

## President's Update 8-10 to 8-14

Hi everyone. The school year started this morning for the High School at Moorpark College. For the rest of you, I hope you enjoy your last week of Summer. I am writing an update this morning so that I can give you a rationale for the working conditions MOU that I signed with the District on Friday. Late Friday morning, CTA informed MEA that members must vote to change our work conditions. We will begin voting on Survey Monkey later this week.

### **Return to Work**

MEA won a major victory at the bargaining table when the District rescinded its mandate for teachers to conduct distance learning from his/her classroom. Prior to that, we fought with our collective might to persuade our school board to delay a forced return to our campuses. If you want a more detailed version of both sagas, give me a call. This letter is long enough as is.

You will have the choice of whether to teach from home or from campus. I want to point out that the drive to have teacher's teach DL on campus did not just come from the District. Parents and some teachers also wanted more teacher accountability. The MOU that our negotiation team developed with the District successfully blends accountability with respect for our professionalism. I would describe it as fairly strict. In other words, it is fair and strict. As President, **I recommend that our membership approve the working conditions MOU.**

The strongest source of contention, after MEA rejected "*shall return to work site,*" may be the MOU's requirement that off-campus teaching must occur from a primary residence. Placing aside enforcement issues, our negotiators questioned why the District was so adamant about this measure. The reason that MUSD wants teachers to teach from his/her primary residence involves technology access and teacher availability, but more so, it is because there were instances during the Spring when teachers taught from "exotic" locales and times when principals could not locate teachers. MEA Bargaining agreed to this stipulation as a gesture toward our accountability and professionalism. You will also notice that the District agreed to suspend *tenured* teacher evaluations for this year as well.

What happens if MEA members do not approve the document? Well, one answer is that the District can order us to work on campus. More likely, MEA and the District will negotiate another agreement, and we will have to vote again on it. Regardless, all staff will return to work on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August.

We are still working with the District on how exactly substitutes will work, and the District will present it's incredibly thorough (lengthy) safety plan to the school board tomorrow. It is based on State and County requirements, and our members' concerns. The listed measures will be in place prior to teachers (who choose to) first step on campus. You will find this document on our MEA site tomorrow. We feel confident that your concerns have been heard and met to ensure all of our safety.

### **CARES Act Hires**

As of this morning, MUSD has hired about 25 teachers, many on temporary contracts to conduct distance learning. MUSD will also be fully staffed in SPED for the first time in a few years. We will conduct a new teacher orientation from a distance after school begins. The tentative date for new teacher orientation is September 2<sup>nd</sup>. This year is going to be a challenge (yet another "process") to get new members signed up. MEA is going to need the help of site reps to get this accomplished.

## **The Schedule**

The District submitted the schedules approved by the two COVID-19 task forces to its school board trustees. As you may know, school boards have final say on calendar-related issues. MEA appreciates that the District collaborated with stakeholders while creating the schedules. The elementary schedule summoned some interesting pedagogical issues and permutations, and discussions, that's for sure.

## **Task Force**

Thank you to all members who gave up their time during the summer months to help create safe, fair, and effective working conditions for staff and students. You absolutely informed our bargaining team as well as guided our negotiations. I know you put in an abundance of time and effort. I am aware that some committee members have asked the district to reimburse them for their time. The District's position is that they explicitly stated that the committee was voluntary. MEA would like to see the member's paid for his/her time; however, we cannot grieve this matter.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank Scott Easley for his activism, communication, and for his prioritization of our health. Scott, you truly have a gift for agitation!

## **Accommodations**

I want to thank Cathy Lasure for attempting to accommodate everyone who had concerns, fears, and/or issues about returning to work. She contacted each individual personally and sincerely tried to make this bad situation better. Please let me know if you did not receive the reasonable accommodation that you requested.

## **Membership**

We did not come to an agreement with the District regarding the counselor's working conditions. The major issue is the night's counselors are asked to work. The two sides are pretty far apart on the matter. We will return to the bargaining table with a new ask for counselors in the 2020-21 negotiations cycle.

Jake and I meet next week with the District psychologists to discuss their possible entry into our association. I am looking forward to the meeting and would love to have them aboard MEA.

## **Canvas Concerns**

I want to remind our members that the District's purchase of Canvas was in response to teacher concerns. Teachers asked for a centralized Learning Management System (LMS) that connects to Google Classroom and to Q. Canvas does this. While no cure all or dynamo, Canvas is the most widely-used and effective LMS in public education. The learning curve is steep for all of us during these trying times. Thank you Tamira Kreider for your guidance, hard work, and for providing a myriad of training opportunities. Please let me know if you have issues with Canvas.

## **Upcoming Elections**

MEA's Political Action Committee (PAC) will meet with potential school board candidates in September. Unfortunately, we have anti-teacher, anti-public education, and anti-public employee association candidates running in two of the newly formed districts. While MEA will not offer any money to candidates this year, we may endorse candidates and/or publicly oppose candidates after the approval

of our representative council. MEA has also been asked to endorse candidates for the Community College District Board.

### **Changes in MUSD and MEA Leadership**

We wish Latasha Jamal well as she moves on to Azusa USD. Pearl Iizuka once again assumes the mantle of interim CBO for MUSD. Welcome aboard again, Pearl.

I will get out leadership meeting schedules as well as a leadership contact list later this week. I want to welcome Erin Hanley, Kim Lemons, and Scott Easley to the Bargaining Team. Erin will represent middle school; Kim will represent SPED/EL; Scott will represent upper elementary. I want to thank Ron Wilford for his time and effort as the SPED rep.

I am not sure that I can express how much gratitude MEA owes Cynthia Kahle for her time, energy, and passion for fairness and employee rights. There is no way to replace a leader like you, Cynthia. Instead, we'll keep up the good fight because that's what you always did for us for so many years.

Best,

Brian