

GTA ADVOCATE

The Official Newsletter of the Glendale Teachers Association



Farewell Message

By: Taline Arsenian, President



June
2021

WE MADE IT!!! We have just completed the most difficult school year in our careers, and we did it together! As I write my very last Advocate article as the proud president of the Glendale Teachers Association, I can't help but beam with pride at the amazing work of our membership. I saw your Facebook posts and learned about your collaborative Zoom meetings, how you helped each other and gave advice about ways of teaching we never imagined -- first remote teaching and then concurrent teaching --and all within the same school year. You shared successes and failures and made each other better. You are the reason why our students continued to stay connected with academic content and their classmates during a world pandemic. You made that happen with the daily hope of internet connectivity and as many devices, apps, programs, and platforms that would allow you to deliver to your students the ability to learn, grow, engage, and participate in public school. I THANK YOU and want you to know that you continue to inspire me. I will be returning to my homeschool of Glendale High School for the 2021-22 school year, after serving as the full-time release president for 6 years (a high-light of my career), and I promise to mirror your professional commitment and dedication to both colleagues and students in transitioning back to serving students directly.

In no way will completing my leadership role diminish my commitment and dedication to our union. I will continue to volunteer to be involved in union activities because I recognize the importance of being a good union steward and working for the collective group, whether I benefit or not. I realize this requires patience and compromise. I understand the long term benefits to our membership, our profession, and our students, outweigh any short term sacrifices that I may make. Advocating together most certainly leads to a stronger union that will help ensure that GUSD remains a district that can boast about its quality instruction with quality programs that meet the needs of our school community.

Here are strategies that you can follow to help strengthen GTA:

- Stay informed about union activities by attending union meetings, reading all union communication, visiting the [GTA Website](#), subscribing to the [Ask A Glendale Teacher](#) community newsletter and the [GTA You-Tube channel](#), and joining our members only [Facebook page](#).
- Do your best to understand and abide by the [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#). If you need help, ask site reps, area directors, GTA leadership, or our CTA Executive Director.
- Volunteer for and actively participate in union [committees](#), actions, functions, and **vote** in union elections. If you are not happy with union leadership, work to **democratically** build positive change within the organization by actively participating, having **professional** conversations with union representatives, and/or consider running for union leadership positions, both at your site and district wide.
- Follow the [union code of conduct](#). Do not criticize a union colleague except to the individual directly. If any union colleague is being criticized in your presence, ask it to **STOP**. Do not participate in conversations with management that negatively speculates about any union colleague. Settle your differences with union colleagues within the union (one-on-one).
- Engage in debate and offer others opportunities to express their opinions. Respect minority viewpoints, but always observe and support the majority mandate of our union.

Please respond to any acts of anti-union behavior by remaining professional and modeling the union code of conduct. There are too many forces that are trying to exploit and oppress us as public school educators and union members. We must stand strong and stay true to the tenants of the collective good of our membership, students, and school community. We deserve nothing less. Together we win!

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Challenges of 2020-2021 will lay the foundation for a better 2021-2022 for GTA

By: Chris Davis, Vice President



As educators, January 1 sometimes feels less like the start of a new year than does some random date in August. Indeed, 2021-2022 will feel very different in comparison to this school year just ended.

I am optimistic for what lies ahead in 2021-22 for a number of reasons:

Resuming contract talks around our CBA

Our Collective Bargaining Agreement expired in June 2020, and we have yet to begin negotiating a new contract due the amount of time we've spent negotiating working and safety conditions during this pandemic year. GTA will survey our members early in the new school year so that we can know our members' bargaining priorities for the coming year. We know that our school district has received [tens of millions of dollars](#) in one-time monies this past school year, and that the state budget for this coming year includes a 5.07 percent COLA. Our schools have not had this kind of funding in recent memory, and while nearly all school districts are struggling with declining enrollment, we are also better positioned financially as a school district than most would have predicted a year ago.

Better technology infrastructure and knowledge

While we may all be tired of Zoom, the pandemic forced us to learn how to effectively use technology like no other form of professional development could have forced upon us. Whereas a couple of years ago we had to jockey to use limited numbers of Chromebook carts for our classes, now all students have access to a Chromebook. Educators in Glendale know how to effectively use Epic!, Quick Math, EdPuzzle, FlipGrid, and Nearpod to enhance our instruction. We will be happy to see our students' faces in person when we return in August, but we will also be more adept at utilizing technology in effective and strategic ways than we were pre-pandemic.

