
Oroville Secondary Teachers Association

TEACHER TALK

<http://www.ostahome.org>

All articles are submitted by OSTA unit members. Submit them to
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December 11, 2007

OSTA - CTA - NEA

Volume 19 Issue 5

Executive Board for 2007-2008

(Meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month at The Depot Restaurant at 3:30 PM)

President	Larry Cobbler (LP)	Vice-President	Steve King (O)	Secretary	Leanna Felardo (O)
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Membership	Nannette Walker (LP)	Adult School Rep.....	Susan Hoopes (OAS)	CCHS Site Rep. Mike	Caratenuto (CCHS)
Board Rep.	Bret Lawson (LP)	Negotiator 07-09.....	Steve King (O)	Negotiator 06-08 (H) ..	Scott Martin (PHS)
Negotiator 07-09.....	Teisha Hase (O)	Negotiator 06-08.....	Erika Hughes (LP)	Negotiator 06-08.....	Nannette Walker (LP)

NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE – LARRY COBBLER

On Nov. 7, OSTA was informed the district would not be making the improvements to the salary schedule that had been previously included in a tentative agreement (TA). That TA called for the district to improve the OSTA salary schedule by the amount of the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for this year (4.53%) minus the “net of cost of retirees” and the cost of “step and column.” That TA was signed on Feb. 8, 2007. Months after the TA was signed, the interim superintendent entered into a separate “retirement enhancing” agreement with six retirees, which cost the district approximately \$70,000. Final settlement of the contract negotiations are now being held in abeyance because the district is insisting that the \$70,000 is now part of the “net of retiree costs,” even though the association did not negotiate or agree to any such expenditure and that expenditure was made after the TA was signed. Our best efforts to mitigate this issue have been unsuccessful, even after offering to take less than the actual “formula” amount, which is contained in the signed TA. A literal interpretation of the TA would actually call for a salary schedule improvement of 7.91% by our calculations. After the explosive and frustrating conclusion to the Nov. 7 bargaining session, the OSTA has no alternative except to file unfair labor practice charge(s) with the Public Employees Relations Board (PERB) against the district for bargaining in bad faith and bargaining outside the exclusive agent.

An OSTA general membership meeting was held Tuesday, Dec. 3 at Prospect High School. Scott Martin, OSTA’s head negotiator, explained the current situation to our membership. He let our members know that our position on the unfair labor practice charge looks pretty strong, but there is always the chance an arbitrator could decide in the district’s favor rather than OSTA’s. Scott presented a survey for our members to take with possible options on how to proceed with negotiations. It was decided that OSTA wanted nothing less than the TA amount of 4.53% and to proceed with the unfair labor practice and let PERB take it to arbitration. If the arbitrator decided in our favor, we would be more than willing to take the entire 7.91% if awarded given the unprofessional and regressive bargaining actions of our interim superintendent.

WINTER FLING UPDATE – BY ERIKA HUGHES

Our Winter Fling will be held at The Graduate in Chico at 6:30 on Thursday, Dec. 20. If members would like to send suggestions for the HORS D'OEUVRES table, please send them to ehughes@ouhsd.org. I will try to include all suggestions if possible. There will be a set menu like last year, but we may be able to include regular menu items, if particular guests don't want the special menu items. Invitations will be sent out and RSVP's will be due earlier this year for a more organized plan.

APPARENT CONFUSION ON ISSUES – BY LARRY COBBLER

It has come to my attention that some of our unit members are still confused on the “Duty Free Preparation Period” and the “IEP” issues. All unit members need to completely understand that they are two entirely separate issues. There are a number of special education issues that have come to a head over the last year and are being worked on. However, the “Duty Free Preparation Period” issue is brand new. Article VII, HOURS AND DAYS OF EMPLOYMENT Section 7, clearly identifies a “Duty Free Preparation Period.” At this time, it is tied in with the IEP meetings but goes far beyond those meetings. IEP meetings are not the issue. **Being REQUIRED to attend an IEP meeting on your “Duty Free Preparation Period” is the issue.** Today it is IEP meetings, tomorrow it is an administrator coming to you and saying “I need these papers typed up during by the end of your “Duty Free Preparation Period,” or “I need you to make copies and distribute these flyers because our secretary is absent today,” or “I need you to edit this WASC report for me by the end of the period,” etc. Volunteering to do things during your “Duty Free Preparation Period” is completely up to you and not in violation of our contract. However, any time an administrator directs you to do something, for the good of all OSTA unit members, you should request that it be put in writing. Then whether the administrator puts it in writing or not, you must comply and follow up with a grievance to your site representative. If you fail to follow through with this procedure, you are watering down the contract that all of our unit members have fought hard for over the years. Even the tallest building can be tumbled if the foundation does not hold up. If you are still unclear about these issues, please don't hesitate to e-mail me at lcobbler@ouhsd.org or call me at 9 2310 x275. Remember, volunteering without grieving the directive will affect all our unit members. Please document all your conversations with the administration about this issue, and keep your site representative informed.

WOULD YOU LIKE MORE SITE MEETINGS? – BY LARRY COBBLER

I have been asked to send out a survey to see if you would like to have periodic site meetings. The purpose of the site meetings will be to talk about different issues and get clarification from an OSTA executive board officer or negotiator. These could be just questions you have about the contract or hot issues of the moment.

