



# ADVOCATE

## Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association

September 2015

### IMPORTANT DATES

#### OMSD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

October 1th

#### OMTA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

October 5th

#### NON-SCHOOL DAY

October 12th

#### OMSD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

October 15th

#### OMTA REP COUNCIL MEETING

October 26th

#### CALSTRS TRAINING/ WORKSHOP

October 27th

[www.myomta.org](http://www.myomta.org)



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## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

*Amy Johnson*



Thanks to all of you who attended our welcome back gathering last month. It was great to hear about all the wonderful things happening in your classrooms already.

We all know that we can't be there for others if we haven't taken care of ourselves. I hope you are using your health benefits to stay well. If you have Anthem, you are free to change medical groups within your plan at any time (and with the district health benefits, you have access to a service called "Health Advocate" that will facilitate the change). But you cannot change your insurance coverage in the middle of the year unless you have a qualifying life event. If you experience a life change such as getting married, having a baby, divorcing or losing a beneficiary, you have 30 days from that event to make changes to your medical benefits. You will need to provide proof of these events in order to make the changes. Speaking of beneficiaries, please make sure you check occasionally with CalSTRS and any other district policies you may have to make the beneficiaries you chose when you originally signed up years ago are still the beneficiaries you wish to be named. Finally, if you have any address or phone number changes, please make sure you are keeping both the district and OMTA aware of these changes.

OMTA will be offering two trainings this year on CalSTRS so save the dates! The first one will be October 27th from 3:30-5:00 at the OMTA office. The other CalSTRS training will be April 5th. The training will cover the basics of the CalSTRS Defined Benefits Program, enhancements, 2012 Legislative CalSTRS reforms, and Social Security offsets. This training is intended for members of all ages. The younger you are when you learn about how to plan for your retirement, the better your retirement will be. Please come and educate yourself. We will provide snacks and raffle prizes.

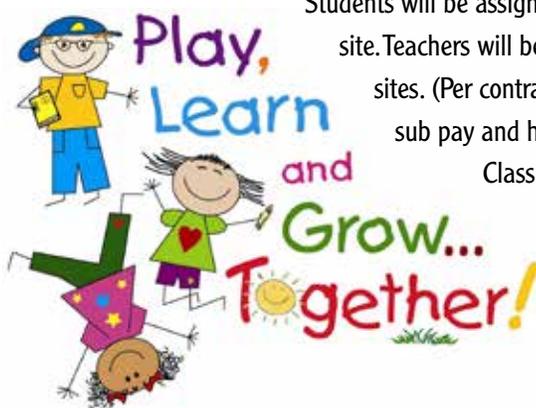
OMTA Executive Board met over the summer to review surveys you have filled out and to come up with a goal for the year. We decided to focus on member engagement. We would like for all of you to become more active, aware, and engaged in your association, OMTA, CTA and NEA. We have activities planned for the year around this. One thing we are doing to help make you more aware is placing a sign on your OMTA bulletin board that says: What Has My Union Done For ME? Each month your reps will put up a different answer to this question. We also have planned a few OMTA member parties at Don Jose's so members have the opportunity to get together and share stories. The first one in September was a big success with members from many different school sites, the next one will be November 6th. The Executive Board will also be doing Listening Tours

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at every site in October. This is a great opportunity for you to get to know your OMTA leaders and share with them what's working and not working at your school. It is important that we work with our local community, so have planned some community outreach. From now until November, we will be collecting canned food to donate to a local food bank for the holidays. Look for the box in your teachers' lounge or ask your reps. This food will be donated on behalf of OMSD teachers. If you'd like to drop off canned goods at our office, please feel free to do so at any time.

I know I discussed the sub shortage in the last Advocate. I want you to know that when a sub does not show up at your site, it is still expected that your site administration will follow the DEFCON procedure put in place in 2012. There are a lot of trainings, planning days, and sick days that happen on the same day and there are not enough subs to fill the jobs.

