

September 28, 2015

Treasurer

Adam Knutsen

Let me start off by saying thank you for entrusting me as the treasurer for MTA. At the end of the 2014/15 school year I was sent to a treasurer training hosted by a CTA accounting and budgetary specialist at their Corona office to go over changes and additions to accounting laws that affect the treasurer's position. The training was informative and collaborative as there were treasurers from across Southern California there.

Although it is the beginning of the year for teachers, September 1st is the end of the fiscal year for MTA. We at MTA are currently working diligently on creating and preparing all documentation for the MTA's end of year audit. I would like to say thanks to our MTA office secretary, Mary for all she does to ensure we at MTA follow guidelines set by CTA and the State of California in our audit procedures.

MTA NEWS

Murrieta Teachers Association

President's Message from Kathy Ericson

What an exciting start to the 2015/16 school year! It's hard to believe we've officially been back from summer break for nearly six weeks, unless one looks back on all that has been accomplished in that time. I know many of you spent a lot of time in your classrooms preparing for students to return prior to August 10th. Your dedication did not go unnoticed as school board members, district staff, and site administrators have all commented on how impressed they were as they visited classrooms the first week of school. I, too, enjoyed visiting all sites that first week of school and was equally awed. Not only were classrooms welcoming, but the professionalism was abundant as different challenges arose and were met. Murrieta Elementary had no electricity on the first day of school, and the teachers worked with site and district administrators to ensure that students were as comfortable as possible until they could be picked up. Teachers at several sites stepped up to take on additional students as more students than expected arrived at their school's doorstep. As new teachers have been hired, teams have supported their new members in any way possible. Teachers have also been attending professional development opportunities, holding Back-to-School Nights, completing progress reports, and preparing for conferences. Wow! As always, I'm proud to be a part of a school district amassed of the finest teachers that put kids first.

Another highlight of the first few weeks of school is our Tentative Agreement (TA)! Our AdHoc team continued meeting with district representatives through the end of last year and continued their diligence over the summer. After allowing some time for the school year to get under way, AdHoc convened briefly to wrap up a recommendation for the basis of negotiations. Because the ground work for the language portion of negotiations had been completed, the bargaining teams were able to settle in one afternoon bargaining session. This is what many of us refer to as doing things the Murrieta way! Kudos to both our AdHoc team (Tom Kuzma, Wayne Conklin, Adam Knutsen, Eva Evans, and Russ Welch) and our bargaining team (Wayne Conklin, Tom Kuzma, Russ Welch, Heidi Schumaker, and Lisa Reed) for their hard work, collaborative approach, and a wonderful TA!

From August until Thanksgiving break is a difficult stretch of the year. I often hear comments such as, "It's only September, and I'm tired!" Try to pace yourselves in an attempt to keep stress levels under control. You are key to your students' success, but you have to take care of you!

As always, feel free to reach out and share acknowledgements or concerns.

Kathy

Check out the MTA website: murrietateachers.com

Director Reports

Middle School Director

Beth Szabo

Kathy Ericson and I will be visiting each of the middle school sites in the next month or so. We will either be available before school or during lunch to visit and discuss any issues or concerns you may have. If invited, we also enjoy coming into your classrooms and observing the great things you do. If you have any concerns that can't wait, you can contact me at any time:

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Elementary School Director

Kim Chevlin

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Special Education Director

Matt Johnson

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High School Director

Kyle Garrity

The coming weeks and months will be important for our leadership teams (department chairs with admin.) to discuss budgets, discretionary spending, strategic planning for improving learning, and the needs of each department. Measure BB bond money is coming along smoothly, and we will be seeing fruit from that success after the holidays through infrastructure improvements. ITLs and ITCs should be meeting with their sites in leadership meetings to continue the discussion of spending and training related to technology, and more specifically classroom needs. Additionally, good discussions about the priorities as expressed in the LCAP (Local Control Accountability Plan) should be happening within your sites within departments and within leadership teams. High School teachers are continuing to press for clearer, more frequent, and more inclusive conversations in the development of the math and English work teams. We have seen a lot of improvements in all these areas and look forward to the journey ahead.

Kyle Garrity, Ph.D.

MTA High School Director/CTA State Council

BTSA/PAR Support Provider

Social Science Teacher, Leadership Team

(Room WW12, 951.894.5750 ext. 6592)

Teachers and Social Media

Tom Kuzma, Vice President

Social networking of one kind or another is used by almost everyone with access to the Internet. Whether it's teachers, students or parents, the way we communicate with each other has changed so much within the last decade. But with the growing use of Facebook and Twitter, teachers who maintain profiles on these websites face difficult dilemmas. It's likely that you are asking yourself numerous questions. What should I do if I get a friend request from a student? Do I allow my pupils to follow my Twitter feed?

As a teacher, you need to be aware of how social networking can affect your professional life. Many of us use Facebook to share information, photos and messages. You should ask yourself if the latest batch of pictures from a recent holiday, or, a photo of you on a night out tagged by a friend, are suitable for students to see. Using strong privacy settings is a start, but they are only as strong as your weakest link. Remember, we in the teaching community have an ethical obligation to maintain both inside and outside of the classroom that represents our profession and district in an appropriate manner.

First, let's debunk the free speech myth: Many teachers believe they have the absolute First Amendment right to post anything they want on social networking sites, including party pix and diatribes about the boss. After all, they're on their own time and using their own resources. Sadly, the courts say otherwise. Thanks to social media, what used to be private is now very public. And that's the problem, particularly for young teachers: Some seem oblivious to the devastating consequences of posting really stupid things in cyberspace.

The exploding popularity of these sites has engendered a prurient interest in teachers' "private" lives by school administrators, students, parents and the media. Newspapers across the country have begun trolling social networking sites for embarrassing and titillating postings by local teachers. And there's a treasure trove of material to be mined. If you are unsure if something is appropriate or not, ask yourself the age-old adage: If I showed this to my mother, would she approve? Moms know best!