



ADVOCATE

Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association

November 2016

IMPORTANT DATES DECEMBER

5th OMTA E-BOARD MEETING

8th OMSD SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

19th OMTA REP COUNCIL MEETING

22nd NON-SCHOOL DAY

Dec. 23rd – Jan. 6th
WINTER BREAK – NO SCHOOL

JANUARY

9th OMTA E-BOARD MEETING

16th MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY – NO SCHOOL

30th OMTA REP COUNCIL MEETING

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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT *MaryKay Scheid*



Welcome back! I hope you enjoyed your well-earned break. I imagine these next three weeks will fly by. Remember to take some time to enjoy the energy, the kindness, and the sense of new beginnings promised by the season.

ELECTION. The election results are in. I am grateful to see the end of one of the most contentious and angry campaigns I've ever known. No matter how you feel about what happened at the federal level, there were some real victories for Ontario-Montclair and for California. Locally, we passed Measure K. Funds from this measure will ensure we can make much needed updates to our aging schools. At the state level, we passed Proposition 55. CTA President Eric Heins shared this reflection on his Facebook page:

"... Here in California we got it right! It makes me so proud that Californians once again voted to invest in our future and the promise of public education. Passing Propositions 55 and 58 will help our students learn and thrive. It means 12 years of stable funding for our schools and colleges. It means hiring additional teachers and education support professionals. It means restoring art and music. It means smaller class sizes for our students. And it means something about community colleges."

Thank you for all the hard work you did to ensure passage of these initiatives—phone-banking, precinct walking, post card writing, and mobilizing on social media . . . When it comes to (the) federal election, it was not the outcome that many of us had hoped and worked for, but we're not going to be distracted from what we do best—educating California's students." #WeareCTA

With Eric, I thank you for your efforts in supporting Measure K and Proposition 55. As we enter LCAP Season (the Local Control Accountability Plan), schools are developing their budget plans. I will continue to seek your input about how best to utilize the resources we have, so that I can relay that message to the district.

ASSESSMENT. Learning and Teaching has already met with the Assessment Committee I mentioned in the last newsletter. Their representatives met with

Holiday Office Hours

Beginning **November 28, 2016**
OMTA office hours will temporarily change to:
8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

We will return to our regular hours:
9:00 am to 5:00 pm
on January 9, 2017.

Continued on Page 4

NEGOTIATIONS 101

by Leslie Miller

Negotiation: noun, *ne-go-ti-a-tion*, a formal discussion between people who are trying to reach an agreement.

Be honest... you've wondered what goes on behind the closed doors in Human Resources when the OMSD/OMTA Negotiation Team is in session. Bottled water, chart paper, ergonomic chairs, and words. Lots and lots of words. Is this the stuff that fills "classified" folders, the workings of a clandestine circle? NOT!

You are familiar with the saying, "If I were only a fly on the wall." Well if you were, you would keep company with many other insect corpses that litter the floor, having perished from boredom. Like I previously mentioned: lots and lots of words. The participants of the negotiating team work through an arduous process to arrive at a tentative contract agreement that will be voted upon by the OMTA unit members. We talk and talk and talk some more.

The key word to remember is process. The individuals who comprise the negotiation team bring to the table (no pun intended) over 320 years of collective experience in education. Time is spent in setting norms for deliberation, rumor control, fact checking... and this takes place before we ever broach Article I of the contract. Two steps forward, one step back. Does everyone agree with the proposed wording of a particular sentence? Let's revisit this specific subject at another time after some thought and consideration. A verrrry long process.

So— when interested teachers ask members of the team "What's up?" And the question is met with a shuffling of feet and the answer "Hmmm... well I can't really say much. There really isn't much to say," (and various other forms of a 'non-answer') people often wonder Why the secrecy? And "Can the bargaining memos that are dispersed be any more uninformative?" No, they don't tell much. No, we don't say much.

