



ADVOCATE

Ontario-Montclair Teachers Association

March 2021

IMPORTANT DATES APRIL

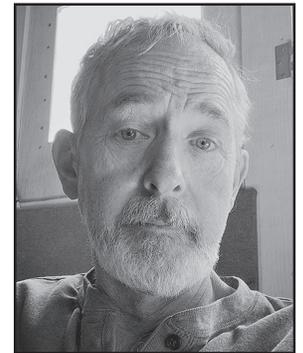
8th OMSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
@ Central Language Academy

18th OMTA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

26th OMTA REP COUNCIL MEETING

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

If you are reading this, you are probably getting ready to go back to a classroom that you've never taught in before. Sure, it's the classroom that many of you have come to know as your second home away from home. At least that was the way I always considered it. You spend an inordinate amount of time in your work environment and it in a sense does become yours; much like how a house becomes your home. But this will be much different. Individual desks stationed six feet apart (now maybe three feet) with a plexiglass partition protecting the desk and student on three sides. You might also be seeing a double desk that will only be used by one student at a time (with that same clear partition). I am certain that there will be signage both in classrooms and outside classrooms reminding students to wear masks, to social distance, and also directing students' movement. I have the feeling that the return to school is going to be closely and carefully orchestrated at school sites so that safety is priority number one.



The MOU webinars were very well attended. I do appreciate all that attended and the questions that were brought up to help provide much needed clarity for all members. I cannot begin to tell you all how much work was done by our bargaining team and our smaller 3x3 teams in creating this MOU for a return of a short six weeks so that students can get acclimated to their school sites. There is the very real possibility that this is the way school will look in August. These short six weeks will provide guidance for us, so we know what needs to be added, subtracted, or modified to the current MOU so that teachers and students feel safe for possibly an entire school year.

As some of you know, there were some periods of frustration during these last few weeks. Principals were given the MOU schedules by a District Administrator and they ran with it. They took the schedules and modified and added to them to their liking and presented them to their staffs before the MOU was even signed. A cease-and-desist letter was quickly drawn up (just in case it was needed), an email was sent to the offending District party and principals were directed to pull back the schedules. This same District person was also seen briefly in one of the MOU webinars, but quickly disappeared. This is one of the reasons that the Association should seriously look at finding a way to have our own email server. We continue to explore this avenue so that Association conversations remain solely Association conversations.

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SENATE BILL 95

The California legislature has provided California employees with additional paid sick leave benefits to combat the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The California legislature passed SB 95 on Thursday, March 19th, 2021, and Governor Gavin Newsom signed the bill into law just one day later, on Friday, March 20th. SB 95 provides supplemental sick leave benefits to certain employees needing to take leave for various reasons prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This new law has three critical components that differentiate it from previous COVID-19 supplemental sick leave policies that have existed on the federal, state, and local level.

SB 95 allows employees to take COVID-19 supplemental sick leave for new purposes, including for vaccinations. Also, SB 95 applies retroactively to require employers to compensate certain employees who previously took unpaid leave for COVID-19 reasons.

SB 95 expands the scope of employees entitled to receive supplemental paid sick leave for COVID-19 reasons. With the expiration of FFCRA at the end of 2020, however, the only employees able to take supplemental sick leave in 2021 were those who worked in local jurisdictions that had extended the deadlines of their ordinances.

SB 95 will cover any employees statewide who are either unable to work or telework for an employer due to specified reasons related to COVID-19, but the law applies only to employers who have more than 25 employees. SB 95 also expands the purposes for which covered employees can choose to use their COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave benefits. SB 95 allows covered employees to use their supplemental paid sick leave benefits to attend vaccination appointments and if they are experiencing symptoms from a

COVID-19 vaccine that prevent them from working or teleworking. Covered employees can also use their supplemental paid sick leave benefits for other specified purposes, including but not limited to caring for themselves or family members who are subject to quarantine requirements.

