



ADVOCATE

Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association

January 2021

IMPORTANT DATES FEBRUARY

1st OMTA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

4th OMSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

8th LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY NO SCHOOL

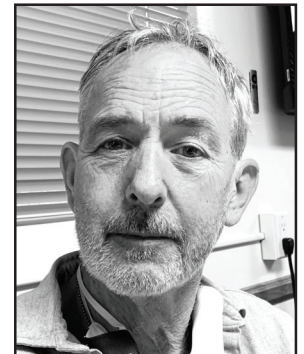
15th PRESIDENTS DAY NO SCHOOL

18th OMSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

22nd OMTA REP COUNCIL MEETING

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

I hope your Winter Break was a safe and restful one with your families. As I'm sure you can all attest, it wasn't long enough. As we begin this new year, I know you all have a great deal of questions. Probably first and foremost is the projected date for when we start populating school sites. If you listened to Dr. Hammond's recent webinar or read his Constant Contact message, we now know that the date we might start back at school sites has been moved to the day we return from Spring Break: Monday, March 29th. This would leave us with a full seven and one-half weeks of school and possible in class Hybrid instruction.



First though, hopefully by this time, ALL teachers will have been inoculated twice with either the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines and the two weeks-time suggested after the receipt of the second shot in order for our bodies to acclimate to the vaccine. The vaccine at this point in time is slow in arrival. At the time of this writing (January 14, 2021) the Los Angeles Times had an article about the slow roll-out that has been impacted by both the federal and state government's inability to effectively plan a systematic and comprehensive dispersal of the vaccine. One of the biggest challenges is that the vaccines need specialized freezer units that keeps the stored vaccines at specific temperature ranges in order to transport to their projected locations. Also, there was mention of no funding being allocated by our state government to plan a schedule for dispersal of the vaccines around the state. Last, the production of the vaccines is not as prodigious as initially thought and the expected vaccination dates as outlined by <https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccines/> is being pushed back. Regardless, we do know that the health care personnel, as well as long-term care facility residents are being vaccinated. Teachers are currently classified as Phase 1B- Tier 1 on the list. The list can be seen here: https://sbccovid19.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2021/01/Phases-Of-Vaccine-Delivery-Legal-Size_r10.pdf

Considering the return to school will be the factor of how far San Bernardino County will be into the administering of the vaccine. If all teachers have received the vaccine by then (and that is not a given) will classrooms be at full capacity or half capacity as dictated by the Hybrid MOU that is still being negotiated? I believe that the jury is still out on the effects the vaccine has on school age children. I think it would be best if we do return this spring, that it is imperative that we continue with the AM/PM Hybrid schedule, possibly erring on the side of caution in favor of our students' health, as well as teachers' health.

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Continued on Page 2

The other big concern is the issue of standardized testing. Last year standardized testing was waived by the federal government as teachers were getting ready to go home and teach the rest of the school year using online instruction. Currently we have no idea what the Biden administration and his new Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona, will do regarding testing, and whether another waiver is being considered or the possibility of online testing. Online testing is a big concern because of the unreliability of the data, and there is no way to truly administer the assessments, which in turns makes the data from the assessments unreliable. This is from the Los Angeles Times, writing about the optional statewide English-proficiency tests administered in the fall which allowed in-person testing with local health guidelines, or testing remotely (online or by paper):

“Remote tests were delayed because it was difficult to secure signatures from parents; there were not enough resources to install secure browsers on devices; proctors were reluctant to sign a security affidavit for fear of being held accountable for anything that went awry in the students’ homes, and students still struggled with bandwidth and internet access. Delivering booklets for written tests was difficult and expensive and some are still being received.”

There is also the consideration of the extra stress placed upon students with the online testing during already stressful times. Many parents may not want their students to test, though it could be beneficial to measure the progress, and/or learning loss of students during the pandemic. If new Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona does move forward with assessing students, it should be to gather information on students and not look for teacher accountability. 🍏

BOARD MEETING CHANGE

As you all know board meetings have been conducted via teleconference while we have been teaching and meeting online. It has been a bit frustrating to sit listening to a phone or computer connection of board meetings and not see a video or presentation in order to keep track of the Ontario-Montclair School District business. This has changed recently. It’s not a perfect scenario, but those wishing to make comments to the board of trustees can now do it without a District employee reading your statement. In a couple of discussions with Dr. Hammond he was willing to investigate, with approval of the board, an avenue that could be provided where community members and employees could address the board directly without an intermediary reading the statement.

Now on the evening of the board meeting, those wishing to make comment can go to the District Office at 950 West D Street in Ontario to make a comment no more than 5 minutes in length. You must follow proper protocols of course of wearing a mask and social distancing. When you speak you may take off the mask in order to address the board. Bear in mind, you will be in a room by yourself with an attendant, but the trustees will not be there. They and the cabinet, along with the superintendent, will be listening remotely. I do appreciate the Board making this most important of accommodations, as sometimes meaning can be misconstrued, despite the best intent of the reader, when one’s words are read by another. 🍏

VACCINATION NEWS

I know that the topic of vaccination is a hot topic for many. Many believe it is a matter of choice. I do understand and support members who choose not to vaccinate themselves or their children. Unfortunately, this decision is beyond the scope of the Association and the bargaining process.

