

GTA ADVOCATE

The Official Newsletter of the Glendale Teachers Association



President's Message

CHRIS DAVIS, President

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Beware the ides of March . . .

“Beware the ides of March,” the soothsayer tells Julius Caesar in Shakespeare’s famous play. For educators, the month of March has been no less foreboding these past two years — in 2020 with its uncertainty of whether we’d return to campuses after spring break, and in 2021 with the uncertainty of returning to classrooms in the midst of a pandemic.

Now, two years into the pandemic, we cautiously enter this spring break hoping that the transition to mask-optional indoor spaces this month will help us all take another step towards a “normal” educational environment.

During this transition, it is imperative that we remain cognizant of the angst that many of us, our students, and their families may still feel. Some have lost family members or close friends to COVID-19, and the pain of these losses will persist. Many also have preexisting health conditions, making them more vulnerable to infection. Being amongst others who are without masks may only add to their trepidation.

While many of us, our students, and their families will celebrate what feels like a liberation from pandemic restrictions, a respect for the feelings and concerns of these adults and children demand a level of concern that has been missing in the often ugly public debate over masking.

As we move forward into these uncharted waters, it is also useful to reflect upon these past two years with an eye on what we as educators have learned that can inform our work now and into the future.

Out of necessity, educators learned how to use technology to a degree that few of us had prior to the pandemic. We’ve used video conferencing platforms to stay connected to our students while we were not in physical classrooms; we mastered learning management systems in order to share assignments, allow students to

complete work remotely, and assess student work; we utilized applications that provide students access to age-appropriate video, audio, images and text; and we provided our students with interactive online tools to showcase their knowledge.

Even with this arsenal of 21st century tools, we’ve also learned that face-to-face interaction is crucial in educating not just the minds of students but in helping children grow into adults who can interact with others in the non-virtual world.

In addition, educators have added more tools to their belt, including addressing students’ social-emotional health, instituting more equitable grading practices, and learning how to address issues of equity and inclusion in their curriculum.

In short, we’ve all been changed as educators by this pandemic. Covid has forced a kind of professional development upon the teaching profession that no school district edict or program could have done. Ultimately, our classrooms are better places for students due to this learning curve we’ve undertaken.

Unfortunately, educators across the nation have been retiring early and resigning their positions in record numbers. Our educational practices have been improved because of Covid, but our profession has been harmed.

The Roman Republic fell in response to the warning given to Julius Caesar. In light of that sad tale, my hope for the ides of *this* March is that educators in GUSD are provided the respect, compensation and working conditions that we deserve. Doing so will help repair the wounds many of our members carry with them and help ensure GUSD remains a district where the best educators wish to work.

As always, I invite you to email me (c.davis.gta@gmail.com) or call me (818.240.3924) anytime to discuss your concerns.

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Glendale Teachers Association

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Bargaining Chair's Message

SARAH MORRISON, Bargaining Chair

Contract talks continue

The bargaining table has been busy! Our #1 priority is convincing the district to agree to a substantial ongoing wage increase. Our wage negotiations began Jan. 14, and during the first few couple sessions, the District gave us reasons to hope that they shared our interest in reaching a fair agreement quickly... but we are five sessions in now, and the District has not (yet) increased their wage proposal above their original offer. Now is a good time for all members to email the Board of Education in support of a better wage increase than they are currently offering.

There are other items on the table that we have preliminary reasons to celebrate. We have convinced the District to increase our District-Initiated and Categorical Special Projects rates, Workshop Instruction rate, Home-Hospital rate, FACT's rate, Consulting Teacher compensation, National Board compensation, and to increase the Special Class stipend for Itinerant Specialists, SLPs, TK-8 FLAG teachers, Teacher Specialists, and many SPED teachers.

We also negotiated a way to more fairly compensate counselors for their longer work days, for working during the summer, and to increase the Head

Counselor stipend.

We negotiated opportunities for Teacher Specialists to teach summer school. And we negotiated higher stipends for orchestra/marching band directors, a new monthly stipend for the Lead SLP, new academic stipends at all schools, and a daily stipend for athletic coaches when a team reaches the postseason. We negotiated updated language that ensures that members are paid appropriately for class coverage. And we convinced the District to include *all unit members, not just teachers, in the daily rate of pay algorithm.*

Also, there are a few MOU proposals on the table right now. We recently signed an MOU addendum regarding changes in county mask requirements, securing that KN95 masks will now be made available to all employees *and students* who request them. We signed another MOU that guarantees spots in District aftercare programs for our members' elementary aged children as a benefit of employment.

