

GTA ADVOCATE

The Official Newsletter of the Glendale Teachers Association



President's Message

CHRIS DAVIS, President

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GTA members continue to inspire

As we continue through this holiday season this year and welcome a new year, I feel that we have much to be grateful for:

- **our students** — those who have shown resilience and fortitude in returning to in-person learning and those who demonstrate the discipline necessary in continuing their studies remotely;
- **our amazing 1250 members**, who have adapted to the vagaries of educating our approximately 25,000 students during a pandemic;
- **our GTA leadership team** — the 60+ site representatives and the dozen members on our Board of Directors — who work tirelessly to advocate for our educators and students;
- **our administrators**, who have had to refocus so much of their effort and time to ensuring safety protocols on our campuses;
- and **our district leadership**, which has had to weather critiques about Critical Race Theory and Covid-19 health policies while trying to promote GUSD's vision for "improving student achievement and maintaining a safe learning environment."

2022 will bring new and continuing challenges, to be sure. Before looking ahead to 2022, I want to reflect on the fall of 2021, and what I've found to be inspiring and challenging in my work as your GTA president:

INSPIRATIONS

- Our members and GUSD leadership have worked in concert on several issues this fall, a trend I hope will continue into 2022. We know that our district is strongest when our

members are true collaborators with our district leadership. This is currently being realized as a team of GTA members and GUSD leaders works towards streamlining the maternity leave process; it is realized each time GTA leadership meets with the leadership in GUSD's HR department to solve member issues; and it was realized when GTA and GUSD decided together that hosting Open House virtually was the prudent and safe choice this school year.

- Many of our members have worked hard to help our students feel a sense of "normalcy" in the midst of this pandemic. Our members have organized and hosted school dances, rallies, athletic competitions, and club events. Our members have continued to spearhead extracurricular clubs and activities even when meetings and activities are made more challenging by masking and other Covid-related requirements.
- Our members have recognized the challenges students have faced during the past 18 months — seeing family and friends getting sick (or worse), losing face-to-face contact with their peers, finding their participation in pre-pandemic activities being limited, and falling behind academically — and they have prioritized students' mental and emotional health, while working hard to help students master academic skills and content.

CHALLENGES

- Our Campus Safety MOU contains language that requires the District to "ensure that all students who are registered for the District's weekly COVID-19 testing program will receive a weekly COVID19 test unless

continued on p. 2

Inside this issue:

President's Message	1
Vice President's Message	2
Exec. Director's Message	3
Health Benefits: Fitbit update	4
Member Spotlight	5
In Memoriam	6
Bargaining Update	7
Calendar	8

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Teachers
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Vice President's Message

LISA AVERY, Vice President

DEI: GTA's new committee

For the first time, the Glendale Teachers Association has formed a committee to focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The ideas behind the committee are not new. In fact, CTA's mission statement (which is, by extension, our mission statement as well) reads as follows:

The California Teachers Association exists to protect and promote the wellbeing of its members; to improve the conditions of teaching and learning; to advance the cause of free, universal, and quality public education; to ensure that the human dignity and civil rights of all children and youth are protected; and to secure a more just, equitable, and democratic society.

Bringing this mission statement to fruition is a tall order. Clearly, diversity, equity, and inclusion are embedded in the core values of our union. We simply cannot "promote the wellbeing of [our] members", "ensure the human dignity and civil rights of all children and youth

are protected", or "secure a more just equitable, and democratic society" without first recognizing our shared humanity, our diversity, and our divergent needs.

GTA's DEI committee is just beginning its work. The committee members (Denise Bell-Bottomley, Patrick Davarhanian, Arpine Ovsepien, Bryna Wallach, and Lisa Avery) have already met with a member of CTA's Human Rights division and have met via zoom with educators throughout the state who are forming or are a member of their local's DEI committee. GTA's DEI committee members are starting to consider what conditions are necessary for educators and students alike to thrive in schools. We are asking questions such as

- What environment allows educators to teach and students to learn to the best of their abilities?

- What brings GTA members joy in their jobs? What gets in the way of that joy?
- What barriers are there to making our schools more diverse and inclusive environments? What can GTA leadership and membership do to help with those barriers?
- How can we create more equity among GTA members?
- How do our decisions affect others in education who are not GTA members, such as our CSEA colleagues?

GTA leadership intends for this committee to infuse diversity awareness, equity, and inclusion into everything we do from representing members to bargaining. Our work has just begun, and we look forward to the productive struggle that will help everyone in our schools to thrive.

President's message, cont. from p. 1

the student is absent for the week." While this has been happening on elementary school sites for months, our district leadership hasn't been able to demonstrate that the same has been happening at secondary sites.

