



ADVOCATE

Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association

November 2020



IMPORTANT DATES DECEMBER

7th OMTA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

14th OMTA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

17th OMSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

18th NON-SCHOOL DAY

21st - 31st
WINTER BREAK
NO SCHOOL



 Find us on
Facebook

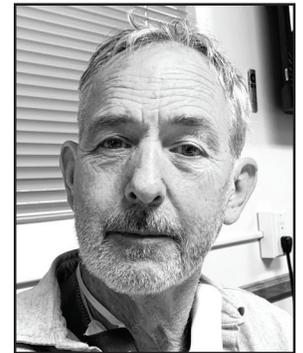
www.myomta.org

Affiliated with



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

I hope everyone had a restful, safe, and well-deserved Thanksgiving break. There is no amount of words that I can say or write to say how proud I am of the teachers of OMSD/OMTA that continue to strive to provide the best education you can to each and everyone of your students. As I am writing this, we are in the midst of a spike that has been impacting all our communities throughout the southland. Regardless of how/what you believe in regard to this virus, it is imperative that we continue to be vigilant to practice safe protocol to not only protect yourself, but most importantly those you come in contact with. As I've stated previously, I know many of us are starved for the friendships and relationships that we had maintained previously but may have had to put on hold because of the current circumstances we face. I miss my friends, and our inability to meet as we used to. I missed going to baseball games last year, getting out on a boat and going fishing, going to Los Angeles with my wife to visit museums and see art, and again visiting with our friends.



Although Superintendent James Hammond has pushed back the possible opening of Hybrid classes to the next calendar year, we still do not have a set date to bring our students back to our schools. And that's okay, because at this point in time, it's challenging for anyone to try and pinpoint when that date will be until we know more about the virus and a possible date that a vaccine will be available to us. I am thankful that we have a school administration that does, in my opinion, try to put safety and health first. The challenge that the district faces is the safety management of the 32 schools that it oversees, and how the site administration at each school interprets directives.

Speaking of interpreting, we currently at this point in time, have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that defines for members and district administration/management the parameters of online instruction at this point in time. This online MOU is backed up by the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) which was renegotiated this past spring. As I type, we are also negotiating a MOU for Hybrid Instruction which will go into effect when the state and the county determine it is safe to return to school sites.

Going back to interpreting... When I was a teacher, even before I was a site representative at Mission Elementary, there was a Special Day Class teacher there who some of you might fondly remember, name of Pat Hawkins. She was a firebrand for the union if there ever was one. She was known to finish each rep meeting with the admonition "Know your contract". I know and understand that the last thing that teachers want to do on top of all the other responsibilities

Continued on Page 2

Continued from Page 1

they are required to do is to read their employment contract. I will admit that I was as guilty as anyone all those years I spent in the classroom, blindly trusting that my principals were doing right by me and my colleagues.

But I digress, back to interpretation. The beautiful things about contract language, besides the fact it can help facilitate sleep, is that it informs you what your job assignment should look like. You have the right to interpret the language within the contract from your understanding and background knowledge. I try to recruit a credible bargaining team that brings a knowledgeable expertise of the profession to the table that best represents our members, but I cannot guarantee that they will leave no stone unturned. As well, do not rely on management to interpret contract either. This is not to say that there are evil underpinnings at work, but simply to say that administrators do not necessarily go into administration to parse and create contract

language either. Also, teachers with an understanding of the contract can help create valuable dialogue between employees and management which helps to circumvent animosity and possible grievances.

If I were to recommend any Articles in the CBA that all members should start to get familiar with, they are Article VIII - Hours of Work, Article X - Class Size, Article XII - Evaluation Procedures, and Article XIV - Safety Conditions. The MOUs should be read in their entirety because they impact you right now. Just a suggestion, a grade level team could easily jigsaw the MOU to read and discuss. Your site representative can provide a physical contract when you return to school sites, and you can find an electronic version at: https://assets.websitefiles.com/5d829340ea2e5934c61df91f/5f0f50968c7ddb760d9d2365_OMTA%20Agreement%20070119_063022_Final.pdf 

SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES FIRST INITIATIVE

The Schools & Communities First Initiative, or Proposition 15, which was widely endorsed by the California Teachers Association, the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, Parent Teachers Association of California, the League of Women Voters, and many other notable associations (see: <https://www.yes15.org/who-supports>) was narrowly defeated in the November election. I want to thank all of you that got out and voted for this most important of measures.

