

ADVOCATE



ONTARIO-MONTCLAIR TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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DECEMBER 2007

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KNOW YOUR CONTRACT – HOURS OF WORK

This month I'll cover two aspects of the hours of work section of the contract: site level meetings and the minimum school-based assignment. Article VIII, D, says, "The District and the Association will annually determine the weekdays reserved for site level and/or district meetings. Under special circumstances the calendar for meetings can be deviated from with the approval of the district and the association." This year the first and third Tuesdays of the month are for School Site Meetings and the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month will be for staff meetings. Special circumstances were determined to exist for Nov. 7, Dec. 13, and March 20. A memo from Jim Kidwell gives some possible alternatives for those dates. A site administrator may not schedule meetings on anything other than what is stated above, for any reason (except emergencies), without prior approval of the district and the association. ETS days are an exception to the above, but if they do conflict with a teacher Tuesday, your administrator must make that up by exchanging one of their Tuesdays for it.

The second, fourth, and fifth (when they occur) Tuesdays are reserved for teachers to use as they wish. If your site administrator requires grade level or department meetings, the administrator must make time available on the first or third Tuesdays for those meetings. Your site administrator can also not keep you beyond your contract day on Tuesdays for meetings, so all required activities must end by that time.

The minimum school based assignment is 6 1/2 hours, exclusive of your duty free lunch. This includes the time from when you are required to report to the time you are required to stay after the student day is over. To calculate what the teacher day should look like, take the beginning and ending times for the student day, subtract the amount of time for lunch then subtract that from 6 1/2 hours. The amount of time left is what can be used to determine when you are required to report and how long you must stay. For example, if your school day starts at 8:00 and ends at 2:30, that is 6 1/2 hours. If you have a 45 minute lunch, that means you have a work day of 5 hours and 45 minutes between the bells. If you are required to report at 7:30, then your contract day should end at 2:45. If after doing this calculation for your site you find you have a workday longer than 6 1/2 hours, bring it to the attention of OMTA and we will talk to your administrator about it. The association also needs to know if your site has eliminated, or shortened any recesses in the last few years (this is another section of the contract, but still an issue).

HAPPY NEW YEAR

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Rick McClure

I spent several days at the end of November in Charlotte, North Carolina at a conference sponsored by the National Council of Urban Education Associations (NCUEA). NCUEA is an organization that is part of NEA. It exists to help deal with issues that relate to those of us who work in urban districts and the common problems we share. The number one issue, nationwide, in urban districts is NCLB and the unreasonable demands it puts upon all of us. Whether it is the issue of having impossible targets to reach, like achieving proficiency for 100% of all students, unrealistic and unreasonable testing requirements for ELL and Special Education students, or the demands of the Highly Qualified Teacher regulations that will make it impossible to fill many teaching positions over the next few years, making changes in NCLB is not only urgent, it's required. Without some common sense changes in the law, public schools are headed down a path where — in a few short years — every school in the country will be labeled a failure.

At the NCUEA conference, we listened to reports from the NEA Governmental Relations Department about the unsuccessful attempt by Congressman George Miller to pass his draft reauthorization proposal. Thanks to the efforts of CTA and NEA (mostly CTA, but that's another story), as well as many of you, it looks like reauthorization will now wait until after a new President has been elected. This does mean that the current version will remain in effect in the meantime. That's not good, but it beats the alternative, which was a proposal that would take a bad law and make it worse. NEA adopted proposals for reauthorization at the Representative Assembly two years ago (you can read an executive summary at www.nea.org/esea/posagendaexecsum.html). It has common sense proposals to fix everything that's wrong with NCLB. In the meantime it is important that the country elect a President and a Congress that will get it right. Toward that end, I submitted, and got passed, a new business item at the NCUEA conference that would make the support of NEA for Presidential and Congressional candidates conditional upon their support for our Positive Agenda. It is a small step, but a significant one, towards fixing a bad law.

As of last spring, the district had about 140 teachers on temporary contracts. It has been district practice to have a teacher on a temporary contract for every teacher in a categorically funded position, such as reading coach, program facilitator, outreach consultant, etc. When teachers are on temporary contracts, the district has also routinely given them notice by March 15 so that there was virtually no job security for any of them. When teachers did finally move off of temporary status they then would do one year as a probationary teacher before becoming permanent, or getting tenure.

We have teachers this year who are now in their fifth year in the district still on temporary status. I began talking with the district last spring and pointed out that just because the law allows the district to do this doesn't mean it's a good idea. I know, and they know, that we're losing good teachers over this issue because they are getting jobs in other districts due to their frustration. The district has told me that they are going to revise their practice, but to date they have not moved a single teacher this year into probationary status, despite the fact that they have hired a number of new teachers.

