

October 9, 2013

MTA NEWS

Representative

Murrieta Teachers Association

Council Highlights

- **Bargaining:** begins November 7th. Let your site rep know about issues that concern you!
- **Ad-Hoc:** Met September 30th— reported to Rep Council about direction the School Board wants to go with new monies.
- **Organizing:** Met on September 30th.
- **Site Rep Training:** October 15th at MTA Office in Murrieta.
- **Insurance:** nothing new to report
- **Grievance:** no grievances to report— Grievances must relate to specific articles in the MTA contract.

President's Message from Kathy Ericson

Congratulations on a successful first few weeks of school! I have enjoyed visiting sites and classrooms and meeting with many of you. Each time, I'm energized by the creative instructional strategies, student involvement, and your commitment to students.

I've also come away with the knowledge that this year is one of overwhelming change for all of you. I want to encourage you to step back and take a deep breath. The transition to common core and the many associated changes should be looked at as a journey rather than an event. As you are able to participate in trainings, give yourself time to process and become comfortable with the information. If more training in a specific area would be beneficial, don't hesitate to ask for it. If you have any concerns, please share them so they can be addressed. I believe the changes coming our way are exciting for teachers and students, but it's difficult to espouse the positives when feeling overwhelmed.

One area of change that is multifaceted and exciting, yet a cause of worry and even frustration is technology. I often hear a desire to participate in decisions regarding technology. At our first rep council meeting, I asked teachers to share insights,

concerns, and names of technology "gurus" in our district. I only had two teachers contact me with ideas and concerns. At a meeting with MVHS site reps, the idea of an MTA Tech Committee was brought forth. The following week, the MTA EBoard approved this committee. I would like to encourage anyone interested in chairing this committee or being a part of this committee to contact me ASAP. It would be ideal to have someone from each site on this committee to provide an avenue of communication for all teachers. The District's Ed Services and Technology departments have embraced open communication by meeting with me each week. Wisdom forwarded from this committee will be communicated to both departments on a regular basis.

I have heard concerns from many of you regarding a new format for PLCs. If your site is holding PLCs in a central location, and this is causing difficulties for your team, please share these issues with your leadership team. If your leadership team is unable to resolve the problems emerging from meeting in a library or MPR, please have your site reps contact me.

Director Reports

Elementary Director

Kim Chevlin

- PLC meetings are teacher-directed. PLCs should not be clustered together in the MPR or library. Contact her if such mass PLC meetings are being held at your site.

Middle School Director

Beth Szabo

The 21st Century Middle School Collaborative met on September 5 to continue the discussion regarding the transformation our middle schools are taking to provide students with the knowledge, skill, and inspiration required to succeed in a globalized society.

The vision for our middle schools is to provide multiple opportunities for student involvement, both com-

petitive and noncompetitive. Although all four middle schools have a number of clubs on campus, the goal is to increase the number of clubs and activities offered to involve more students and to encourage students to participate in multiple clubs and activities.

The collaborative discussed several focus areas that provide opportunities to improve schools. We examined the expansion of the celebration of "honor roll kids" to include a diverse group of students who demonstrate other positive characteristics such as marked improvement. We talked about the establishment of robust character education. We discussed the need to encourage more students to take rigorous course work with grades

correlating to state assessments. We agreed that we should be giving student voice a high priority. Finally, we examined how to establish and maintain a strong connection to the high school our students will be attending.

As the 21st Century Collaborative continues these discussions over the upcoming year, the goal is to identify areas for growth and new possibilities in the hope of improving climate, culture, and student connectedness on each middle school campus.

High School Director

Anthony Blount

- Overages in English classes have been addressed
- Met with Kathy Ericson and the leadership team at MVHS—successful meeting

CTA President Dean Vogel believes that if you want to know how a child learns to read, ask a teacher, not a bureaucrat.

Special Education

Director

Matt Johnson

- Special Education teachers at some sites are being pressured into servicing up to 50 Read 180 students, in addition to their case loads.

These teachers have a right to say "NO!" to working with these additional students. In some cases, they do not even have the proper credential to work with regular education students.