



ADVOCATE

Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association

February 2017

IMPORTANT DATES MARCH

- 9th OMSD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
- 13th-17th SPRING BREAK NO SCHOOL
- 20th OMTA E-BOARD MEETING
- 27th OMTA REP COUNCIL MEETING
- 31st OMTA SPRING SOCIAL

COMING UP IN APRIL:

- 11th RETIREMENT TRAINING

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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

MaryKay Scheid



I hope you all enjoyed your 4-day weekend. It's hard to believe that spring break is right around the corner. Also right around the corner is an election. Because of the break, we cannot run the election with double blind envelopes –we wouldn't be able to submit the results in accordance with CTA timelines if we did. For that reason, we will be asking the reps to set up "polling places" at their sites. For 2 consecutive days, site reps will invite unit members to sign for a ballot, cast their votes, and submit them. At the middle schools, the voting will occur on Thursday, March 9 and Friday, March 10 – the days immediately preceding spring break. At the elementary schools, voting will occur on Monday, March 20 and Tuesday, March 21. These are the two days immediately following spring break. Ballots are due back to the OMTA office by 3:30 pm on Tuesday, March 21. Contract ratification results will be posted on Wednesday March 22.

You have two votes to cast in the upcoming election. The first vote is for state delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly in Boston this summer. Because of the size of our district, OMTA is entitled to seven local delegates. A total of seven OMTA unit members submitted their qualifications to be considered as local delegates. Our by-laws allow for all seven of those candidates to be approved by acclamation. Our area (known as Region 3) sends additional delegates who will be funded by CTA. A total of 17 delegates will be elected in our region. In casting your vote, you are entitled to vote for fewer than 17. Please do look for the OMTA unit members running at the state level and consider supporting them.

The second issue to be considered on the ballot is our tentative agreement. The bargaining process took much longer than it has in past years because we were negotiating the full contract and did, in fact, look at the language in EVERY article. In many instances, we merely endeavored to simplify the language. In other instances, we spent hours reflecting upon the pros and cons of altering language on issues we initially assumed would be simple. Refer to the "Know Your Contract" article for further information.

I have heard that some of the problems you've had with the assessments have been corrected. The tests are being stapled in book-style, to ease the students' use of the material; the scantrons have been written in a more logical order. I have learned also that some sites, realizing assessment 5 occurs during state testing, have chosen to eliminate assessment 5 for those grade levels participating in the SBAC. I realize the assessments are still requiring substantial instructional time

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SPOT LIGHT ON VINEYARD STEM

By Nila Delise

Everyone knows that STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, but at Vineyard STEM we are STEM teachers; Superb Teachers with Exemplary Motivational skills. So, what makes Vineyard such an amazing place to learn and work at? Vineyard STEM is STEM for all grades –TK–8th! Our STEM isn't restricted to clubs, it is not just for the exceptionally gifted, and it is not just one part or hour of our day, it is truly STEM for all. STEM is intergrated in everything we do at Vineyard; students are given many opportunities to use the four stem skills of collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking.

Whether you find yourself in our TK-3rd grade learning gardens that are aligned with NGSS, or walking into a 4th grade classroom and witnessing the one-to-one iPad pilot in action, or stumbling upon the 5th grade Robotics program, there is always something exciting to see at Vineyard. Perhaps you will find yourself in our middle school land; you will surely see students engaged in MESA (mathematics, engineering, science, achievement) through UCR. This year's MESA competition is quickly approaching; bridges, egg drops, gliders, math competition, Speak Up (speech competition), model science and prosthetic arms are some of the exciting categories. The top 3 in each category will move on to regionals. Once Mesa Day (2-25-2017) is done, the middle school students will shift to prepping for our District Robotics Competition, to be hosted by Vineyard. This year 8th grade representative Olivia Tobin is going to the county science fair for the second year in a row with the same project. The teachers at Vineyard encourage our students to add more data and continue to let research guide their next steps. Vineyard STEM has four amazing labs that embody the work we do at Vineyard; the computer lab, the multi-media lab, the science lab, and our newest lab: the makers' space lab. This lab is a space where teachers can take their students and create with our 3D printer & vinyl printer, use the engineer design process to problem solve, and explore our 10 ready-made kits that have classroom lessons such as bridge building, boat building, flying machines, and more. The tools in this makers' space allow the students to apply what they learn in a hands-on way.

