
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

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OSTA - CTA - NEA

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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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OCTOBER 2007 TEACHER OF THE MONTH - BY CAMILLE UPTON

I would like to nominate Rebecca Howard. Rebecca is a very devoted teacher both in and out of the classroom. Having taught a wide range of mathematics courses, tutored for high school exit exam, and offered after-school tutoring to the pre-calculus students, she has shown her dedication to improving students' understanding of math. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, she is also very involved outside of the classroom: sophomore Class Advisor, Academic Decathlon coach, Anime club advisor, and as WASC committee chairman. Rebecca has done it all with grace and dignity. But the job that I most appreciate her for is her agreement to cover Activities Director while I was on maternity leave. This is a position that many shy away from due to the commitment involved. Rebecca didn't hesitate to agree to cover and still maintained all her other commitments while serving in this position. I think we are a lucky staff to have Rebecca Howard working with us, and I think she deserves the honor of Teacher of the Month.

OCTOBER 2007 FRIEND OF EDUCATION - BY NANNETTE WALKER

I would like to nominate Kim Dean of Round Table Pizza for the October Friend of Education. Kim heard about the lockdown at Las Plumas, and she had pizzas delivered to the school. That was such a wonderful gesture! It is so nice to know the community was behind us and appreciated our efforts on an extremely difficult day.

I can think of no better person to nominate as a Friend of Education than Kim Dean.

DISTRICT ENROLLMENT UPDATE - BY LARRY COBBLER

According to a report superintendent Dwayne Robinson gave to the OUHSD school board on Sept. 19, the district enrollment counts were LPHS -1412, OHS - 1239, PHS - 146, CCHS - 143, and CDS - 16. Thanks to 120 newly-enrolled students, our district-wide student enrollment dropped only 97 students, instead of the predicted 113.

WINTER FLING COMING SOON – BY LARRY COBBLER

We have a date and location for the Winter Fling. It will be held at the Graduate Restaurant in Chico on Thursday, December 20, at 6:30 PM. Erika Hughes is the chair of the Winter Fling. If you would like to help you may contact Erika at ehughes@ouhsd.org.

CLASS COVERAGE FOR IEP MEETINGS – BY LARRY COBBLER

It is the understanding of OSTA that site administrators still have not provided IEP meeting information and guidance to all our unit members. For this reason, OSTA will again try to explain the new IEP process the district is requiring for this year. Here are the procedures the superintendent has directed site administrators to follow for class coverage during an IEP meeting, as OSTA understands them:

- ✓ The district is scheduling 20 days for IEP meetings. On these days, many IEP meetings will take place.
- ✓ The district will provide a substitute for the special education teacher and roving substitutes to cover the regular education teacher's classroom.
- ✓ The district is requiring that the regular education teacher sit through the entire IEP meeting because the district is paying for a substitute.
- ✓ In the event an IEP meeting must be scheduled on a different day, a para-educator will cover for the special education teacher in the classroom and an administrator will cover class for the regular education teacher. The regular education teacher will be allowed to return to class after 10 to 15 minutes or as soon as they are no longer needed in the IEP meeting. The reason for administration coverage is to save money on the cost of substitutes.

According to some special education teachers, there are many occasions when IEP or 504 meetings can't be scheduled on a pre-arranged IEP meeting day. So is it necessary to have administrators tied up in the classroom that often? How about the safety of the students and staff on our campuses? If our administrators were tied up in class when a student went into the band room at LPHS with a gun on Friday, Sept. 28, would things have turned out as well as they did?

If teachers are only needed in an IEP meeting for 10-15 minutes, as has always been the practice until this year, where is the educational value in having a classroom teacher sitting in an IEP meeting for an entire period? Does the district believe we can improve the educational process and our students' test scores by leaving a substitute in the classroom and keeping the regular education teacher in a meeting, even though they are no longer needed?

OSTA believes teachers should be in the classroom. Teachers should be allowed to return to class when they are no longer needed in the IEP meeting. The district is not saving any money by keeping teachers in the meeting and the substitute in the classroom. Apparently, the district is trying to get its money's worth for the cost of a substitute teacher -- at the expense of our students' education.

COMPENSATION PERIODS – BY LARRY COBBLER

All instances requiring a teacher to comp another teacher are to go through the site administrator and be pre-approved before coverage is assigned. It is the responsibility of the administrator or designee to request and assign the coverage for emergencies and school business.

CVT BENEFITS INFORMATION - BY LARRY COBBLER

California's Valued Trust (CVT) is our medical benefits carrier. They have a web site at www.cvtrust.org and the phone number is 800-288-9770. If you have any questions about your coverage, you may contact them for information.