- While our district leadership provides vaccination clinics and on-site Covid testing, our community continues to lag behind vaccination rates of neighboring cities. At the end of November, Glendale's vaccination rate for those five and up was at 67 percent, ten percent below the 77 percent vaccination rate for Los Angeles County as a whole. What this means inside many of our classrooms is that quarantining continues to impact the

quality of instruction our teachers can offer, and that many of our members, our students and their families continue to grapple with this pandemic in very impactful ways.

I wish you and your family a safe, healthy, and joyous holiday and new year. As always, I invite you to email me (c.davis.gta@gmail.com) or call me (818.240.3924) anytime to discuss your concerns. Please also reach out to GTA leadership — your site reps, your area reps, and members of our Board of Directors — with your ideas on how our association can best represent our collective interests.

Executive Director's Message

NATE BANDITELLI, GTA/BTA Executive Director



GUSD email is not private

GUSD District Administration recently informed GTA leadership that e-mails written by specific Glendale educators are being requested by members of the public under the California Public Records Act (CPRA). Under the CRPA, the District must provide copies of the requested e-mails to the requesting party. If you are the subject of a request, you will be informed.

It is important to understand the regulations and laws that impact your rights when using District technology or even your own devices when conducting District business before you do something that could be used against you.

Your GUSD e-mail is a public record that is subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act (CPRA).

Be careful about what you write in your District e-mail, because electronic communication is never truly deleted out of existence. Politicization of curriculum and instruction has created high-profile instances where educators have been “exposed” for their views in conservative media.

Before you write and send an email, ask yourself how it will look and how you’ll be perceived if it becomes the subject of a viral video or draws the attention of a conservative pundit.

You signed the Acceptable Use Agreement and Release of District from Liability that limits your rights and instills responsibilities when using District technology or conducting District business on your own device(s).

All District employees must sign the “Acceptable Use Agreement and Release of District from Liability” document. In signing, you acknowledge that you have no expectation of privacy while using District technology. The document states:

Since the use of District technology is intended for use in conducting District business, no employee should have any expectation of privacy in any use of District technology. The District reserves the right to monitor and record all use of District technology, including, but not limited to, access to the Internet or social media, communications sent or received from District technology, or other uses within the jurisdiction of the District. Such

monitoring/recording may occur at any time without prior notice for any legal purposes including, but not limited to, record retention and distribution and/or investigation of improper, illegal, or prohibited activity. Employees should be aware that, in most instances, their use of District technology (such as web searches or emails) cannot be erased or deleted.

Before you even touch technology, make sure that its usage would be appropriate if seen by District administration, who can access it at any time. The same document limits your rights when conducting District business on your own device, stating:

If an employee uses a personally-owned device to access District technology or conduct District business, he/she shall abide by all applicable Board policies, administrative regulations, and the Acceptable Use Agreement. Any such use of a personally-owned device may subject the contents of the device and any communications sent or received on the device to disclosure pursuant to a lawful subpoena or public records request.

Correspondence and usage that is strictly personal in nature is exempt from public records requests, but inappropriate use can still violate District Policy and subject you to discipline.

Before you use your own device in conjunction with District technology (such as connecting a personal computer, tablet or mobile phone to District WiFi) or to conduct District business (such as sending texts or leaving voicemails that are totally related to your duties or checking District e-mail on your personal device), ask yourself if you are comfortable with the contents of your device being seen by administration or members of the public.

While these scenarios are unlikely, remember that nobody ever expects to be the target of a viral smear campaign or a talking head who is pushing a political agenda at the expense of public education and individual educators.



FITBIT Evolution evolves in January

Starting next month, our Fitbit wellness program will begin to evolve. Here's what you need to know: If you haven't already claimed your free Inspire 2 Fitbit and you would like to have one, be sure to order it before January 22. Just go to this link to order the Inspire 2 or another model at a discounted price:

<http://www.fitbit.com/welcome/GUSD>. Members with Blue Shield coverage have access to Fitbit Premium and health coaching at no cost with new device orders. The health coach works one on one with members on developing healthy goals and habits. There are currently 637 employees enrolled in this Premium Program.

There will be another Fitbit exercise challenge in January, just in time to support your New Year's resolutions! This time, it's an individual challenge. There will be weekly monetary prizes for the winners, and also a prize for those who are able to finish the challenge. More details will be announced soon. Why are we doing these challenges? Research has shown that healthy competition motivates many people to exercise more.* More exercise, as we all know, leads to physical and mental well-being.

Beginning in March, we will be able to access an additional wellness app called *MoveSpring*. *This program integrates with other devices besides just Fitbit, such as Apple Watch and Garmin. The app will have step challenges, curated health and wellness content, coaching, and a private community group for members who opt in.*



Recent statistics about the average activity levels of Fitbit program participants in GUSD

*Source: Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. *Preventative Medicine Reports*, 2016. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211335516300936?via%3Dihub>

Daily H.S. members celebrate!