The district tries to avoid scheduling too much on one day, but sometimes it cannot be avoided. I would encourage you to have your site planning days on Tuesday through Thursday as Mondays and Fridays are the busiest sub days. According to DEFCON there is an order that should be followed when a sub does not show. Please work with your administrators to make sure this is being



followed and what it looks like at your site. The following is the order of what to do when there are not enough subs: 6) Sites may have a substitute on site, on any given day, for site planning. If your site has a roving substitute on site, place the substitute to provide classroom coverage. 5) Site Instructional Leadership Team (bargaining unit members) will be placed in the classroom for partial or full day classroom coverage. (Per contract, they can only sub for 6 hours and 45 minutes a week). 4) Site administrative assistants or office designee, personally call preferred substitutes. If substitutes are not available to work a full day, offer at a minimum, half day coverage. Human Resources office staff can assist in calling substitutes who did not respond. If substitutes are not available to work a full day, offer at a minimum, half day coverage. 3) Classroom coverage is provided by site administrative personnel (Principal, EA/AP or a combination). 2)

Students will be assigned /split up to other teachers at elementary site. Teachers will be asked to "period sub" at middle school sites. (Per contract teachers are time carded based on sub pay and how many teachers took the students). 1)

Classroom teachers will be asked to return from training to sites where no coverage is available. (This is the last resort and should only happen if all of the above options are exhausted). 🍏

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## REAUTHORIZATION OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT/NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (ESEA/NCLB)

By: Tracy Taylor

Remember last spring when the re-authorization of ESEA was imminent? You were asked to call Congress almost daily to affect their decisions regarding Public Education. Both chambers of Congress did work to pass an Education Act. By the summer recess, the Senate had passed the Every Child Achieves Act and the House of Representatives passed the Student Success Act. The two versions are quite different so the next step is for the two chambers to form a committee that must work together to find a compromise.

Leaders of the education committees in both chambers have shown they hope to complete work on ESEA this year. But it is likely we will be asked again to make calls to encourage our members of Congress to continue working toward a new ESEA that will benefit students.

**NEA believes some priorities for the bill should include:**

- a measure for student and school supports; all students should have equitable opportunities in their schools.
- a reduction in the amount of standardized testing in schools and developing new assessment systems that move beyond these tests.
- support for the rights of parents to opt their children out of high stakes standardized testing
- teachers in the decision making on policy in their schools and districts.

Congress has returned to Washington. The political dynamics in Washington highlight the need for our voices to remain loud and persistent, and for educators to keep pressing Congress to craft a final bill that keeps the needs of students front and center. 🍏

# SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS: RAMONA COMMUNICATION ARTS ACADEMY

*By Trudy Cowan . . . With the help of Ramona teachers*

Teaching is such a stressful job, but it is really rewarding at Ramona. What makes Ramona Communication Arts Academy such a positive place to work? There are many answers to that question, depending on whom at Ramona you ask.

If you talk to the administrators, they would say it is the staff that promotes a positive working environment. Administrators are always telling us how hard we work. They praise us for going above and beyond. They thank the office staff and custodial staff for making the school safe and running the office efficiently. Administrators highlight and deliberately publicize successes. They call teachers the experts in our classrooms. They treat us like the professionals we are.

The office staff feels it is the teamwork that makes Ramona so pleasant. They know that if a challenge arises, the teachers and administrators will help them resolve it. They say we cooperate and work together to make this place a positive place for families. They feel we are a great team. They also appreciate coming to work in an environment that is safe and clean.

The custodial staff feels that we work together to make sure the school is safe and clean. They appreciate that the teachers help them identify problems so they can be addressed quickly. They also appreciate how teachers ask the students to clean up the room, making sure no trash, pencils, or crayons on the floor so they can do their job

The non- classroom teachers say that teachers work with them to make sure that all students who need services can get them at a time that works for both the classroom teacher and the non-classroom teacher. They feel that the staff works together for the good of the students.

The librarian said that it is the teachers that make Ramona such a positive place to work. Our librarian said; "The teachers here care about the students and it shows."

