# MEA Update: January 10th, 2025

Happy New Year and welcome back! I hope your Winter Break was relaxing and reinvigorating. As I write, Southern California suffers through devastating fires in neighboring areas and communities. Many of us have friends and family who have suffered horrific losses from the inferno that continues to rage. Please stay vigilant; please stay safe. And, as always, the mutual support of the Moorpark Educators community is here for you. As a reminder, CTA has programs available for those members who suffer loss as a result of natural disasters, such as fires.

# Membership

The President handed out the last of the *Coffee ala Mode* gift cards this (Friday, the 10th) morning Cards will be good through the end of February. Please encourage your colleagues to use the cards. It brings business to our friends at *Coffee ala Mode* and they have tasty stuff!

# Bargaining

Bargaining commissar, Lisa McCarter, submitted its Sunshine to MUSD and its school board trustees on 11/12/24. It went on December’s SB agenda. Lisa then submitted MEA’s proposal for 2024-25 to MUSD on 12/16/24. The governor will release the 2025 State budget this morning. Lisa will schedule bargaining sessions beginning for early February at the latest. Meanwhile, the State’s economy continues to perform well.  The tax receipts outpace the estimates by billions.

# Social Security Offset:

On January 5, 2025, President Biden signed the bipartisan Social Security Fairness Act (SSFA), HR82 into law. The passing of this law is a monumental victory for organized labor, particularly for California’s public employees. This law ensures that millions of educators and other public servants receive the full Social Security benefits they deserve by repealing the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). The WEP/GPO unfairly reduced Social Security benefits that public employees or their spouses earned. Let me offer one quick example of the impact of this new legislation: a few years back, an MEA member retired after 30+ years of service with her STRS pension in tow. Her husband, who worked in the private section for 30+ years with a salary above six figures suddenly passed. Under WEP/GPO, this teacher had to make a choice between her pension and her husband’s. She did the math and chose STRS. Where did the SS money go? I can tell you that it did not go her or to their children. As we presently understand it, The Social Security Administration is evaluating how to implement the SSFA, and will provide more information and guidance as soon as possible.  Under SSFA a retiring teacher won’t have to “do the math,” and, most importantly, they and their family will receive the money that they or a spouse earned during their career in the private sector. I will send a SSFA Fact Sheet to your site reps to disseminate to you with this update.

# Flex Period at MHS

MHS postponed a vote on MUSD’s “flex period” plan. MEA has been actively soliciting information about local HS sites that have have remediation periods. MUSD plans to reconvene a “flex period” committee after Winter Break. The stated intent is to create time in the existing schedule to offer added instruction/intervention/remediation to MHS students.

# Evaluation/Observation process

MEA’s official position is that MUSD’s current practices regarding Evals/Obs are out of compliance with what is currently stated in the contract. MEA is also working with School Counselors to codify their evaluation process during the next round of negotiations. MEA will work with MUSD to clarify the contract language and right the ship.

# Retirement Workshop Rescheduled:

The new date for workshop is 1/30/25 at 3:45pm at the DO.

# Who Can Write You a “Doctor’s Note”?

A health care provider that is recognized by the State**: a** medical or osteopathic doctor, physician, or surgeon, licensed in California or in another state or country, who directly treats or supervises the treatment of the applicant or employee; or a marriage and family therapist or acupuncturist, licensed in California or in another state or country, or any other persons who meet the definition of "others capable of providing health care services" under FMLA and its implementing regulations, including podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, optometrists, chiropractors, nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, clinical social workers, physician assistants; or a health care provider from whom an employer, other covered entity, or a group health plan's benefits manager will accept medical certification of the existence of a health condition to substantiate a claim for benefits (*California Code of Regulations § 11065*).