GTA site rep **Antonia Piscitelli-Carrasco** presents a certificate to Daily H.S. teacher **Alfredo Gonzalez** in recognition of his years of membership in GTA.

Daily High School member **Shelly Van** and Daily site rep **Antonia Piscitelli-Carrasco** enjoy snacks at a recent celebration of GTA membership.



Member Spotlight: CHRIS MARKOS



POSITION / WORK SITE: Teacher, Wilson Middle School

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENT: Graduated in Nov. 2021 from American College of Education (A.C.E.) with a 4.0 G.P.A. Master's In Education in Advance Studies of History with a Minor in Secondary Education

QUOTE: "I wanted to extend my knowledge of history by learning more about different types of historical research methods and approaches, which has made me a better history teacher/historian. It definitely helped me improve my research and writing skills, which I am now planning to incorporate into my classroom to teach to my students. This program also focused on equity and gender issues in the K-12 and college level and what we can do to improve them."



If you or someone else would like to share an outstanding achievement, please email glendaletaoffice@gmail.com

Glendale Teachers Association

UPCOMING

SITE VISITS

When will GTA leadership visit your site?

Jan

13 College View / Ind Study

20 Edison Elementary

27 Franklin Elementary

Feb

3 Cloud

10 Crescenta Valley HS

17 Lincoln Elementary

24 Cerritos Elementary

March

3 FACTS / PAEC

Site dates subject to change; check with site reps for updates



GTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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GTA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Nate Banditelli

Find contact info for all GTA Board of Directors on our website, glendaleteachers.org

glendaleteachers.org
818.240.3924



Denise Pogrowzewski

Honoring the life of a beloved teacher and friend

After completing her student teaching at Crescenta Valley High School, Denise Pogroszewski was promptly hired as a science teacher at CVHS in 2001. She served as the science department co-chair for over fifteen years and was the CSC science co-chair for the last two years. She was also active as the treasurer of the Alumni Organization of Education (ALOED) at Occidental College. Denise passed away in October, after battling cancer.

Several years ago, I read a blog that had gone viral, “Find Your Marigold, The One Essential Rule for New Teachers.” It argued that educators are like plants – some, like walnut trees, drain the environment of essential nutrients, but others, like marigolds, are companion plants that promote healthy growth to surrounding plants as they themselves grow. And although I was far from a newbie, the wisdom in this blog was sage for both new and veteran teachers alike – “Surround yourself with good people” and you will thrive in a profession that can be limitlessly draining.

When I first read this, I reposted it on social media, tagged all my marigolds, and a love-fest of comments ensued. That was five years ago. Since then we’ve endured a contentious election, a pandemic, as well as constant professional battles negotiating for fair wages and working conditions, not to mention the personal struggles we all daily face. Through all of that, I had forgotten about this

article.

On October 7, this post appeared in my memory feed, one I hadn’t seen since I’d first posted it. It was a poignant and timely reminder, but not for the obvious reasons. In fact, it took me a week to even find the words as to explain the depth it resonated.

On the same day this memory appeared, I had just learned that Denise Pogroszewski, the ultimate marigold to all, passed away. I had logged on to Facebook for mindless distractions, but this post greeted me instead, with her comment, and only her comment, highlighted: “So grateful for so many marigolds as I head into year 16.” I knew it was some kind of symmetry in the universe, but I needed time to process, to reflect, to begin to understand.

I realized I’m not in the same place I was five years ago. The years have taken its toll on me, and I’ve found myself bending more toward being the curmudgeon of a walnut tree. If Denise were in earshot, however, she would unfailingly remind me – gently, honestly, compassionately – that the world always has a silver lining. Not in a Polyanna kind of way, but with a balanced realism. Her grounded optimism peppered with a dry sardonic wit was infectious.

Memories shared at her memorial last month uncovered the source of Denise’s inspirational light. Her greatest treasure was connection with others – cards sent to students, colleagues, friends; impromptu outdoor adventures; even helping a student practice driving and agreeing to host and officiate another student’s wedding – all of it highlighted Denise’s mantra of yes.

I don’t know how she found the time, but magically Denise did. Person after person shared the impact her selfless connections made on them and their extended families.

If you had the pleasure of meeting Denise, you know exactly the magnitude of her heart. And I know she would gently remind us that given the choice we should send all the cards, seek meaningful connections, and always choose to be the marigold.

— *Katbi Chaplar Beerman* (teacher, CVHS)



WEINGARTEN RIGHTS: YOUR RIGHT TO UNION REPRESENTATION

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT UNION REPRESENTATION

"If an employee has a reasonable belief that discipline or other adverse consequences may result from what he or she says, the employee has the right to request union representation. When the employee makes the request for a union representative to be present, management has three options:

- it can stop questioning until the representation arrives
- it can call off the interview
- it can tell the employee that it will call off the interview unless the employee voluntarily gives up their rights to union representation (an option the employee should always refuse)

Best practices:

- keep accurate and on-going records of student discipline
- take and keep notes of all parent and administrator meetings
- be cautious with what you post or share on social media



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Give your athletes a sporting chance with a Thomas R. Brown Athletics Grant. Apply to receive **\$1,000** for your middle/high school's team.

