And of course, arts are also integrated into the core curriculum through teacher-designed lessons that stimulate creativity, while fostering higher academic learning. The Visual and Performing Arts are everywhere at Buena Vista!

As you walk around the campus, you can't help but notice and appreciate the amazing student-generated visual art pieces, or should I say, masterpieces, which are the creation of our awesome scholars under the direction of our awesome teachers. You will also see scholars playing instruments outside of a classroom, singing, and conducting outdoor science lessons. The scholars at Buena Vista are always being challenged academically as well as artistically.

Buena Vista teachers are highly qualified as both classroom teachers and artists in the visual and performing arts. Our multi-talented resident teachers bring years of professional arts experience as gallery artists, vocal and instrumental musicians, dancers, and thespians.

Our Buena Vista choir is comprised of first to sixth grade scholars who have a love for music. They rehearse Mondays after school where chorus director and second grade teacher, Tami Wardell, introduces singers to a variety of musical genres from classical to pop. The music is learned and prepared for our many school and local performances. The choir is always a highlighted group of the District's winter celebration of "VAPA Land."

A large number of our student population participates in the school band, which is led by our wonderful instrumental teacher, Linda Owens. Through her dedicated instruction and guidance, many students have been selected to the OMSD honor band and orchestra, not to mention the prestigious opportunity to perform at the county level. Performances include Christmas on Euclid, District-Wide Honors Concert, as well as the Spring Honors Concert.

Each year, Buena Vista, in collaboration with our neighboring school, The Arts Conservatory at Vernon Middle School, puts on a major musical theater production. Directed by our multi-talented fifth grade teacher, Teyanna Smith, scholars from both schools have the opportunity to perform in a professional-caliber production that allows our scholars to experience the world of live theatre. In past years, Buena Vista has

produced "The Little Mermaid Jr.," "Seussical Jr.," and "Aladdin Jr." This year's production of "The Lion King Jr." featured a cast of more than 50 young actors, singers and dancers from both schools.

The Buena Vista Dance Club welcomes all scholars regardless of experience, and is comprised of about 80 dancers. Buena Vista first grade teachers, Gina Alexander and Brenda Palacios, with the help of a professional dance instructor, lead the group and choreograph the dances. This year, the dance club has performed several times for parents, as well as a recent district officials.

This month, Buena Vista is hosting the first annual Day of the Arts; a day in which our scholars are given the opportunity to participate in two specialized VAPA focused classes of their choice. This is a day of celebration in the arts and is an enriching extension to our school-wide arts focus.

We also have a wonderful, supportive PTO that coordinates our fundraising by sponsoring such events as our annual Fall Festival, family enrichment movie and game nights, field trips and providing a multitude of additional art supplies, materials and resources to enhance our program.

Recently, Buena Vista received a letter from our State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlakson, that we would be receiving the prestigious California's Gold Ribbon School Award, which honors outstanding public schools in California. The Gold Ribbon committee was very impressed with our focus on integrating of the arts into the CORE curriculum, our focus on teaching art content during studio time, and the wide variety of VAPA extracurricular opportunities students have to be a part of at Buena Vista. The Gold Ribbon committee was most impressed by the consistent high level of rigor was witnessed in each and every classroom, as well as the authentic positive school culture and family atmosphere.

Overall, when the staff was asked about why they enjoy working at Buena Vista, there was a common theme that resonated throughout all of the responses. In short, at Buena Vista, we have always been a school that promotes teamwork, collaboration with the goal of putting the needs of our students first. Every day, we get the opportunity to enrich our scholars' lives with both academia and creativity, which makes teaching and learning fun! At Buena Vista, we are not only colleagues, but we are friends who enjoy sharing ideas; we are respectful of differences and supportive of each other. With the tremendous support of our awesome administration, support staff and parents, we are able to use our skills to reach new heights with our scholars and give them the kind of education that will help them achieve lifelong success. In short, Buena Vista is a FAMILY! 🍏

PATH TO LEADERSHIP

by Ana Waldschmitt

Teacher leadership evolves over the course of one's career. As young educators, we first look at what's best for our students, guiding them on their journey. Eventually, some of us accept leadership opportunities at our school sites. Ultimately, we may begin to look at education a little more globally. The desire to understand the field of education on a grander scale inspired me to become a union rep.