This legislation would have required those multibillion-dollar corporations who continue to pay disproportionate and outdated tax rates, to pay more realistic property tax rates that would have helped subsidize public education in California. This means companies like

Chevron and Disneyland are sitting on very valuable land, since their market value has gone up significantly since the year they purchased those parcels, but their tax rate hasn't gone up at the same rate.

Because this particular election was so close, we will probably see revised legislation similar to Proposition 15 when the next election cycle rolls around again. Public education is such a pivotal issue in California and there is always going to be discussion/action by CTA and other political groups, in trying to return education back to the way it was when California was among the top states in per pupil spending in this country. 

OMSD SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

I want to thank those who have participated in writing to the school board this year to share your opinions and concerns with the board. School board meetings are still being held audibly on YouTube via the district link found on the OMSD homepage under the "Board of Trustees" heading. There is one school board meetings left in this year: December 17th. The December meeting is the Annual Organizational Board Meeting where they will undoubtedly elect Trustee Elvia Rivas, President again. The position of president used to be rotated among the trustees, but for some reason this practice has stopped. 

BARGAINING 2020-2021

Earlier this year we sent out a bargaining survey to all members for their input into what to bargain for this year. Last year, per the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the entire Collective Bargaining Agreement (contract) was opened at the termination of its cycle (a three year period). This being an interim year, both the District and the Association are able to open, or “sunshine”, two Articles in the CBA that they have interest in talking about in the hopes of changing or modifying language to their liking.

We prefaced the survey this year with opening Articles that would not create an additional cost or involve more money. This was because of the freezing of this year’s allocation to match last years funding from the state due to the impact of the coronavirus on student’s attendance, which drives school funding.

The two Articles chosen by members were Article VIII – Hours of Work, and Article XIV – Safety. The executive board acknowledges that Class Size was a popular choice among members, and also agrees that this should be remedied in the near future. However I’m certain everyone understands that decreasing class size involves the hiring of more teachers which in turn does create more expenditures for the District. However, the opening of the Safety Article can involve discussion of class sizes, as we all know that decreasing class sizes can make classrooms more manageable, and also decrease some safety concerns. Safety, is a good Article to open with the recent increase in student behavior throughout the District.

The District chose Article III – Association Rights, and Article XII – Evaluations. Evaluations is always an Article that leads to engaging and impassioned dialogue as both sides have strong opinions on evaluations. Chief among them is the four-year cycle evaluation and how that is defined. Teachers believe that the four-year cycle should be four years of uninterrupted teaching by formal evaluation. The District believes that the fourth year into the process is your evaluation year. I agree with the former, and not the latter argument. To add to this, we have many veteran teachers that exhibit the requisite markers to be granted the “four year cycle” for evaluations, yet year after year are having to go through the frustration of having to perform the every-other-year cycle of formal evaluations with their site administrators. It really is time to stop this silliness and give the benefit of the doubt to these teachers who have performed well year after year. Principals still have the privilege to visit classrooms and observe informally. 🍏

STATE SEES FINANCIAL TURNAROUND

Recently EdSource, in an online article dated November 18th of this year, stated that according to the Legislative Analyst’s Office, that starting in the fiscal year 2021 (July 1st is the beginning of the fiscal year), that K-12 schools and community colleges could be looking at an unexpected state budget surplus of \$13.1 billion dollars.

This increase of 18.5% of Proposition 98 funding that determines revenue for K-12 schools and community colleges will far surpass the mark set in 2014-15 of \$6.3 billion. We should not expect this will leave our school district in a lucrative position as the state issued deferrals to school districts to help avoid budget cuts due to the emergence of the pandemic. Regardless, this unforeseen largesse of funds will substantially help many districts stay afloat and negate possible layoffs.

This projected surplus was created because the state legislature passed a budget expecting their to be a catastrophic financial forecast. Although the pandemic grossly affected many low-wage laborers, high wage earners were not as badly impacted. With the stock market, personal income taxes, and capital gains doing well, the state revenue is up 22% (\$11 billion) after a third of the fiscal year has passed.

This is fairly good news for our newest employees in Ontario-Montclair School District. We should not be seeing many lay-offs as we head into a new school year, and I am cautiously optimistic as we head into a new bargaining year. 🍏

EARLY DECLARATION

The District is offering again this year a monetary incentive to certificated employees who have previously decided that this is the year they have planned to retire. Certificated employees who let the District know ahead of time that they plan to retire have two offers to consider:

- If a certificated employee elects to inform the District that they plan to retire on or before December 18, 2020, they will receive \$2,020.00.
- An amount of \$1,000.00 will be given to certificated employees who submit an early declaration to retire on or before January 29, 2021.