Most importantly, the law's provisions apply retroactively to 1 January 2021. SB 95's retroactivity requires an employer to compensate any employee who took unpaid time off prior to the law's enactment so long as the employee took this time for one of the specified purposes. For example, an employee who took unpaid time off in February 2021 to attend a vaccination appointment can now receive supplemental paid sick leave benefits. The total number of hours an employee can claim for COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave benefits varies based on the employee's work schedule. If the employee has a regular work schedule, then the employee's COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave equals the total number of hours they worked over the past two weeks up to a total of 80 hours. If the employee's schedule varies, the employee's supplemental paid sick leave will become the average number of hours the employee worked in a two-week period over the past six months.

Regardless of how the hours are calculated, SB 95 calculates the amount of pay at the employee's "regular rate," but it does not require an employer to pay out more than US\$511 per day or US\$5,110 in the aggregate to an employee in supplemental paid sick leave benefits. These benefits expire on 30 September 2021, but the law permits an employee who is using supplemental paid sick leave benefits at the time the law expires to take the full amount allowed. 🍏

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Finally, the last bit of frustration was the voting taking place for our members to either approve or not approve the language in the MOU. As the vote was going on, I continued to lobby with the District for small changes in the MOU that would help clarify members' conception of the agreement as well as establish that the schedules in the MOU stay unchanged, that site administrators cannot add minutes to these schedules. We can do this because the MOU was effectively still not signed and the language was not agreed upon yet; we were effectively still looking at the language through

the voting process. We should still be able to tweak the language if need be. However, this MOU language had already been sent to print, because for whatever reason, the District felt compelled to get it in front of the school board to be approved. Of course, the approval at a board meeting is nothing more than a formality. The board could be convened at any time to sign an approval in the event of an emergency, or if a need arose at the last minute, like when we closed schools last March to teach online. 🍏

ELECTIONS

I want to thank all members who voted in the elections. Simply Voting has certainly made the process much easier and saves OMTA the time and money from having to buy the amount of paper it takes to do a conventional election as well as having to find volunteers to come to the OMTA Office to help with the counting of votes.

Congratulations need to go out to Monica Lite who was re-elected as 2nd Vice President of OMTA. Monica has been a great representative for our association, and I know she will continue to do so. Congratulations also go out to MaryKay Scheid who was elected as Treasurer, and as State Council Representative for OMTA. MaryKay needs no introduction to many of you, as she has dutifully served and represented OMTA for many years.

As you are reading this there is a run-off election taking place. Tisha Curry and Judy Westbrook are both running for the 1st Vice President because there were more than two candidates initially running for the position and no one came away with a

clear majority of the voting membership. We also have two other run-offs: Kim Hunter and Monica Lite are running for the position of Service Center Representative (1-year term). Kim Hunter and Trudy Cowan are running for the position of Service Center Representative (3-year term).

I want to thank all the candidates who threw their hats into the ring with the hopes of representing OMTA. Whether they won or not, this has nothing to do with them being qualified representatives of this Association. Every single candidate is more than capable of running for any position within our organization and has my respect for even considering running. Please remember every single teacher who is a member, is a representative of this association. This organization is stronger when we have a vibrant and energetic membership willing to speak up and defend our profession. I hope more are willing to get involved in moving this association forward. 🍏

RETURNING TO SCHOOL

A little background regarding the MOU and returning to school. The team that helped worked on the MOU, and particularly the schedules, were veteran elementary, middle school and SPED teachers and who have a great deal of classroom experience both in person and with distance learning. I know we were well represented at the bargaining table when meeting with the District and those representing understood both teachers' needs, and the District's wants when looking at the scheduling pieces for the return to school. They also understood that not all schools are the same. We have a considerable variety of schools: elementary, middle, K-8 elementary, SPED heavy schools, small schools, large schools, schools with greater needs than other schools, etc. No one schedule will be right for all schools.