We are a county model STEM school, PBIS Gold Ribbon School, AVID Certified and this year we were awarded the STEM School of Excellence Award by the International STEM Education Association. We were the only school in California and 1 out of 4 schools for the United States. Don't miss us in the PTA National Newsletter where we will be featured about STEM. Of course, all of this could not be accomplished without the amazing staff and administration. Alec Hobbs has been in education for 16 years. This is his first year as a principal but second year in administration. "I have never worked with a more dedicated staff. It's exciting to be here; Everyone at Vineyard genuinely cares about our students and community"-Alec Hobbs. Adriana Melgoza has been in education for 19 years. This is her first year as an EA; before returning to Vineyard, she was a TOA for Curriculum Instruction for two years and as a Data Coach for six years. "One of the main reasons I came back to Vineyard is the sense of family here, this staff is the hardest working staff I have ever worked with by far, I'm excited to be a part of the Vineyard family and to be a part of its future." -Adriana Melgoza. This administration is very approachable, encouraging, and supportive. They value and frequently ask for our input when it comes to what is best for Vineyard. They are very welcoming and encourage teachers to come in and sit and chat with them.

When I asked some teachers at Vineyard what they liked about working at Vineyard, I was ecstatic to learn that we are all on the same page. Responses such as: "There is a true sense of collaboration amongst staff", "I feel supported, and I get along with all staff and Administration", "For all the thousand things going on here there is always someone to help you. You are never alone . . .", "You can always count on this staff to help you out, everyone always supports each other", "There are many things I like about working at Vineyard, one the staff... we work HARD to do what's best for kids."

Vineyard is a pretty phenomenal place to be!

"If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow." ~ John Dewey.

RAISES ON THE HORIZON

by Judy Westbrook

Our bargaining team was able to make some gains for our pocketbooks, even though California is facing shortfalls in the state budget and OMSD is facing declining enrollment. Our negotiators worked hard making claims and supporting them with research and data to win these financial gains for us. We agreed to a 3.5% ongoing increase to our salaries and a .5% one-time payment, both retroactive back to July 2016. Knowing that healthcare continues

to be a challenge for our members, we worked hard as a team to negotiate a .5% ongoing allocation to provide for coverage of single party medical and partial coverage of two-party and family coverage. While the amount may lower than you would have liked, the team believes this is truly a win-win for members given the tough financial times being predicted across the state. 

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT – THE TENTATIVE AGREEMENT

The bargaining team spent countless hours researching settlements in other locals, offering data to the district, and arguing on your behalf. We believe we have realized some significant wins in this tentative agreement and we hope you agree.

Article I, Recognition, identifies who is and is not qualified to be a unit member. We clarified the language. Article II, Effect of Agreement, describes how the contract is to be interpreted when new policies or laws are enacted. We deleted some language for ease of understanding. Article III, Association Rights, speaks to the privileges the district affords the Association in disseminating information. We wrote language to include additional methods of communication, including use of technological resources. In Article IV, District Rights, we merely remedied grammatical errors. Article V, Grievance Procedures, describes the process for filing and outlines deadlines for submitting and responding to grievances. We extended the deadlines by two days to allow for more complete gathering of information. In Article VI, Work Stoppage, there were no changes. Article VII, Special Education, addresses concerns specific to special education teachers and students. We revised the language that provides for teachers to be informed of a student change of placement. We changed the Language Speech Hearing (LSH) title to Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP), in keeping with the industry standard. We identified an SLP Preschool case load. Finally, by removing the phrase “good faith effort,” we ensured substitute coverage be provided to unit members whose attendance is required at an IEP meeting during the instructional day.