It is important to note that this is not to be confused with a “golden handshake” which is a substantial monetary incentive in order to compel an employee to retire. 🍏

INDEPENDENT STUDY

I know some of you have struggled with the Independent Study piece while we continue to work online to meet the needs of our students. I do appreciate your patience as we worked through this issue with the District to try and come up with answers to alleviate the stress this learning model has created for some of you.

In a recent conversation with Tammy Lipschultz, Assistant Superintendent of Learning and Teaching, she stated a variety of things have helped to ease the burden. Hector Macias, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Steve Garcia, Director of Child Welfare and Attendance, have helped by removing students from Independent Study that were either not doing their work, or it was not working to their benefit. She also said that there were principals that understood the challenges of doing independent study and teaching a full class of online students at the same time, and made accommodations for those teachers to be successful. (Thank you to those principals)

Mrs. Lipschultz also said that principals were reaching out to other principals who were unclear of helping facilitate independent study with their teachers. Teachers on Assignment also were helping to create Independent Study lessons that could also be used as a scaffold for planning other lessons. Professional Development was as well being utilized to help with building the Independent Study piece. We know that starting full time online instruction during a health crisis was a

huge learning curve for the majority of teachers. Then to also throw the Independent Study piece into this schedule, I know it seemed insurmountable and probably impossible for those asked to do this assignment. This was a great deal of stress to deal with in an already stressful situation.

The incredible grit and determination of many of our teachers to work through this, and make this work for their students is commendable. There has been some talk of a nominal financial compensation in the form of a stipend for those teachers who perform this crucial task. It won't be a huge monetary reward, but it will at least be something for the services you provided. 🍏

Red for Ed T-shirts for Sale

A new batch of Red for Ed T-shirts have been delivered to the OMTA office. They sport the CTA logo "outlined" by the state of California on the front of the shirt, and the OMTA logo on the back.

We have a supply of:

5-Medium, 7-Large, 8-XL, 5-2X, and 5-3X.

Prices: \$18 for small to XL | \$20 for 2X and 3X

OMTA OFFICERS AND OPERATIONS

President: John Egan
president@myomta.org

1st Vice President: Tracy Taylor

2nd Vice President: Monica Lite

Secretary: Isabel Santos

Treasurer: Daniel Salcido

CTA State Council Representatives
MaryKay Scheid, Tracy Taylor, John Egan

Service Center One Representatives
Judy Westbrook, Vickie Harri, Tisha Curry,
Isabel Santos, Glenn Wong

Bargaining Chair: Robert Mariani

Elections Chair: Sendai Parker

Office Manager: Cindy Newey
officemanager@myomta.org

Advocate Design: Dorreen Petersen Davis

OMTA Office

417 West "E" Street • Ontario, CA 91762

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

OMTA REPRESENTATIVES

Arroyo: Brenda Zola

Berlyn: Crystal Cook, Erik Kobulnick

Bon View: Debbie Roose Baker, VACANT

Buena Vista: Michael Hatter

Central: Marina Garcia

Corona: Julie Rafeedie

DeAnza: Inaki Bizkarra

Del Norte: Natalie Cantos

Edison: Diana Eberle

El Camino: Janean Rogers/Cindy Smith

Elderberry: VACANT

Euclid: Wendy Beltran

Hawthorne: Joyce Johnson

Haynes: Robert Mariani, Cecil Malacarne

Howard: Kelly Pawley

Kingsley: Michelle Montes, Robert Paulak

Lehigh: Robin Carr, Jennifer Barringer

Lincoln: Alice Mungia, Tamara Lemmon

Mariposa: Sendai Parker,
Dionne Treadway Contreras

Mission: Debby Hilak

Monte Vista: Jose China

Montera: Ana Zoque, Dawn Falkenberg

Moreno: John Ross

Oaks: Lisa Eckersley, Malinda Hurley

Ramona: Kelly Albers, Trudy Cowan

Serrano: Ana Moreno, Glynnis Ellis

Sultana: Breanna Jones, Terri Tucker

Vernon: Regina Kranzer, Rosa Whitton

Vina Danks: Noe Ortiz, VACANT

Vineyard: Nila Delise, Brett Waters

Vista Grande: Annmarie DeHerrera

Wiltsey: Kim Hunter, Brad Joplin

Counselors/Orcs: VACANT

Early Ed/Pre-School: Alison Guadalupe

HFB/Hardy Center: Jeff Quick

Health/Nurse: Dana Smith

Music: Daniel Salcido

PE/APE: Daryl Durston

Special Ed: Aurora Mejico

Speech: Ulla Tang Larsen