
Oroville Secondary Teachers Association

TEACHER TALK

<http://www.ostahome.org>

All articles are submitted by OSTA unit members. Submit them to
Larry Cobbler at LPHS e-mail lcobbler@ouhsd.org or Linda Draper at LPHS e-mail ldraper@ouhsd.org

May 12, 2008

OSTA - CTA - NEA

Volume 19 Issue 10

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)
Treasurer	Steve Wolf (O)	Policy	Rodger Townsend (O)	Political Action	Lisa Avila (LP)
Research	Shane Walter (LP)	Publicity	Cobbler & Draper (LP)	LPHS Site Rep	Vaughn & Bacior (LP)
OHS Site Rep	Carol Anderson (O)	PHS Site Rep	Scott Martin (PHS)	Grievance	Erika Hughes (LP)
Membership	Nannette Walker (LP)	Adult School Rep	Susan Hoopes (OAE)	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)

BY-LAWS REVISED AND APPROVED – BY LARRY COBBLER

By a vote of 45 to 0, the OSTA general membership approved the updated by-laws. If you haven't taken the time to read through the two copies I have sent out, I suggest you do. There are many changes, and it is important that you are informed and aware of them.

2008-09 EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTIONS– BY LARRY COBBLER

The results of the elections were sent out. A run-off ballot will be necessary so we can fill the Publicity, Grievance, School Board Rep., OHS Site Representative, and clarification on the LPHS Site Representative position. The run-off ballot will be voted on at site meetings on Wed., May 21.

2008-09 NEGOTIATION TEAM ELECTION – BY LARRY COBBLER

The OSTA Bargaining Team consists of five individuals elected by the Executive Board. Teisha Hase and Steve King have one more year on their 2007-09 terms. Scott Martin, Nannette Walker, and Erika Hughes were elected to fill the 2008-10 term seats.

2008-09 LOCAL DUES INCREASED – BY LARRY COBBLER

As you know, the OSTA held some discussion on the possibility of increasing local association dues. Our intent is to provide training opportunities for elected officers, the possibility of providing stipends for all elected positions, and increasing existing stipends to elected officers.

By coincidence, last week OSTA received a letter from CTA about local dues for the 2008-09 school year. In the letter, CTA states: “Keep in mind that the minimum dues level for locals to qualify for arbitration funding from CTA during the 2008-09 year is \$150 per full-time member.”

Therefore, on Tuesday May 6, the OSTA Executive Board voted to increase its local association dues from \$10 to \$15 per month, which will meet the CTA minimum requirement of \$150 per full-time member. All part-time members will have pro-rated dues.

This action will be coming to the general membership for ratification on Wed., May 21, at site meetings.

ADMINISTRATOR VOTE OF CONFIDENCE SURVEY RESULTS – BY LARRY COBBLER

The “Vote of Confidence” survey for site administrators and the district superintendent are in and have been distributed. On Wednesday, May 7, each site administrator received a copy of the “Vote of Confidence” survey from the OSTA site representatives.

Larry Cobbler dropped off Dwayne Robinson’s results at the district office. As he was leaving, Dwayne was driving in. Larry stopped and talked to Dwayne to let him know of the survey and that Dwayne’s results were in his office. Dwayne’s response: **“I couldn’t care less; it is not OSTA’s job to evaluate administrators.”**

On Wednesday night, OSTA President Larry Cobbler presented all of the results to the school board. He said, “There were 117 OSTA members participating in the survey. I am very pleased to report that most of the administrators received very high marks and the OSTA members were very confident in their administrators. Unfortunately, that is not the case for all administrators, as you will see when you look at the results.”

VOTE OF CONFIDENCE results with 117 OSTA members responding:

Dwayne Robinson	OUHSD Superintendent	17% confidence
Charles Tracy	OHS Principal	64% confidence
Jeff Ochs	PHS Principal	100% confidence
Sandy Dovell	LPHS Principal	78% confidence
Walt Guess	CCHS Principal	82% confidence
Dan Ramos	LPHS Vice Principal	100% confidence
Darin Williams	LPHS Vice Principal	100% confidence
Dennis Spasbo	OHS Vice Principal	91% confidence
Jeff Peek	OHS Vice Principal	96% confidence

HARRISON STADIUM BOND PROPOSAL – BY LARRY COBBLER

Site meetings will be held at LPHS and OHS at lunch on Thurs., May 15, to hear about the Harrison Stadium Bond proposal.