Continued benefits from a focus on health and safety best practices

Hopefully, the pandemic will be in its waning days when school resumes in August, and we can take down our plexiglass barriers. However, the money spent on HEPA filters, hand-washing stations, better air filtration for our HVAC units, and other health improvements made this past year was not a wasted expenditure; these additions to our campuses will continue to improve health for the adults and children for years to come. If fewer children and adults get sick in future years because of these improvements and because of increased awareness of effective public health practices, we all benefit.

Defining what best works for our members and our students at our school sites

This past year ended with a flurry of District Review Committee meetings where a panel of GTA and GUSD appointees reviewed dozens of contract waivers for banking day schedules. Both elementary and secondary teachers experienced schedules and changes in schedules unlike anything we've experienced in recent memory. And we were compelled to use a "concurrent instruction" model for a few months that few of us would want to use ever again. And then GUSD decided to continue with block scheduling for secondary schools going forward as we return to in-person instruction in the fall.

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GTA members have endured a whiplash of GUSD-mandated initiatives over the years, but the changes coming to our secondary schools have never been so drastic as this coming year. Our members are resilient and dedicated, but we also must feel a sense of ownership of our teaching and working conditions. When uniform instructional and meeting schedules are determined for our members without our members being able to decide on their own terms what best suits their site needs, our students are the ones who ultimately lose. The quality of education our students receive in GUSD is directly proportional to the degree to which our members retain professional autonomy. GTA will continue to prioritize our members' professional decision-making as central to maintaining the viability of GUSD as a district of choice for families in Los Angeles County.

Glendale schools are great places for our students because of our amazing educators and because of the strength of our members' voices in advocating for policies, practices, and programs built around GTA member-informed decision making. Thank you for bringing your voices to the table in the current year that is ending. There will be new challenges to face in August and in the years to come, but we will be better equipped to handle them because of what we've all experienced during this past year.

Get to know our new GTA President: Chris Davis

By Taline Arsenian

Congratulations to Mr. Chris Davis for beginning his first term as the new president of the Glendale Teachers Association on June 1, 2021. Chris has been a public school teacher for 30 years. He began his teaching in Beaverton, Oregon, before starting to teach in GUSD, where he has continued teaching since 1991. He has taught ELD, English, History, and Journalism at the middle school and high school levels, and he currently teaches history and journalism at Clark Magnet HS. I first met Chris at a GTA Rep Council meeting when he and I were both site reps for our respective schools. I remember thinking how thoughtful, inclusive, and diplomatic he was in his comments and opinions to the rep council body. Little did I know, 16 years later he would be the incoming president to help lead GTA in our efforts to be considered valued stakeholders in our own district. Chris has been active in the GTA not only as a site rep for many years, but also on the GTA Board of Directors as the high school area director and the vice president. He has been involved in many GTA committees including health benefits, political action, bargaining, and organizing. Next year, Chris will implement the first ever GTA Equity committee. As VP, Chris helped increase public outreach by launching our new [GTA website](#) and creating videos for our new [GTA You-tube](#) page. Chris is married to Clark Magnet HS teacher Jennifer Davis and they have three children. Their oldest son, Tomás, is a GUSD graduate and works in Glendale. Their daughter, Miranda, graduated this year from Columbia University with a degree in public health. Their youngest son, Alex, is graduating from Crescenta Valley HS.

Working closely with Chris this year confirmed he possesses the strong leadership skills necessary to be an amazing leader, including integrity, inclusivity, excellent communication skills, diligence, intelligence, and teamwork. All of this coupled with his deep understanding and value for unionism gives me great hope for the future of GTA. I look forward to his presidency and am grateful he has agreed to take on this role.

Chris, I am passing the baton with full confidence that you will lead us to many victories. You have my full dedication and support.



Unfair Practice Charges Update

By: Nate Banditelli, GTA/BTA Executive Director



During the 2020/2021 school year, GTA and GUSD filed Unfair Practice Charges (UPCs) with the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) against each other. The charges are nearing resolution.

GUSD v. GTA

In October, 2020, GUSD filed a UPC against GTA, alleging bad faith bargaining for a single violation of the bargaining norms that the parties agreed upon before negotiations for COVID-19 related matters began. PERB dismissed the charge and GUSD appealed the dismissal. GUSD has hired an outside law firm to appeal the decision, taking the case out of GUSD in-house counsel David Greco's hands and costing the District additional money. Now, the PERB Board will decide the matter. In the likely event that the appeal is rejected, the decision will be precedent-setting and available to read on the PERB website.