I'm not sure why the district is taking so long to do something about this, but I have gotten tired of bringing it up and getting nowhere. Jim Kidwell, Deputy Superintendent of Human Resources, has told me to have teachers who are concerned about the issue call him. I suggest if you're on temporary status, take him up on his offer and call, or email, him. He needs to hear from you (believe me, he's heard from me about it!) about how frustrated you are and how damaging this is to morale. I've talked with lots of you when I visit schools about this, but if you haven't had a chance to let me know how you feel, or even if you have, feel free to call me too. Maybe if all of you get involved in this too, we can get the district to do something.

To be fair, after this was written, I was told by Debi Cockrell, Director of Human Resources, that HR is planning on rolling a number of teachers into probationary status after the first of the year, but nothing is final yet. If they do this, it will be a good step in the right direction.

CREDENTIAL RENEWAL: “PIECE OF CAKE”

by Melody Kelly

I told my friend Faye Ferguson, from Mariposa, I had the courtesy notice on my pay stub that my credential would expire within 180 days. She had recently renewed her credential online and said it was a piece of cake. This boosted my confidence to get this job done right away. Up until now I was only “Proficient” online at ordering books and CD’s and worried that the renewal would be more complicated. It was so easy. The best thing about it is that we no longer have to document and submit the Professional Growth Plan and Record!

I went to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing website at ctc.ca.gov. Proud that I had my current credential and its document number handy, (I hadn’t lost it) I discovered it was not needed. These renewal steps are on the website:

1. Enter Social Security Number and Date of Birth
2. Select Credentials to Renew
3. Enter Self-Verification Information
4. Edit Personal Information
5. Answer Personal and Professional Fitness Questions
6. Sign Oath and Affidavit (by a checkmark in a box)
7. Enter Payment Information. Visa or Mastercard
8. Receive Confirmation (Print it Out!!!)

The site said it would be processed within ten days. I was online less than five minutes. It could have been even less time if I hadn’t had to locate my bifocals to read the expiration date on my credit card. When I receive the credential I will bring a copy to Personnel.

In 2006, Jill Hammond sent us a letter announcing the credential renewal process being online, and that computers are available in Human Resources. I renewed mine from my Bon View computer and had the confirmation sent to my home email. If you are not accustomed to working online don’t be shy to ask members at your site for help.

If you need further assistance, OMTA President Rick McClure is available. Call him at OMTA, 986-2414.

CORRELATES OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

CLEAR AND FOCUSED MISSION

In the continuing series of the Advocate, here is Correlate number 4. The Advocate is running this series as a reminder that having the Essential Program Components (EPCs) in place is not enough; the attributes of effective schools must exist as well if student achievement is going to be maximized.

The First Generation: In the effective school there is a clearly articulated school

mission through which the staff shares an understanding of and commitment to the instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures and accountability. Staff accepts responsibility for students’ learning of the school’s essential curricular goals.

The Second Generation: In the first generation the effective school mission emphasized teaching for **Learning for All**. The two issues that surfaced were: Did this really mean all students or just those with whom the schools had a history of reasonable success? When it became clear that this mission was inclusive of all students especially the children of the poor (minority and non-minority), the second issue surfaced. It centered itself around the question: Learn what? Partially because of the accountability movement and partially because of the belief that disadvantaged students could not learn higher-level curricula, the focus was on mastery of mostly low-level skills.

In the second generation, the focus will shift toward a more appropriate balance between higher-level learning and those more basic skills that are truly prerequisite to their mastery. Designing and delivering a curriculum that responds to the demands of accountability, and is responsive to the need for higher levels of learning, will require substantial staff development. Teachers will have to be better trained to develop curricula and lessons with the “end in mind.” They will have to know and be comfortable with the concept of “backward mapping,” and they will need to know “task analysis.” These “tools of the trade” are essential for an efficient and effective “results-oriented” school that successfully serves all students.

Finally, a subtle but significant change in the concept of school mission deserves notice. Throughout the first generation, effective schools proponents advocated the

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Health/Nurse: Denise Mick
Early Ed Center: Leticia Martinez
Hardy Center: Charise Santana
HFB: Linda Nelson



mission of teaching for **Learning for All**. In the second generation the advocated mission will be **Learning for All**. The rationale for this change is that the “teaching for” portion of the old statement created ambiguity (although this was unintended) and kept too much of the focus on “teaching” rather than “learning.” This allowed people to discount school learnings that were not the result of direct teaching. Finally, the new formulation of **Learning for All** opens the door to the continued learning of the educators as well as the students.



OMTA Executive Board Meeting
January 14th at 3:45pm

OMTA Rep Council Meeting
January 28th at 3:45pm

OMSD School Board Meeting
January 17th - 7:00pm at
Central School

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