HOW TO CALL IN FOR A SUBSTITUTE – BY LARRY COBBLER

When calling the district office substitute caller line, 538-2300 (ext. 8), try to call before 6:00 a.m. if possible. The only information you need to leave:

- ✓ your name
- ✓ school site
- ✓ subjects taught
- ✓ any extra duties
- ✓ the day of the absence and full day, half day or what periods
- ✓ simply state the category the absence will be charged to: family sickness, personal necessity, sick leave, court leave, etc... no further explanation is necessary. (See your contract on the web at http://www.ouhsd.org/hr/Contracts/OSTA_05-06_CONT-FINAL_updated_5-30-06.pdf)
- ✓ the district office will not forward lesson plan information
- ✓ e-mail, fax, or call your school site with your lesson plans

CTA SPONSORED “MEET THE LEADERSHIP RECEPTION” – BY LARRY COBBLER

The Second Annual “Meet The Leadership” Reception was held Thursday, Sept. 20, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Gold Country Casino banquet hall in Oroville. Eight OSTA unit members were in attendance to meet and hear from state, regional and local leaders about CTA issues. The big issue of the night was about the NCLB reauthorization bill currently in Congress. There was also plenty of information about all the benefits available to us as CTA members. Four of our unit members won door prizes at the reception: Diane Handley, Larry Cobbler, Carol Anderson, and David Rieck. Carol and David each won one of the two big door prizes (\$100 gift certificate to Barnes & Noble). We all had a great meal and a good time.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND NCLB REAUTHORIZATION BILL – BY LARRY COBBLER

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) reauthorization bill is currently in Congress. Surprisingly, this bill is authored by George Miller (D) (925) 602-1880 and supported by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D) (415) 556-4862. The bill endorses paying teachers based on student test scores, privatizing public schools, “brands” teachers under a statewide data system based on student tests, and destroys collective bargaining rights for educators. CTA strongly recommends that we make three phone calls asking our elected officials to VOTE NO on the NCLB reauthorization bill now before Congress. Please call Miller, Pelosi, and your congressman. To call your congressman, dial 1- (800) 268-4334. You can even do this from a cell phone.

NEW RULES AFFECT MEMBERS' TAX DEFERRED ACCOUNTS – BY LARRY COBBLER

The following is a memo to chapter presidents and membership chairpersons from David A. Sanchez, CTA President. It was dated 9/20/07 and is titled New Rules Affect Members' Tax Deferred Accounts.

Recently, the Internal Revenue Service issued new rules affecting 403(b) retirement plans. We are examining the new regulations and their impact on chapters and members. The regulations include new requirements on the part of employers, including a written document that formalizes the offerings of 403(b) vendors.

Most of the new regulations are effective Jan. 1, 2009; however, one important change relates to moving funds from one investment company to another. After Sept. 24, 2007, an employee who moves funds from one company to another may be at risk if the receiving vendor is not included in the 403(b) plan document that is ultimately approved by the employee's school district.

Under Revenue Ruling 90-24, employees can make 403(b) transfers and exchanges between companies at their discretion (without employer approval). This rule will now expire on Sept. 24, 2007. Therefore, any member who desires to make a change from one investment company to another should contact his or her tax advisor or plan advisor and consider making the change by Sept. 24, 2007. It appears that the required paperwork must be completed and accepted by the receiving vendor by Sept. 24, 2007, although the check can be sent after that date. Employees who make changes after Sept. 24 should understand that there is a risk to doing so. If an employee moves money from an existing account to a company that is not later approved by the employer, the entire sum of money transferred may become immediately taxable and penalties may be assessed for early withdrawal. Consequently, even after Sept. 24, 2007, members should consult their tax advisor or plan advisor before they make changes to their 403(b) accounts. CTA does not provide tax or investment advice.

Because of the potential tax consequences and uncertainty about the new regulations and information sharing agreements with vendors, some districts may temporarily freeze 90-24 transfers. Cal-STRS has released a circular about the 90-24 transfers to districts with the recommendation that districts temporarily freeze 90-24 transfers effective Sept. 25, 2007.

Retirement investing is important to our members. We will continue to study the new regulations and identify ways to help members take advantage of quality investment options.

CTA MEMBER BENEFITS AT WORK - BY LARRY COBBLER

One of the benefits of CTA membership is that you can sign up for the CTA-endorsed Group Disability and Life insurance plans during a special enrollment opportunity without providing proof of good health, in most cases. Of course, as a CTA member, you can apply for coverage at any time, but your application will be subject to health evidence and insurance company approval.

Special enrollment opportunities for 2007/2008 include:

- ✓ Current participants in CTA-endorsed plans can apply to add or increase their coverage from Sept. 1, 2007 to Oct. 31, 2007;
- ✓ CTA members with Disability and or Life coverage with other companies can apply to switch to The Standard from Oct. 15 to Dec. 15, 2007 and Apr. 15 to June 15, 2008;
- ✓ Newly hired CTA members (including transferees) during the first 120 days of employment can apply for Disability coverage or up to \$200,000 in Life coverage; and
- ✓ CTA members with a Family Status Change have 31 days after a qualifying family status change to add Disability or add/increase Life coverage up to \$200,000.

Some limitations apply. Refer to The Standard's member enrollment brochure for details and enrollment forms. An even easier way to enroll is online at www.cta.org/mycta.

Don't let these opportunities pass you by; help protect yourself and your loved ones today. Call The Standard at 800-522-0406.

HOW "NOT" TO BE INSUBORDINATE - BY LARRY COBBLER

If an administrator asks you to do something you don't feel is right, it is okay to express your disagreement to the administrator. If the administrator insists that you meet his/her demands, simply ask them to put it in writing, make sure you comply with the request, and then present a copy of the written request to your site representative. The site representative will be able to determine if this was a grievable offense. If so, the contractual grievance procedures process can then be started.

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 want to give a special thanks to Commander David Bruhn, Gunny Sergeant Glenn Blakley and the NJROTC students for helping to beautify our campus. They have been working diligently for the past few weeks creating a lovely pathway and are now in the process of planting trees. I think I speak for all of us on this end of the campus when I say that we appreciate your efforts.....Annie Bacior (LPHS)

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.