To apply for a grant, go to:
CalCasAthletics.com

 California Casualty
AUTO AND HOME INSURANCE



New negotiation cycle about to begin

SARAH MORRISON, Bargaining Chair



There will come a day when the COVID-19 pandemic is written about in history books. These books will tell the story of public school districts, and the extraordinary ways that school children sacrificed to protect public health. These books will tell the stories of teachers, counselors, service providers, and school nurses, who found creative ways to overhaul what we knew about teaching and learning to find new ways to provide education and support to students and their families.

These books will also tell the stories of teacher unions which persisted in using our collective voice and bargaining power to establish better systems during a crisis. Some unions had to fight. GTA had to fight. And our story will be remembered.

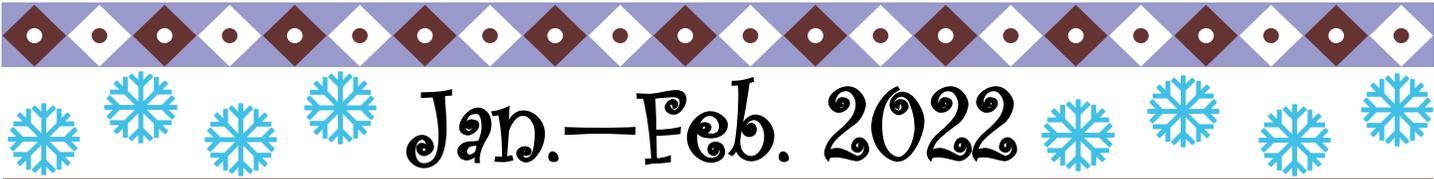
The pandemic continues today. GTA's bargaining team has secured a Campus Safety MOU which remains in effect until the end of the school year. This MOU provides peace of mind to educators, students, and families that all of the requirements and many of the recommendations from the LA County of Public Health are being implemented in our classrooms and workspaces.

GTA's bargaining team also secured a Professional Development MOU that, due to the statewide shortage of substitute teachers, compensates educators for attending PD/training during non-contractual time. These PD/trainings prepare us to implement curriculum and strategies that address academic and social-emotional issues that arose during the pandemic. The PD MOU was set to expire this month; we are excited to have secured an agreement to extend this MOU through August 13, 2022.

The time has come for GTA's and GUSD's bargaining teams to focus on something more lasting than MOUs. Both parties have issued "Sunshine Letters" for public review within in the Board Report issued at GUSD's Board of Education meeting on Dec. 14. Sunshine letters state the articles within our Collective Bargaining Agreement that each party wishes to negotiate. These letters state that GTA intends to negotiate increases in wages (article 13), benefits (article 14), hours of employment (article 7), and class size (article 11); and GUSD intends to negotiate article 8 (evaluations), and article 19 (site based management).

GTA Board of Directors used the Oct. bargaining survey that over 70% of members completed to determine which articles to sunshine. The wage increase is a major priority. In order to determine a wage proposal, the Board will consider California's ample 5.08% COLA, financial diagnostics from CTA, settlement trends from neighboring districts, and the power that is generated through organization and mobilization. We are in this together!

GUSD is one of the greatest school districts in California. GUSD students and community members benefit from the energy, excellence, and expertise of GUSD educators. The bargaining table is a place where we can be recognized. We will start passing proposals in January. Stay tuned for bargaining updates and information from GTA about ways you can support the team. Our success at the table requires that we all stand strong and stand united to achieve language that makes our lives and students' lives better.



Jan. 2022

- 1/11 GTA Board of Directors meeting
- 1/13 College View / Ind Study site visit
- 1/18 GUSD Board of Education meeting
- 1/20 Edison Elem. site visit
- 1/25 GTA Rep Council meeting
- 1/27 Franklin Elem. site visit

Feb. 2022

- 2/1 GTA Board of Education meeting
- 2/3 Cloud site visit
- 2/8 GUSD Board of Education meeting
- 2/10 Crescenta Valley H.S. site visit
- 2/15 GUSD Board of Education meeting
- 2/17 Lincoln Elem. site visit
- 2/22 GTA Rep Council meeting
- 2/24 Cerritos Elem. site visit

Happy Holidays!

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): _____

Work Site: _____

You can email the above information to Aline @ glendaletaoffice@gmail.com.

**THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO TO SUPPORT
GUSD FAMILIES AND STUDENTS!**



GTA ADVOCATE STAFF



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