Teachers believe it is knowing that we can go to the principal with any concern and feel that he cares and is ready to help. When we ask questions we always get answers. If our principal does not know the answer, he will find it. When we email the principal, he always responds to us in a timely manner.

The positive administrator to teacher relationship makes Ramona a positive place to work. At Ramona, we feel supported by our administration. They make sure we are up- to- date on district trainings and initiatives. They are very supportive of our needs. We feel that if there is a problem, administration will "have our back." They are supportive of our students and their various needs. We feel we are unified as a staff.

Another thing that makes Ramona a positive place to work is that teachers and staff do what is best for the students. Teachers act as advocates for students. Teachers collaborate and share lessons to ensure students receive the best instructional practices. Staff is respectful and helpful to other staff members, parents, and members of the community.

New teachers feel welcomed into the Ramona community. They quickly become part of the Ramona family. They see that we share the workload so that not one person has to do it all. From probationary teachers to veterans, teachers know that their ideas are valued.

It is nice to work with a staff that genuinely cares about you as a person. When one of us is down or having a bad day, somebody is there to pump us up. When somebody is injured or sick, people offer help. If a teacher suddenly gets sick at school, we make sure sub plans for the next day are ready or take their class for the rest of the day. We believe in each other and rely on each other.

Each year there is a theme for the school year that helps us keep positive and teaches our students to be positive. Last year the theme was that we were all bucket fillers. This year we are all on the Energy Bus. We even don't mind going to staff meetings because there are sweet home-cooked treats at every meeting. Not to worry, we follow the district's healthy guidelines for at least one of the snacks.

What makes Ramona such a positive place to work? It is the teachers, staff members, students, and the Ramona Community that makes this such a positive place to work! 🍏



## TEACHER INITIATED FUNDS

Over 50 teachers had the opportunity to attend conferences last year through TIF. Teacher Initiated Funds provides funding for teachers to attend conferences for the purpose of professional growth. This fund helps teachers attend conferences, workshops, and trainings that meet their specific needs for professional development. Every year the fund starts with \$35,000 per negotiated contract language. Because of its popularity, we have already spent over \$15,000 this 2015-16 school year. Each teacher that applies has a cap of \$800 to use towards your conference of choice. If you are thinking of attending a conference, please visit [www.myomta.org](http://www.myomta.org) and click the TIF tab. You will find the application and information on how to apply. If you have additional questions, please email your OMTA representatives on this committee, Tisha Curry or John Egan. 🍏

# See's CANDIES

## See's Candies are a great gift any time of year!

The OMTA office has See's Gift Certificates year round. The certificates cost \$15.00\* each and can be redeemed for One Pound of Candy in a standard See's box or Equivalent Dollar Value of One Pound of See's Candy (currently a \$18.50 value\*).

**Come by our office today!**

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Office Hours: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm Monday-Friday  
(excluding non-student days)

\* Prices and value may change without notice

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**Treasurer:** Erine Ames

**CTA State Council Representatives**  
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**Service Center 1 Representatives**  
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**Buena Vista:** Michael Hatter  
**Central:** Tina Foglesong, Marina Garcia-Guevara  
**Corona:** Paul Leal, Julie Rafeedie  
**DeAnza:** Jarred Shell  
**Del Norte:** Kelly Albers, Natalie Jensen  
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**El Camino:** Vacant  
**Elderberry:** Kevin Dixon, Roxanne Hernandez  
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**Haynes:** Robert Mariani, Leslie Miller  
**Howard:** Kelly Pawley  
**Kingsley:** Linda Bell  
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**Mission:** Debby Hilak, Vince DeFabiis  
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**Montera:** Ana Waldschmitt, Kelly Cook  
**Moreno:** John Ross  
**Oaks:** Lora Dahms, Vickie Harri  
**Ramona:** Trudy Cowan  
**Serrano:** Sam Sager, Brad Holtan

**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:** Vacant  
**HFB/Hardy Center:** Olivia Craig