

President's Message 10/14 to 10/18

Hi. Here's what's going on this week.

Senate Bill 344

Earlier this week, Senate Bill 344 became law. The new Education Code language mandates that, commencing in 2022-23 school year, middle schools must begin their day no earlier than 8:00am and high schools 8:30am. If classes start prior to 8am or 8:30am; however, MUSD, for example, will not receive ADA for any class or program that commences prior to the mandated time. So, the 0 Period courses that MHS presently offers will yield 0 attendance money for MUSD. This, obviously, does not bode well for the continuation of flexible scheduling and increased student choice at MHS.

The research concerning later school start time is convincing, and has been around for more than a decade. There is a correlation between later start times and increased student achievement. This is not why CTA opposed Senate Bill 344. CTA was against the bill for two reasons: first, CTA wanted the individual districts to maintain local control over start time. The districts and their stakeholders—particularly teachers and parents--should be entrusted to decide what is best for their children. While in general, the teenage brain doesn't wake up until later in the morning, this generality does not apply to all teenage brains. The brain is malleable and adaptive. Last, the State's top-down mandate denies individual students valuable choices concerning their school day. This year, 320 of MHS' 1921 pupils voluntarily attend 0 period. Many of these students' day consists of childcare (their own or siblings) or work, in addition to school. Some of MHS' AVID students may not be able to play sports when this is implemented. Students who work or take work experience courses may lose the ability to take required course work. Last, students who need to make up credits to graduate may not use 0 period to do so. Today, at MHS, there are three scheduling tracks: the majority of the students are on the traditional 0-6 schedule. An increasing number of students take a 0-5 schedule (ending at about 2pm) or, to a lesser extent, a period 2-7 schedule (ending at about 4pm).

This well-intended law suffers from a lack of foresight and can potentially deny student opportunity and avenues toward success. The unintended consequences may outweigh the extra half an hour of sleep that it provides.

Standard Open Enrollment until Nov. 15th

The Standard, our CTA-affiliated insurance carrier has accompanied me (and sometimes Jake) on site visits. Your MEA Rep has more information and hard copies of the informational booklets. You can also log-in through CTAMemberBenefits.org/TheStandard or call The Standard at 800 522-0406. The Standard offers two products: disability and life insurance.

Disability Insurance: educators in the state of California do not pay into state disability. If you run out of sick days, you will not qualify for state disability. It is a good idea to have a *Plan B* in case something happens. The Standard is our CTA-endorsed product. Several other companies, including American Fidelity, sell disability products. Please be informed about the differences between the products (see page 14 of the booklet). This shows how The Standard

product sets itself apart and is tailored to educators. If MEA has 15 members apply for disability insurance with The Standard by Nov. 15, **then the health questions do NOT have to be answered!** This opportunity is only offered to our members once every few years.

Life Insurance: all members may qualify for \$50,000 (and \$25,000 for their spouse). In addition, if you already have life insurance with The Standard, you may increase your existing coverage to the next closest level, up to a max. of \$100k of coverage, **all without answering any health questions.**

Other Happenings

- The District is interviewing SPED teachers for a position at MHS. They are also looking for more relief at Peach Hill
- The District has current posting for paraeducators. Two recent hires did not pan out.
- The MEA Bargaining Team meets with the District on Monday, the 21st. We will mainly discuss the first few Articles in the Contract (recall it is a “successor contract,” so we are essentially updating the entire document) and attempt to hammer out contract language for counselors. We will not discuss compensation at this meeting.
- The District needed all members to turn in a Catastrophic Leave Bank form regardless of whether or not you join it because the State audit requires documentation expressing the member’s opt-in or out.
- According to the District, there will be no golden handshakes or retirement “buy-outs,” at least, in the years to come. If you will recall, the most recent District’s buy-out surprised MEA. It did not surprise MEA leadership that MUSD has no interest in a new retirement incentive given its stated objection to the costs of retiree health care benefits and its desire to move to a different health care trust.

Have a great weekend!

Brian