I have been given the opportunity this year to serve not just my students, but also my school as a school site rep. What does this mean? Well it means that I get information and then share it with my school site. As a union rep. I have been told by many people that it is important to know the contract, your rights, and never to be afraid to ask questions.

Being a rep. has provides opportunities such as attending the CTA Region III Leadership Conference. I signed up to go with a friend, Monica Lite. I had no idea what to expect but was excited about the opportunity. First of all, CTA goes all out, they feed you all day long and their sessions were really interesting. My favorite was the one on STRS, the State Teachers' Retirement System. I had never attended one. Let me just say that I wish I would have gone to one sooner. I won the raffle and was fortunate to sit at Eric Heins' table for lunch. It was really interesting to hear about his life as the CTA president.

It was such an empowering weekend to be around so many past and present teacher union leaders. They were positive problem solvers and that to me is empowering. They encourage you to know the contract and know your rights. OMTA gives us so many opportunities to get to know them. I know we are all really busy in doing what is best for our students, but there has to be a time when we take a deeper look within to help ourselves too. This conference was a great start toward a wonderful journey in the union. 🍏

*Message from Interim President
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can also enroll in voluntary/supplemental life insurance during open enrollment, up to the guaranteed issue amount. This means that even if you have declined voluntary/supplemental life insurance in the past, you are eligible to enroll – for up to \$150,000, no medical questions asked! You may elect to add any amount from \$10,000 to \$150,000. If you choose to add additional coverage, even as little as \$10,000, Voya will allow you to increase your additional coverage to the maximum of \$150,000 at any time in the future without answering medical questions, but you must enroll during this open enrollment to get this one-time only benefit. So, should you, in the future, be diagnosed with a life threatening illness that would preclude you from qualifying for life insurance elsewhere, Voya would still permit you to increase your coverage to the maximum. You are also able to continue a relationship with Texas Life or any other carriers with whom the district has partnered. 🍏

OMTA OFFICERS AND OPERATIONS

President/State Council Rep: Amy Johnson

President@myomta.org

1st Vice President/Interim President:

MaryKay Scheid

2nd Vice President: Daniel Salcido

Secretary: Melody Kelly

Treasurer: Erine Ames

CTA State Council Representatives

Cindy Lopez Elwell, Tracy Taylor, Amy Johnson

Service Center 1 Representatives

Shari Megaw, Tisha Curry, Trudy Cowan,

John Egan, Amanda Howser

Bargaining Chair: MaryKay Scheid

Elections Chair: Vince DeFabiis

Office Manager: Cindy Newey

officemanager@myomta.org

Advocate Design: Dorreen Petersen Davis

Advocate Editor: Judy Westbrook

OMTA Office

417 West "E" Street • Ontario, CA 91762

Tel: (909) 986-2414 • Fax: (909) 983-0585

OMTA REPRESENTATIVES

Arroyo: Mary Ann Bantillo

Berlyn: Crystal Cook, Erik Kobulnick

Bon View: Abel De Casas, Nancy Mason

Buena Vista: Michael Hatter

Central: Tina Foglesong, Marina Garcia-Guevara

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Sultana: Terri Tucker, Bertha B. Fitzgerald

Vernon: Isabel Santos, Diana Verdugo

Vina Danks: Ryan Highstreet, Jeff Rogers

Vineyard: John Borrowman, Nila Delise

Vista Grande: Helen Cieslik/Monica Lite

Wiltsey: Steve Taylor, Kim Hunter

Music: Daniel Salcido

PE/APE: Vacant

Speech: Ulla Tang Larsen

Health/Nurse: Marissa Sitz

Early Ed/Pre-School: Jeanne Deseran

HFB/Hardy Center: Olivia Craig