APRIL TEACHER OF THE MONTH – BY LISA ROSS

It should go without saying that Marla Vaughn is deserving of the April TOM Award. Whether you know her personally or not, you know her name...as the go-to person for any contract questions, grievances, and questions in general. Twice in my tenure as yearbook adviser, Marla has made it possible for yearbook staff members to attend yearbook camp. Without her contributions, our students would not have reaped the benefits of summer training so essential to a successful year and notable book. Through GATE, Marla enabled 12 students to attend a three-day yearbook camp at CSU East Bay in Hayward. Our yearbook staff has held strong at 32 students, and this year Las Plumas will see its first full-color yearbook. Thank you, Marla. This is one of many reasons why Marla deserves Teacher of the Month, but one more fact worth mentioning is that Marla's car is in the parking a lot more than any other (except maybe Bill Bliss)...at the crack of dawn and well after sports practices have concluded.

MAY TEACHER OF THE MONTH – BY MICHAEL CARATENUTO

I would like to nominate Courtney Connelly for Teacher of the Month. Courtney has been a teacher leader at Challenge Charter High School since she was first hired back in the fall 2004. She currently is the AVID coordinator and is one of three Directors of Curriculum at our school who sit on CCHS's Advisory Council. She has advocated for AP classes in our course offerings and currently teaches AP English. She creates opportunities for students to learn about colleges by setting up onsite presentations or field trips to colleges and universities in the state of California, and she works diligently to ensure that her students are on track to enter a four-year college or university, if a student chooses. There is so much more Courtney does for our school and our students. She is a valuable asset to our team and deserves this nomination.

APRIL FRIEND OF EDUCATION – BY COURTNY CONNELLY

I would like to nominate Mel Jackson from Mooretown Rancheria for making a generous donation to the AVID Region 2 Spring Field Trip. Their donation helped make it possible for students to go on the three day field trip to Central California to visit five college campuses (UOP, Sacramento State, CSU Fresno, CSU Merced, CSU Stanislaus), visit Great America, and experience many other fun-filled adventures on the way. THANK YOU MOORETOWN RANCHERIA FOR MAKING THIS TRIP POSSIBLE!

MAY FRIEND OF EDUCATION – BY MARSHA MILLER

I would like to nominate Shauna Koadi for Friend of Education. She is a caseworker with Northern Valley Catholic Social Services, and she is directly responsible for the Teen Parent Program in the Oroville Union High School District. Shauna comes to the Prospect site every Thursday to meet with students. She also came for four sessions before Christmas so that every student in the parenting class could make crafts for Christmas. Shauna now has committed to coming for six weeks after school so that teen parents can attend a "group" session to make scrapbooks for their children. She is a delight to work with and works very diligently to ensure that every teen parent in our district has a caseworker. She makes home visits, assists in the enrollment of students, takes students' appointments, etc. She is very dedicated to the teen parents in our district.

MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK! – BY MICHEAL CARATENUTO

It seems that I see the same 40 or so people at the general membership meetings, yet there are more than 140 members of the Oroville Secondary Teachers Association (OSTA). It also seems that every year, the same 17 teachers participate on the Union's Executive Board. This is a scary pattern.

Our union is only as strong as our membership participation. Aside from running for office, there are four things all members should do to participate in OSTA more:

- Your most important role as a member of the OSTA is to make your voice heard by actively VOTING on the initiatives, surveys, and Executive Board Candidates. This is absolutely the easiest thing all members can do. Will you make a commitment to vote on all union votes?
- Voting generally occurs at general membership meetings; therefore, another important responsibility that each member has is to ATTEND General Membership Meetings. These occur at the beginning and end of the school year, and at other times as needed. If you have a better suggestion on when general membership meetings occur, please let your school site representative or union president know. Will you make a commitment to attend most general membership meetings if given enough notice?
- INFORM your site representatives of anything, and I mean anything, that you feel might be a break in the contract. For example, suppose an administrator requires you to attend a meeting during your prep. If you let your school site representative know, then he/she will be able to give you some advice on how to handle that specific situation. If she can't, she will find someone who can. If a grievance needs to be filed, you only have 15 days from the time that you knew the incident took place to file a Level 1 Grievance (See Article VI of the OUHSD/OSTA Bargaining Agreement for full details of the grievance process). Will you make a commitment to inform your site representatives of issues that you have with your administration, even if you feel that a grievance is not necessary?
- HELP the union when asked. According to our new by-laws, elected members of the Executive Board can not participate in the elections committee when such elected positions are to be voted on; therefore, someone else HAS to do it and that might mean you. A responsibility like this only happens once a year, but it is VERY important. There are other responsibilities that you can participate in; just ask your school site representative or our union president, or volunteer when asked. Such extra work is not needed often, but many hands make light work. Will you make a commitment to ask your site representatives how you can help?

Bottom line: If all union business were only handled by the same 17 people who attend the Board Meetings and who keep getting re-elected, then those 17 people (who also have to plan for their classes, grade papers, be advisors for different programs, attend extra meetings, coach, and take care of their families, too) will eventually burn out. And who is ready to replace them? Are you up to the challenge? This is YOUR union. Make YOUR VOICE heard and take control.

GRIEVANCE UPDATE – BY LARRY COBBLER

The unfair labor practice charge was deferred to arbitration by PERB (Public Employee Relations Board). An arbitrator, Normand Brand, has been selected, and the arbitration dates are Aug. 28 and 29, 2008. We now have to wait and see whether applying the district's offering of the SERP for retirees last spring to our June 2007 contract settlement was legal or not.

In the meantime, the grievance "OSTA Grievance #1-07/08 (Salary Agreement)" is on its way to arbitration also. At first, the district did not want to skip mediation and move on to arbitration. After not meeting mediation deadlines, OSTA found out the district lawyer wanted to roll this arbitration and the PERB arbitration together. When OSTA discovered what had been attempted, OSTA insisted that this arbitration be heard separately. The OSTA Grievance #1-07/08 (Salary Agreement) issue has to do with the district constantly

changing the agreed upon settled percentage based on the state budget crisis. As you know, your first pay raise was 1.3% and then you received an additional .5%. Who knows how much more you should be receiving even if the deduction for SERP holds up?

Arbitrations are costly to both the district and OSTA, as we have to split the costs of the arbitrator, his/her staff, lodging, etc. Dwayne Robinson, district superintendent, said, "I was thinking about the teachers and not having to give RIF notices this year or next." He added, "Every dollar spent out of the general fund puts us closer to having to RIF a teacher next year." If OSTA wants to have two arbitrations, then "OSTA will be the cause for teachers losing their jobs next year." OSTA informed Mr. Robinson that if the contract had been followed, we would not be in this situation.

According to CTA Representative Mike Higginson, it is rare to have an arbitration with a total cost of more than \$4,000. Of course, the district does have to pay for their lawyer's time.

We have another grievance currently at the Informal Level at LPHS over the STAR-testing schedule. It revolves around granting minimum days to make things more fair and equal for all teachers. Even though we had requested minimum days for STAR-testing in the past, they were again denied. However, minimum days were allowed at one other site.

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.

- I know most people were against endorsing the District using \$50,000 from the general fund to put a bond measure on the ballot for renovating Harrison Stadium. I am against using general fund money without the district making any offer of a better pay raise. However, I am also against the concept that now is not the time for a bond measure about Harrison Stadium. There will never be a wonderful time for the bond measure. I disagree with the argument that people in Oroville will not vote for the bond. I have small children who would grow up using the new facility, and I believe a new facility would promote more people to want to move and raise their children here in this community. Harrison Stadium is a facility used by the community, not just the two high schools. The middle schools use it, and the community football leagues use it on Saturdays. The elementary schools do not have money to bus kids to Butte College for track meets, and they hold all their track meets there. Many schools use it for graduations, including our 8th grade graduations. Can OSTA make a recommendation as to where the district gets the \$50,000? Can we recommend they ask the other feeder school districts to put in some cash for the bond to be placed on the ballot? Can we give a vote in favor of the bond measure if the district finds other sources of revenue for the \$50,000?

By Rebecca Howard

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