At this time, it is expected that the California Department of Public Health and the California Department of Education will require school employees to be vaccinated, just as children need to have their Measles, Diphtheria, and Polio vaccinations to participate in a public education, and adults having a negative TB skin test to work in California public schools. It is also expected that if a member refuses the vaccination, they will possibly jeopardize their employment status, unless their refusal is based on religious beliefs such as those held by Christian Scientists or extenuating health circumstances as verified by their physician.

Please understand that this is the latest knowledge we have on this particular issue and that there is new information everyday regarding the coronavirus and its mitigation and control. The vaccination of public employees may change. If there is any change in vaccination dispersal and the requirements regarding who needs to get vaccinated I will try and update members as soon as possible. 🍏

A LITTLE ON DISTANCE LEARNING AND TEACHING FROM CTA AND THE CDE

COVID-19 has brought many changes to our schools and educational system. Moving from spring 2020 to fall 2020, one of the most significant changes in distance teaching and learning in California was the push to standardize and, in many cases, increase the amount of instructional time students received. Language in SB-98, the education omnibus budget trailer bill, specifies a minimum number of instructional minutes for all students based on grade level for the 2020-2021 school year:

- 180 instructional minutes per day for students in transitional kindergarten or kindergarten;
- 230 instructional minutes per day for students in grades 1 to 3; and
- 240 instructional minutes per day for students in grades 4 to 12*.


*Or 180 instructional minutes per day for certain high school students co-enrolled in community college, California State University or University of California courses, or who attend a continuation high school.

The California Department of Education (CDE) further clarified:

In distance learning, instructional time is calculated based on the time value of assignments made and certified by a certificated employee of the LEA in which the student is enrolled. Those assignments can include assigned instruction or activities delivered through synchronous or asynchronous means. Synchronous opportunities may include whole group instruction, peer interaction and collaboration, two-way communication, small-group breakouts, or individual office hours. The delivery method should match the purpose of the current learning outcome, corresponding task, and program

placement (i.e., Language Acquisition Program). At times it may be appropriate for new content to be delivered asynchronously utilizing synchronous time for peer interaction, small-group breakouts, or individual office hours. Inversely, at times content may require synchronous opportunities to include direct instruction on new content. All modes should provide students a means of checking for understanding and progressing based on that understanding. [CDE website, Distance Learning Instruction Planning Guidance]

One key take-away from the CDE's guidance on distance teaching and learning is that the minimum number of instructional minutes is meant to be fulfilled through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instructional practices, including direct instruction, student collaboration, and independent application activities. Unfortunately, too many administrators and school districts have interpreted the minimum number of instructional minutes narrowly, expecting teachers to conduct 3-4 hours of synchronous online direct instruction per day. This is neither consistent with the letter or intent of the statutes, nor is it sound educational practice. Students should not be expected to sit through hours of online instruction when both teachers' professional judgement and state regulations call for both synchronous and asynchronous instruction, time for students to practice and apply learning within the school day, and student interaction with peers as well as teachers.

~ from AN OVERVIEW: DISTANCE & HYBRID TEACHING PRACTICES, CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION, INSTRUCTION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT 

A FINAL NOTE

There has been a lot said about the "Learning Loss" happening due to the coronavirus. We as educators need to reframe this narrative. There is no learning loss, and the students you teach are learning. They are just not learning a cadre of pre-established standards as determined by politicians far removed from the classrooms we teach. Many of our students have learned to navigate through a digital platform as devised by you, their teacher in order to receive an education. There is learning here that just cannot be measured at this time. As well, if the state is so concerned about a

so-called learning loss then when we do return, there should then be a moratorium on Professional Development and Staff Trainings so the money used for these activities that pulls teachers from classrooms can be devoted for more time to make up the in-class instruction that was missed. Also, how was this shift made to online learning if teachers were not working hard and past the contract day to make this happen for their students? I cannot say this enough, thank you for all you do for the students of Ontario-Montclair School District.



NOMINATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE BOARD/NEA REPRESENTATIVES

In January, nominations open up for five Executive Board positions of our Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association. The positions that need to be filled are for 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Treasurer, two Service Center One Representatives, and a State Council position. All positions have responsibilities, most notably the required monthly attendance at OMTA Executive Board Meetings and Representative Council Meetings. The Service Center Representatives also have four quarterly dinner meetings (currently Zoom meetings due to COVID) they are required to attend. The State Council Representative also has the responsibility to attend the four State Council meetings that are held at the Biltmore in Los Angeles and occupy scheduled weekend dates. These are also held via Zoom meetings currently. If one is interested in getting a start and being more involved with Association (union) activity a good place to start is (in my opinion) to run for a Service Center Rep position. You will make acquaintances with other OMTA Representatives and representatives from neighboring associations within the Service Center One domain which extends along the southern foothills

corridor from about Pasadena to Fontana. Although it helps to be a site representative first, anyone who is a member of Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association can run for any of these positions. If you need any more information you can call or email the OMTA Office for more information. 🍏

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
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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