GTA v. GUSD

In November 2020, GTA and CSEA filed separate UPCs with PERB, alleging that GUSD violated the Educational Employment Relations Act (EERA) for unlawfully and unilaterally imposing the Temporary COVID-19 Employee Travel Policy on all District employees at the end of October 2020. The District is legally required to negotiate such policies with GTA before implementing them. Before PERB rules on an UPC, the parties must attempt to settle the dispute at an informal settlement conference where a PERB Regional Attorney acts as a neutral mediator. While the District was willing to settle with CSEA, GUSD refused to settle with GTA.

The day after the settlement conference, GUSD sent a notice to employees, stating that the policy was retracted and that any members who used leave as a result of the policy would have leave restored. Even though GUSD refused to sign a settlement agreement, GTA was victorious, and members do not have to abide by a unilaterally-imposed policy. GTA asked the District to formalize the retraction by signing a simple statement:

On or about November 6, 2020, the Glendale Teachers Association filed an unfair practice charge before the Public Employment Relations Board, alleging that the Glendale Unified School District violated the Educational Employment Relations Act when it issued a "Temporary COVID-19 Employee Travel Policy" without first providing the Association with notice and an opportunity to negotiate. On or about February 4, 2021, PERB issued a Complaint on this charge.

The District agrees that it will adhere to the Educational Employment Relations Act, and will meet its obligation to provide notice and an opportunity to negotiate to the Association, prior to making any changes to matters within the scope of representation."

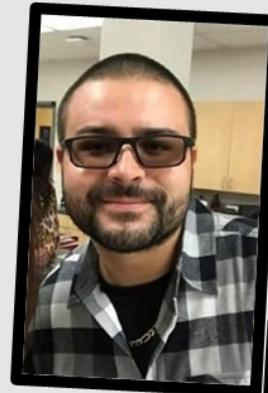
The District refused to sign the statement, preferring to go through the time and expense of a time-consuming evidentiary hearing before PERB over the summer. GTA would likely prevail. In the spirit of a fresh start in 2021/2022 and to show GTA's readiness to move beyond the contentiousness of the COVID-19 era, GTA is withdrawing the charge and hopes that the District is ready to move forward in the same spirit of cooperation and compromise.

GUSD Health Benefits Contribution Analysis

For the 2021-22 plan year, the District’s maximum annual contribution for a bargaining unit member health benefits plan is \$30,586.70 (**\$3,058.67** tenthly). The GUSD health care renewal rates for the 2021-2022 school year are in the chart below in tenthly increments. The only plan rate that falls above the District’s maximum contribution is the PPO Family by **\$123.29** per month for ten months, which would be the member’s responsibility to pay if you choose this plan. This is a \$51.65 cost savings next school year for members who choose PPO family. No plan changes or prescription coverage changes have been negotiated for the next plan year.

Medical Coverage Type	Plan Year: October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022		
	10thly Cost	District Pays 10thly	Employee Pays 10thly
HMO Employee Only	\$873.38	\$873.38	\$0
HMO Employee + 1	\$1,502.26	\$1,502.26	\$0
HMO Employee + Family	\$1,869.06	\$1,869.06	\$0
PPO Employee Only	\$1,486.88	\$1,486.88	\$0
PPO Employee + 1	\$2,557.43	\$2,557.43	\$0
PPO Employee + Family	\$3,181.96	\$3,058.67	\$123.29

Thank you to the GTA members on the District’s Health Benefits Committee for working to represent the health needs of our membership. From left to right, top row: Chris Davis-Clark Magnet HS, Tammy Tiber-Jefferson ES, Melvin Barrientos-Roosevelt MS; bottom row: Jana Wells-Dunsmore ES, Luis Guevara-Dunsmore ES, and Ariane Doerflinger-RD White ES.



GTA Bargaining Message

By: Sarah Morrison, GTA Bargaining Chair



As bargaining chairperson of the 2021-22 GTA Bargaining team, I want to **THANK ALL members of GTA** for standing in solidarity as we battled for safe, equitable, and sustainable working conditions during this year of crisis. Some of these battles occurred in every district in California, but others were unique to GUSD. While all districts negotiated MOUs regarding distance learning, hybrid learning, and safety mitigation protocols, the exploitive expectation that *all teachers should be exhausted was unique to GUSD, and our district brought that absurd mantra to the bargaining table. In response, GTA members stood strong, stood bold, and were never gaslit. Our collective determination and activism led to better MOUs than the district hoped to agree to. We are GTA Strong.*

Thank you GTA Bargaining Team: Lenore, Angelina, Chris, Lisa, and Nate. The members of this team have juggled the same teaching responsibilities as all of us, while also spending countless weekends and evenings consulting with GTA members, writing and revising proposals, and studying the constantly changing legislation, budget, and public health protocols. This is a team of superheroes who use their superpowers for **GOOD**.