Here's why: "...it only takes one voice, at the right pitch, to start an avalanche," says D. Hardy in *Return of the Wolf*. What occurs during negotiations is not the creation of secrets and/or covert modus operandi. It is the process of reaching an agreement, if this part here or that part there of the agreement is leaked before it is truly ready to be revealed, the process can and will be severely compromised. A little bit of information can be a dangerous thing indeed — that one voice, spoken out of turn, spirals into false assumptions, which in turn cause rumors to spread, which in turn ends up with people taking sides regarding proposals that are "incomplete, unfinished, and in draft form."

Breathe deeply and be patient with the process. The team of educators sitting at the negotiating table are genuinely concerned about creating the best working environment for both students and staff. In keeping the minute-by-minute workings of negotiation sessions confined to the four walls of the room, we are best able to present a thoroughly considered proposed tentative contract in a comprehensible format.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," wrote Benjamin Franklin. His quip could have been about the founding fathers and our U.S. Constitution: talking, arguing, and wordsmithing until they had a finished product to present to the people for their approval. Likewise with our OMSD/OMTA contract negotiations, give our teachers a finished product that they can say "yes" or "no" to; it is better to be vague than to give partial or incomplete information in the form of a tentative agreement that is not ready for viewing. 🍏

CTA Members Who Stay Focused can Win a Car from California Casualty

CTA members who make a promise to drive safely will be eligible to win a new car from California Casualty. The year-long **Promise to Drive Focused** campaign is dedicated to preventing needless tragedies from inattentive or distracted driving.

National statistics show as gas prices have dropped, more people are driving more miles, with a subsequent increase in highway crashes, injuries and deaths. While insurance companies can replace property, they can't replace a lost life.

Surrounded every day by children, educators know all too well how devastating the preventable death of a young person can be. That's why California Casualty is asking California's educators to "make the promise to drive focused," complementing the efforts of Impact Teen Drivers, a non-profit founded and supported by California Casualty to prevent distracted driving.

"Your safety is important to us," said California Casualty Sr. Vice President Mike McCormick. "We appreciate everything you do and we know that your commitment extends beyond school to your home and family."

Educators have a great influence on younger generations. California Casualty is now rewarding one lucky winner with a new Ford Focus* for being a safer driver and setting an example for students and loved ones.



K-12 educators and administrators can join the commitment to drive focused and be entered to win at www.drivesafepromise.com. The campaign will run from October 20, 2016 through September 1, 2017. The new car winner will be announced in September or October of 2017.

For free evidence-based education materials, please visit Impact Teen Drivers at www.impactteendrivers.org.

*Ford Motor Company is not a participating partner in or sponsor of this contest.

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT – INSTRUCTIONAL MINUTES

Article VIII, Hours of Work, is vital to unit members. Of course, salary and benefits are important, but how we spend our day with students is at the heart of what we do. Several years ago, we agreed to an additional 15 minutes of instruction for a 5% increase in salary. The bargaining team calculated that the increase in instruction represented about 3.8% of our day, but also realized there would be some additional preparation and grading required – hence the 5% figure. Concurrently, we negotiated an additional PE period for elementary school students, bringing the time spent in a formal PE setting within the 200 minutes each 10 days required by California Ed Code. Perhaps most importantly, we standardized and defined the maximum number of instructional minutes in our new day.

These are the instructional minute caps:

Elementary:	Kindergarten	= 1125 weekly instructional minutes
	Grades 1,2,3	= 1565 weekly instructional minutes
	Grades 4,5,6	= 1625 weekly instructional minutes
	Grades 7,8	= 1625 weekly instructional minutes
Middle school:	Grades 6,7,8	= 1650 weekly instructional minutes

As our children get older, they receive more instructional minutes each day. Students in elementary school have fewer daily instructional minutes, a 45-minute lunch, a daily recess, and 2 PE classes per week. Middle school children have PE daily, no recess, and only a 30-minute lunch (7th and 8th grade students at K-8 schools are considered elementary students, as indicated in the chart).