So, when your principals sit down with your school faculty or grade level teams and present schedules, the schedules should generally fit to the sample schedules as given in the MOU that was agreed upon by the District and OMTA. OMTA did not spend all the time that we did on the MOU, only for site administration to start adding extra instructional minutes (though well-intended) onto teachers' shoulders. This late change to teachers' schedules is going to be more tiresome and demanding because this change is going to take extra effort and time for teachers to adapt to this new schedule.

If your principal is dead set on drastically altering the schedule from what is depicted in the MOU, the principal will need to consult with the entire school teaching staff and okay these changes with at least a 75% agreement from the staff. The voting results supporting a change of schedule at a school site, as well as a record of the staff vote, and a copy of the new agreed upon schedule will need to be sent to the OMTA office so that we have it for our records.

As Dr. Hammond has stated at the recent return to school webinars, the main idea about coming back to school is to be able to interface with our students and to assess them socially and emotionally. Right now, is not the time to be imparting academic rigor on our students. It is a beginning of a return to normalcy to many of our students. Yes, there will be testing. But we should all know by now that this is not a District decision, it is a Federal decision. You should also know that the assessment is not going to as extensive as it normally it would be. We can thank our larger labor organization, CTA, for proactively lobbying both in Sacramento and in Washington D.C. for getting the testing whittled down so that it is more manageable for teachers and their students. 🍏

OMSD MUSIC DEPARTMENT: TEACHING MUSIC AND PERFORMING VIRTUALLY

By: Daniel Salcido

When we think of playing Music with our students, we don't really think of doing it virtually. Well Friends, as you know, we went to a full on virtual music program this year. There have been some real challenges in terms of our 5th through 8th grade music students. Not so much in the way of students not wanting to play their instruments (Strings or Band) but more of the music students not having a place to practice and do our lessons, especially in homes that have several students doing their own virtual studies, playing an instrument is tough. So we had to adapt just as our K-8 teacher friends did.

Of course Zooming became the forefront of our adventure, and yes, we had many of the same issues as our classroom friends. We understand how important class time is for our classroom teachers, so we collaborated with our teachers and found the best time to schedule instrumental music. We started using online interactive programs where the student could practice and record themselves playing. We used Flipgrid and other recording software methods to give the kids a chance to practice and perform at times when they could. A few of us even started private YouTube channels to give lesson support. All of these methods helped our music students throughout the year adapt as well. Most of all, we wanted to keep it fun and enjoyable for all our kids.

For me, the most exciting experience I had this year was with the 750 4th grade students in what is called "Song Flute Time". As you can imagine, learning and remembering all their names was a challenge, (thankfully their names are on their Zoom pictures)! This year we made an upgrade in our song flute program and began to use Recorders instead of the little black Conn Song Flute we have used for a very long time. This was such a good change for our kids. They simply love the new instruments they received because it feels like a proper instrument and not a toy. It is also important to say "Thank You" to Dr. Hammond and Veronica Bucheli for making it possible to buy and give our 4th grade students their very own Recorder to keep forever without cost to them. OMSD has been giving our song flutes to 4th graders for several years now and it is much appreciated!

We will be having Virtual Recorded Concerts in May with instrumental and Recorder Classes. The kids have been working hard to finish their recordings and having fun doing it. This will be an amazing concert and include soloist as well. I hope you have a chance to visit the Concerts using the links we will be providing and enjoy the music from some very awesome students.

In Closing, I would like to say that we appreciate the support of our Teachers and Administration here at OMSD. We give our kids the best because of the support we receive. Thank you all! 🍏

OMTA OFFICERS AND OPERATIONS

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2nd Vice President: Monica Lite
Secretary: Isabel Santos
Treasurer: Daniel Salcido

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Corona: Julie Rafeedie
DeAnza: Inaki Bizkarra
Del Norte: Natalie Cantos
Edison: Diana Eberle
El Camino: Janean Rogers/Cindy Smith
Elderberry: Lisa Inga, John Packer
Euclid: Wendy Beltran
Hawthorne: Joyce Johnson

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Howard: Kelly Pawley
Kingsley: Michelle Montes, Robert Paulak
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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