

ADVOCATE



ONTARIO-MONTCLAIR TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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OCTOBER 2007

nea

FROM THE TEACHER'S GUIDE TO SCHOOL SAFETY

The following are excerpted from CTA's guide on school safety:

NOTIFICATION OF VIOLENT STUDENTS

A school district shall inform the teacher of each pupil who has engaged in, or is reasonably suspected to have engaged in, any of the acts (described in E.C. §48900) that are grounds for suspension and/or expulsion. The district shall provide the information based upon records it maintains, or receives from a law enforcement agency, regarding a pupil. The information provided shall be from the previous three school years and it shall be received in confidence.

SCHOOL DISRUPTIONS

Any parent, guardian or other person whose conduct in a place where a school employee is required to be in the course of his or her duties, materially disrupts class work or extracurricular activities or involves substantial disorder, is guilty of a misdemeanor. This section does not apply to any otherwise lawful employee activity.

CLASSROOM INTERRUPTIONS

It is the intent of the Legislature that each school district board formally address the problem of classroom interruptions and adopt a policy to control those interruptions.

SUSPENSION BY TEACHER

A teacher may suspend a pupil from his/her class or class period, for any act specified in Ed. Code § 48900, for the day of the suspension and the day following. The suspension must be immediately reported to the principal and the student sent to the principal for further action. The teacher must also request a parent/teacher conference as soon as possible. The pupil shall not be returned to the class from which the pupil was suspended without the concurrence of the teacher and principal.

NOTIFICATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

Whenever any school employee is attacked, assaulted, or physically threatened by a pupil, it is the duty of the employee and the supervisor who has knowledge of the incident to promptly report the matter to law enforcement authorities. Failure to make such a report is an infraction punishable by a fine. Any school employee who attempts to impede the making of a required report is guilty of an infraction punishable by a fine. No board member or school district employee may impose any sanctions against a person for making this report.

One of the hats I wear in addition to President of OMTA is President of the Southern California School Employees Benefits Association (SCSEBA). SCSEBA is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) that provides fringe benefit programs to member school districts. It is where OMSD purchases the Blue Cross and Kaiser medical insurance programs that are offered to employees in OMSD. SCSEBA is run by a partnership between both labor and management with equal representation from both sides. I have served as President for several years now. In this column I'd like to highlight a few of the programs that are offered through SCSEBA.

Health Advocate is a program that all employees who have a medical plan, either Blue Cross or Kaiser, are part of. Health Advocate exists to help members navigate the medical world, assisting you in solving problems with your Doctor, medical plan, or anything else pertaining to your health. One of our teachers was diagnosed with cancer, but couldn't get Blue Cross to authorize chemotherapy. After spending more than a week trying to navigate the Blue Cross bureaucracy she called Health Advocate. Within a day, her chemotherapy problem was solved. Fortunately, most of us won't have a situation like this, but if you are having issues with your medical group, doctor, pharmacy, or you just have questions, Health Advocate may be able to help.

Blue Cross members also have Healthy Roads available to provide assistance in weight loss and tobacco cessation. They offer a personal coach to help you meet whatever goals you may have. Anonymous and free, the coaching occurs over the phone as frequently as you want, and whenever you want. If you want to quit smoking they offer a month's supply of nicotine patches at no cost and a discount after that.

All employees in OMSD are enrolled in an employee assistance program through Pacificare Behavioral Health. They offer programs for money management, stress, marriage counseling, drug and alcohol abuse, dealing with childcare and eldercare issues to name just a few. The program is available to employees as well as family members, in some circumstances.

These programs are available as a part of the medical plans you participate in, or your employment by OMSD. Virtually all of us, at one time or another, can use the things these programs offer. For more information about them you can call the OMTA office or the benefits department in the district office.

On another subject, a change in California law, sponsored by CTA, now allows for school employees to be elected, by other school employees, to serve on the CalSTRS board of directors. Previously, only persons

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Rick McClure

appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate could serve. The current chair of STRS is Dana Dillon, a teacher from Weed Union Elementary School District. All of you should have received from STRS a ballot for an election for two members. Running for reelection is Dana Dillon. Also running is Harry Keiley from Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. Dana and Harry have both been endorsed by CTA. I also know both of them personally and urge you to cast your ballot for them. Having teachers on the board of directors for our retirement plan is important and I know we'll be able to count on Dana and Harry to protect our interest. You can cast your ballot by mail, phone, or email. The deadline is Nov. 30, so be sure to get your ballot in and make your vote count.