WISCONSON LEGISLATURE TO LOOK AT TEACHING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND THE HISTORY OF LABOR UNIONS – BY LARRY COBBLER

Michael Carantenuto, our site rep for Challenge Charter High School, sent me this on-line article and I thought it might be of interest to all our unit members. Please click the link below:

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/W/WI_XGR_TEACHING_LABOR_WIOL-?SITE=WIKEN&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=ap_content_popup.html

MAINTAINING CTA MEMBERSHIP WHILE ON LEAVE OF ABSENCE - BY LARRY COBBLER

(The following excerpt was in a CTA communication sent to all CTA Chapter Presidents.)

Are you planning on taking a leave of absence due to maternity, illness or other personal reason? If so, keep in mind the importance of maintaining your CTA membership. Your CTA membership dues are deducted from your paycheck; however, while you are on leave and not receiving a paycheck, this deduction may stop. Therefore, when taking a leave, remember to contact your local association to determine if you are eligible for a reduced dues category in order to maintain your CTA membership.

Maintaining your CTA membership while you are on leave is required to participate in the following Member Benefit Programs:

- ✓ **CTA Death & Dismemberment Plan:** This automatic, free benefit is contingent upon CTA membership each Sept. 1 subject to some exceptions for a death or dismemberment that occurs while on an unpaid leave of absence. This benefit increases with each year of continuous membership.
- ✓ **CTA Group Legal Services Program (GLSP):** CTA membership must be maintained throughout the entire time assistance is being provided.
- ✓ **CTA Well-Baby Program:** If you or your spouse/domestic partner are pregnant and participate in the Well-Baby Program, your CTA membership must be current throughout the pregnancy and three months postpartum to participate in the Well-Baby Program.
- ✓ **CTA Advisory Panel on Endorsed Services:** Participation in the CTA Advisory Panel on Endorsed Services requires CTA membership at the time the incident occurs and continuously through the date the panel makes its decision. This is a free and expedited process that allows any unresolved complaints with a CTA-endorsed vendor to be adjudicated on your behalf.
- ✓ **CTA Auto and Home Insurance:** Policies offered by California Casualty's A+ Auto and Home Insurance offers exclusive CTA discounted rates and therefore a drop in membership will adversely impact your premium at renewal.

If you have any questions regarding your CTA membership, please contact the CTA Membership Accounting Department at 650-552-5278 or e-mail membership@cta.org. If you have questions regarding your CTA Member Benefits, please contact the CTA Member Benefits Department at: member_benefits@cta.org.

TELL IT TO TEACHER TALK

This is your chance to express yourself anonymously. Names will not be published unless requested. Comments can be positive or negative in nature. However, this will require your time to e-mail Larry Cobbler at lcobbler@ouhsd.org or Linda Draper at ldraper@ouhsd.org. Please take the time to send comments about any union topic you wish, or you can share thoughts on any topic of interest to other teachers.

- ✓ Two sections of English at Oroville High didn't have a real teacher this year until seven weeks after school started. This violates the Williams Act which says, "There should be no teacher vacancies or misassignments as defined in Education Code 35186(h)(2) and (3). . . ."

"Teacher vacancy means a position to which a single designated certificated employee has not been assigned at the beginning of the year for an entire year . . ."

Our inexperienced interim superintendent probably made this error without considering how he would

have felt had one of his children been stuck in an English class with five different subs and no assignments or standards taught for most of the first quarter. What a waste for these students! One class consisted of eleventh graders, and the other of virtual non-speakers -- beginning ELD. Imagine how confusing this situation must have been for them.

The Williams Act was also violated when sections weren't created until three weeks after school started. This is especially frustrating when everyone knew last April that the school needed seven to eight sections more than it was given. The interim superintendent withheld them.

For the students' and the district's sakes, I pray that the school board will begin to pay attention to what goes on in the schools and in the classroom. Students don't deserve to be treated like abandoned vehicles in order to save money. The Williams Act was written to protect these kids.

I heard the district lost \$180,000 because it broke the law regarding student numbers in the Independent Study program. Can our district be fined for breaking the Williams Act?

Can't anyone do anything about all of these mistakes? Can the union grieve this? Can't the board members give some guidance to the interim superintendent? *Anonymous*

- ✓ The following link will take you to a free website for grading rubrics that has endless possibilities and can save your rubrics online. It also has Spanish-language rubrics. It can be used for anything from posters or mobiles to short stories, for pairs, groups and individuals.
<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php> .

Another good rubric website is <http://www.uwstout.edu/soe/profdev/secondaryteamworkrubric.html> . It's got all the key aspects of self and peer evaluation for group work! *Linda Rodgers*

OSTA WEBSITE ADDRESS - BY LARRY COBBLER

You can now find all kinds of OSTA information at the OSTA web site: www.ostahome.org. Larry Cobbler, our OSTA president, is the webmaster.

UNIT MEMBER COMMUNICATION - BY LARRY COBBLER

All unit members need to communicate with each other and follow the contract. Grievances need to be pursued whether you as an individual agree or disagree with the issue. There are also timelines that need to be followed in the grievance process. If we all try to do a better job of communicating, we might resolve issues sooner.

OSTA NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION FOR 2007-2008 – BY LARRY COBBLER

This issue of the OSTA's TEACHER TALK newsletter was distributed by e-mail. If you did not receive it, send me an e-mail (lcobbler@ouhsd.org) with your name, school, and correct e-mail address you wish to use. Past issues of OSTA's TEACHER TALK newsletter may also be viewed at www.ostahome.org .