Because grades 1-3 have 2 recesses during the day, they receive 60 fewer instructional minutes per week. Per California Education Code, recess minutes and lunch are NOT included in the instructional minute calculation (passing period in middle school IS included in the instructional minute calculation). It's well-documented that children need play-time, and that they actually perform better when they receive brain breaks; so neither recess nor lunch should be shortened to increase instructional minutes.

Instructional minutes can be considered any minutes a properly certificated teacher is supervising and guiding students. Instruction begins the moment a teacher opens the classroom door or greets his or her students on the playground, instructs them to line up, walks them into the classroom, and directs them to focus on the next task. And instruction does not end until the supervision of the students is released to another adult. Just as we cannot be compelled to open our classroom doors before instruction in the morning, to allow students to hang up their coats and take out their materials, we should not be taking valuable time from recess or lunch to line up and walk back to class. Doing so reduces the time teachers have to take care of whatever they need to do, which sometimes includes pulling students (on a voluntary basis) to provide supplementary instruction. But of more significance to the teachers I've met, shortening playtime is bad for kids. 🍏

MISSION TEACHERS ARE THANKFUL

by Debby Hilak

In keeping with the season, we decided to ask our staff if they would share some of the reasons they are thankful to be working at Mission. Several common threads emerged and often overlapped in the replies. Administrative support, strong team bonds, and a positive sense of community resonated through the responses.

We appreciate our administrators, Rhonda and Gina, as they provide the leadership and essence of our school culture. Rhonda is going on her 24th year at Mission; she began as a teacher and gradually moved into the role of principal. Gina is going on her sixth year. Her energy and enthusiasm encourages students and staff alike. Both ladies are organized, helpful, and "solution minded." Several staff members wrote about having to go out on leave and how understanding and compassionate Rhonda and Gina were during very stressful times. Some of the comments written by staff include: "I am always thankful for our administrators, they are helpful, easy to talk to, approachable, friendly, and always there when I need them, I love coming to work daily." "They are exemplary, and by far the best problem solvers." "They both make us feel appreciated and respected, the door is always open to come and talk." "They work with us to help our students succeed." "They truly care about our school!"

It takes talented and confident leaders to foster leadership and promote collaboration. Our grade level teams entwine the talents of individuals to create the strong, flexible fabric of our school. Many responses refer to sharing, working together, and instances when teachers had to be out of their classes and their team helped with lesson plans and substitute support. "My grade level jumped in and helped my long term sub." A newer teacher stated: "(With) so much support, and closeness, I never feel alone." "I look forward to coming to work and learning from my colleagues."

There is a strong sense of community at Mission. Many responses refer to a close-knit, family environment. Staff, parents, students, and administration all work together. There are parent groups to share information and strategies, afterschool student groups to provide tutoring and enrichment, and family activities to promote family involvement. Student council plans engaging activities and community service projects. "Rhonda and Gina spend time interacting with staff, and also a lot of time interacting with students on the playground."

We are fortunate to be part of the Mission team and grateful for all the people whose talent weaves the insuperable cloth. 🍏

Message from President Continued from Page 1

OMTA to hear our observations about the new testing protocol. They had a formalized agenda and collected data regarding key concerns. Additional changes were made in response to the concerns voiced. The Assessment Committee has scheduled a 2nd meeting before the winter holiday. At this meeting, we plan to have OMTA develop the agenda and offer suggestions for additional changes. Again, please continue to let your reps know about your assessment observations and offer any ideas you may have about changes that would improve the process for both teachers and students. 🍏

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teacher is
like a
candle – it
consumes
itself to light
the way for
others
Unknown

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Wiltsey: Steve Taylor, Kim Hunter

Music: Daniel Salcido

PE/APE: Vacant

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Health/Nurse: Dana Smith

Early Ed/Pre-School: Vacant

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