Finally, the battle in Congress about reauthorization of NCLB is not over yet. As you'll recall from the last issue of the Advocate, Congressman George Miller, Chairman of the House Labor and Education Committee, and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi have come up with a draft bill that, among other things, has a merit pay proposal that would tie some teacher compensation to test scores. It is critical that this draft be killed. I know I don't have to tell any of you the problems that currently exist with NCLB. The Miller-Pelosi draft would make a bad law worse. If you haven't called your Congressman yet, please do so today. By calling the CTA hotline at 1-888-268-4334 you can be automatically connected to your Congressman. While you're at it, call Congressman Miller's office as well as Speaker Pelosi's. You can also email or fax your thoughts on this. For more information call the OMTA office or visit www.cta.org."

VISIT CTA/NEA WEBSITES!

Melody Kelly

Membership includes subscriptions to two magazines, "California Educator" and "NEA TODAY." In addition to these resources CTA and NEA have websites that are worth checking in to.

As you access the "cta.org" website you need your membership number, found on the top right hand corner of your CTA card. If you did not receive your card recently, contact your Site Rep or OMTA office manager Cindy Newey at 986-2414. The site includes the structure of CTA, news, ideas, and, my favorite, "Issues in Education." The site presents an overview of many issues that are good, quick reads. Newer staff will find it helpful in learning all of the acronyms, buzzwords, and business of our profession.

Spending time on the "nea.org" website has its benefits. "Works4Me" has ideas and tips submitted from teachers across the country, and you can sign up to receive it as email. You can also receive The "NEA MORNING UPDATE: OPENING BELL" as email. It is a digest of educational news from TV, radio, newspapers and journals. "Opening Bell" is light, informative reading for busy professionals.

The websites also include CTA/NEA political action updates. The sites make individual participation in contacting legislators easy.

Another benefit of these websites is that we may find professional articles that can be used for the practicum. As I surf these sites I am comforted with the fact that we are not alone in our daily challenges, and that we are doing a great job!

OMTA President Rick McClure is available to assist us in any quest for information. He is full-time released from the classroom and is working for us. Hope to see you at "cta.org" and "nea.org!"



CORRELATES OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

Safe and Orderly Schools

Last month, I started listing the 7 correlates of effective schools by Larry Lezotte. The State of California has been having schools focus heavily on the EPCs (Essential Program Components), but without the correlates, as described by Lezotte, in place, having all the EPCs in place won't mean much. Last month's focus was Instructional Leadership. This month's is Safe and Orderly Schools.

"SAFE AND ORDERLY ENVIRONMENT"

The First Generation: In the effective school there is an orderly, purposeful, businesslike atmosphere which is free from the threat of physical harm. The school climate is not oppressive and is conducive to teaching and learning.

The Second Generation: In the first generation, the safe and orderly environment correlate was defined in terms of the absence of undesirable student behavior (e.g., students fighting). In the second generation, the concept of a school environment conducive to **Learning for All** must move beyond the elimination of undesirable behavior. The second generation will place increased emphasis on the presence of certain desirable behaviors (e.g., cooperative team learning). These second generation schools will be places where students actually help one another. Moving beyond simply the elimination of undesirable behavior will represent a significant challenge for many schools. For example, it is

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unlikely that a school's faculty could successfully teach its students to work together unless the adults in the school model collaborative behaviors in their own professional working relationships. Since schools as workplaces are characterized by their isolation, creating more collaborative/cooperative environments for both the adults and students will require substantial commitment and change in most schools.

First, teachers must learn the "technologies" of teamwork. Second, the school will have to create the "opportunity structures" for collaboration. Finally, the staff will have to nurture the belief that collaboration, which often requires more time initially, will assist the schools to be more effective and satisfying in the long run. But schools will not be able to get students to work together cooperatively unless they have been taught to respect human diversity and appreciate democratic values. These student learnings will require a major and sustained commitment to multicultural education. Students and the adults who teach them will need to come to terms with the fact that the United States is no longer a nation with minorities. We are now a nation of minorities. This new reality is currently being resisted by many of our community and parent advocacy groups, as well as by some educators."

OMTA Executive Board Meeting
November 5th at 3:45pm

OMTA Rep Council Meeting
November 26th at 3:45pm

OMSD School Board Meeting
November 1st & 15th - 7:00pm at
Central School

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