Article VIII, Hours of Work, was the most time-consuming topic to address. We spent many hours contemplating the best way to create a kindergarten program that would serve our students and our teachers and be consistently implemented across the district. After meeting with and surveying early childhood educators across the district, the bargaining team recognized that there were several key concerns to be considered. After extensive discussions with the district, we settled upon what we both believe to be reasonable solutions:

- To ensure a similar amount of prep time in the extended day program, teachers will continue to provide the same number of instructional minutes each day they provide now, allowing for daily prep time (teachers in the extended program will not be required to provide share time to other teachers);
- To allow for targeted instruction with students, teachers will be provided a classroom aide for 1 and ½ hours each day;
- To ensure the students are not overwhelmed by curriculum, an average of 20% of each day is reserved for developmentally appropriate enrichment activities;

- To keep kids comfortable and safe, participating schools will provide appropriately-sized furniture, materials for instruction, and reasonable proximity to bathrooms;
- To allow teachers more time for interaction, the average class size will be 24 to 1 with no class to exceed 25 (the sites not able to participate in an extended day program will have a class size average of 26 to 1 with no class to exceed 27);
- The TK students will continue to have weekly instructional minutes of 1,125;
- Special education students will participate in the program in accordance with their IEPs.

Our first survey of current kindergarten and transitional kindergarten teachers indicated the majority of teachers were not interested in an extended day program for our students, but also that the majority would remain in their positions if asked to implement it. Our second survey of kindergarten teachers showed a majority felt the district’s responses to teacher concerns were reasonable. The MOU developed in response to kindergarten teachers’ input will apply for two years, and the Association must agree with the District that the conditions described have been met. This means that site reps and kindergarten teachers at each school will be asked to work closely with administration to ensure their visions are realized.

Also in Article VIII, we provided flexibility for sites to schedule their Back-to-School and Open House minimum days. We agreed to a 45-minute lunch for elementary teachers and maintained a 30-minute lunch for middle school teachers. We confirmed that teachers need to be provided their duty-free lunch regardless of weather conditions. Finally, we set parameters around teacher preparation periods. In Materials, Article IX, the allotment has gone from \$10 per enrolled child to \$15 per enrolled child. Article X addresses Class Size. We agreed to reduce TK-3 class size to an average of 26 with no class exceeding 27. In middle school, no traditional class may exceed 36 students. The daily contact limit remains.

In Articles XI (Transfer Procedures) and XII (Evaluation Procedures), we did minimal revisions for clarifying purposes. In Article XIII, Leaves of Absence, we added an option for unit members to request to use accrued days for Family Illness/Personal Necessity. There were slight changes for clarification in Article XIV (Safety Conditions), Article XVI (Personnel Files), and Article XVII (Public Charges). There were no changes in Article XV (Non-Discrimination).

For Article XVIII, Salary Schedule and Rules, we agreed to a 3.5% ongoing increase and a .5% one-time payment, both retroactive to July 2016. We arrived at this agreement with the help of our CTA Negotiations and Organizational Development Department, who

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for the students to take and almost as much (if not more) of your own personal time to grade. I am certain the last thing you want to do is take more time to fill out a worksheet tracking the time you spend, but I implore you to do so. It will be difficult to argue for changes to the testing protocol if we don't have any data to suggest that changes are necessary.

Spring site visits have begun. For this second round of visits, I am bringing dessert to share with you during our discussion. At the request of our health-minded members, I have included fruit and cereal bars on the menu. I have often been invited, before or after lunch, to serve as a guest lecturer in a unit member's classroom. If you would like to invite me to speak, read, or teach a drama lesson to your class, please reach out to your site reps.



I hope you enjoy the days as they get longer, dryer, and warmer. We have multiple celebrations planned in the spring months – a social on March 31, a teacher appreciation event at our office on April 28, and our retirement dinner on May 5. Please mark your calendars! 🍏

Know Your Contract Continued from Page 3

provided us with the financial data we required to justify our request despite the state budget deficit and our declining enrollment.

In Article XIX (Compensation for Special Assignment), we added a stipend for Spotlight Teachers and IB teachers teaching a design class in middle school.

For Article XX (Annual Salary Supplement – Fringe Benefits), we agreed to an additional .5% ongoing allocation to provide for coverage of single party medical and partial coverage of two-party and family coverage.

In XXI, Definitions, we added a description of instructional minutes and personal leave. And in our final article, we made only minimal changes. In the Appendices, we added a separate salary schedule for Speech and Language Pathologists, on the advice of our CTA Staff.

Elections will be held at the middle schools on March 9 and 10 and at the elementary schools on March 20 and 21. Your site reps will inform you where and when to vote. 🍏



We had a great turn out for our "Presidential Social".

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