Thank you GTA Board of Directors. In addition to the regularly scheduled BOD meetings, there were many additional special/emergency BOD meetings where your elected union leaders met to give the green-light or red-light on proposals to bring to the table. Each GTA member is represented by at least one BOD member, and the BOD ensured that the interests of all GTA members were included in the language that we presented at the table. Special thanks to At-Large Area Director Judy Scheidhauer who was vigilant about representing EEELP, Counselors, Nurses, and all members who are not classroom teachers.

Thank you President Taline Arsenian. Taline's fierce competence, sharp honesty, and unwavering dedication to make life better for GTA members and better for GTA students has kept GTA educators feeling valued when our employer dismissed us. Taline's leadership reminds us all this is *our district. We are the reason why GUSD schools are great places to get an education. Our profession is important. And, thanks to Taline, our Association is stronger than ever.*

Next year is going to be another big year, full of opportunities. Our CBA will be open and there is a healthy COLA for 2021-22 -- a wage increase is appropriate and will be negotiated. Also, there is an abundance of new one-time funding. At the table, we will continue to advocate that educators be included in the planning and implementation of all new programs and that we are compensated appropriately for extra-hourly work. After all, no one is better suited to meet the needs of GUSD students than GUSD educators. We return to the table on Tuesday June 15, the second day of summer. Please check your personal emails throughout the summer for bargaining updates and ways you can help.

The GTA Bargaining Team, left to right: Chairperson—Sarah Morrison, Secretary— Lisa Avery, Lenore Piskel, Angelina Thomas, Chris Davis, and CTA Executive Director, Nate Banditelli.



Congratulations to the 2020-2021 GTA Retirees

*Kelly Altobelli.....Fremont ES, 21 Years of Service
Barbara Berent.....Glendale HS, 34 Years of Service
Fred Blattner.....Clark Magnet HS, 31 Years of Service
Kathleen Collins.....Daily HS, 39 years, 5 Months of Service
Alex Day-Blattner.....Clark Magnet HS, 13 Years of Service
Mary Ann DeWitt.....College View, 23 Years of Service
Nora Doctorian.....Marshall ES, 30 Years of Service
Carol Driffill.....Glendale HS, 36 Years of Service
Gail Dunham.....Wilson MS, 36 Years of Service
Andrea Fay.....College View, 17 Years of Service
Eve Fletcher.....Fremont ES, 14 Years of Service
Maral Guarino.....Clark Magnet HS, 34 Years of Service
Steve Hogren.....Dunsmore ES, 22 Years of Service
Christine Holden.....Glenoaks ES, 16 Years of Service
Arsine Hovannesian.....Glendale HS, 28 Years of Service
Pia Hugo.....Crescenta Valley HS, 23 Years of Service
Mairena Jacobs.....RD White ES, 32 Years of Service
Nancy Learmonth.....SELPA, 25 Years, 2 Months of Service
Ken Lee.....Toll MS, 25 Years of Service
Erin Lynch.....Rosemont MS, 21 Years of Service
Tagui Malakyan.....Roosevelt MS, 23 Years of Service
Phyllis Miller.....Dunsmore ES, 25 Years of Service
Gregory Mooshagian.....Lincoln ES, 13 Years, 1 Month of Service
Karen Nagao.....Dunsmore ES, 37 Years of Service
Rose Newman.....Glenoaks ES, 30 Years of Service
Renee Rivera.....Lincoln/Valley View ES, 16 Years of Service
Craig Phelps.....College View, 26 Years of Service
Gerald Sharp.....Marshall ES, 32 Years of Service
Rosine Simitian.....La Crescenta ES, 29 Years of Service
Susan Simon.....SELPA, 21 Years of Service
Jennifer Waters....Crescenta Valley HS, 30 Years, 4 Months of Service*







June 2021

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- 06/01 GUSD BOE
- 06/11 Last Day of School
- 06/14 First Day of Summer School
- 06/15 GUSD BOE
- 06/30 to 07/03 NEA RA
- 07/04 Happy Fourth of July
- 07/16 Last Day of Summer School
- 07/26—07/29 [CTA Summer Institute](#)



Name or Address Change?

Please notify the GTA Office of any name, address or phone number changes. You may send in the form below to the GTA Office via school mail. GTA will update our records and notify CTA of any changes.

Name: _____

New Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Email (Non-GUSD): _____

School Site: _____

Or submit this form electronically [here](#).

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO TO SUPPORT GUSD FAMILIES AND STUDENTS.
Have a great summer session and summer break. See you in the FALL.



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