We continue to negotiate MOUs regarding improving our dental benefits (mouthguards); improving our vision benefits (increasing our frame allowance); guaranteeing health benefits for longtime GUSD teachers and part-

time members who retire before age 65; and compensation for the COVID-testing requirement during winter break.

Still on the table is a proposal regarding the expanding TK program. We are seeking to memorialize TK class-size at 12:1 or 24:2 (which is currently a state requirement) and we are attempting to secure positions for CDCC teachers who carry certificates in early child development to serve as the second teacher in these classrooms.

We continue to negotiate for higher stipends for CDCC Head Teachers and Teacher Specialists. And we are fighting hard for upper elementary teachers to not have to wait until the second full week of school for their prep time to begin.

But most importantly: ongoing wages. The district is enjoying a large budget and the COLAs for this year and next are both over 5%. California's economy is strong, and CA legislators have been investing increased revenues in public schools. This investment is long overdue, and so is an ample raise for hardworking educators like us.

When we stand together, we will achieve a wage increase that reflects our commitment to our students and our district. Together, GTA educators will make it happen!

RECENT MEMBER WINS

- Daily HS extra pay for work performed during 2020-2021 school year
- CDCC / EEELP program coverage and class combo hourly pay
- COVID testing leave usage, which predated leave provided by state law
- Assistance for GTA member with an overpayment dispute with a former employer

Executive Director's Messages

NATE BANDITELLI, GTA/BTA Executive Director



EDUCATOR PROTECTIONS FROM CIVIL LIABILITY

Many educators wonder if they can be “held liable” or get sued by a parent if something goes wrong in the classroom and worry about performing directives that may be illegal or not in the best interest of the student(s).

From a legal perspective, members have nothing to worry about. It’s true that in the United States, any person can sue for any reason if they hire an attorney or fill out the right paperwork. That doesn’t mean that they’ll prevail in court, though, or that the lawsuit will ever make it to court. In California, public employees are protected from litigation while they’re performing services at work.

As an employee of Glendale Unified School District, which is a public employer, you’re protected by California Government Code Section 820.2, which states, “Except as otherwise provided by statute, a public employee is not liable for an injury resulting from his act or omission where the act or omission was the result of the exercise of the discretion vested in him, whether or not such discretion be abused.”

In the unlikely event that you are individually sued by a parent, the District should provide legal representation. If they don’t represent you, GTA members can contact CTA for free legal representation.

Thanks to Ca. G.C. Sec. 820.2, you’ll prevail in any litigation brought on by a parent. You could, however, face discipline from the District if you are insubordinate and refuse to carry out a directive that you disagree with or if you make a mistake that is bad enough to warrant disciplinary action.

The best course of action, if you are given a directive that you believe to be unlawful, is to ask for the directive in writing. If you can show proof that you were performing a directive and something goes wrong, you should not face discipline.

Others in the chain of command may face discipline for issuing such directives and the District may face litigation, but you will be protected.

KNOW YOUR HIPAA RIGHTS

From time to time, members contact GTA leadership with questions or concerns about the privacy of their medical information. This has especially been true during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members are often ask about HIPAA privacy rights and are surprised to learn that HIPAA rights do not apply to medical information that is known to employees of Glendale Unified School District. You were required to provide vaccination status to the District as a condition of employment, which is legally allowable because HIPAA privacy rights only apply to “covered entities”: health care providers (doctors, pharmacies, clinics, etc.) and health plans (insurance companies or government programs such as Medicare or the VA). Your employer is not a covered entity and therefore may ask you for vaccination status.

CIVILITY MATTERS

In January, the GUSD Board of Education adopted BP 4040.1, which describes the acceptable use of GUSD email.

This Board Policy spells out how email should be used in a workplace. The reasons GUSD adopted this Board Policy are apparent given the sometimes fractious nature of public debate and online communication.

Public education has always been a politically contentious issue and the COVID-19 pandemic amplified the debate, injecting a level of urgency that we have never been through. As advocates, many of us have dedicated our lives to protecting public education from those who wish to defund our public schools.

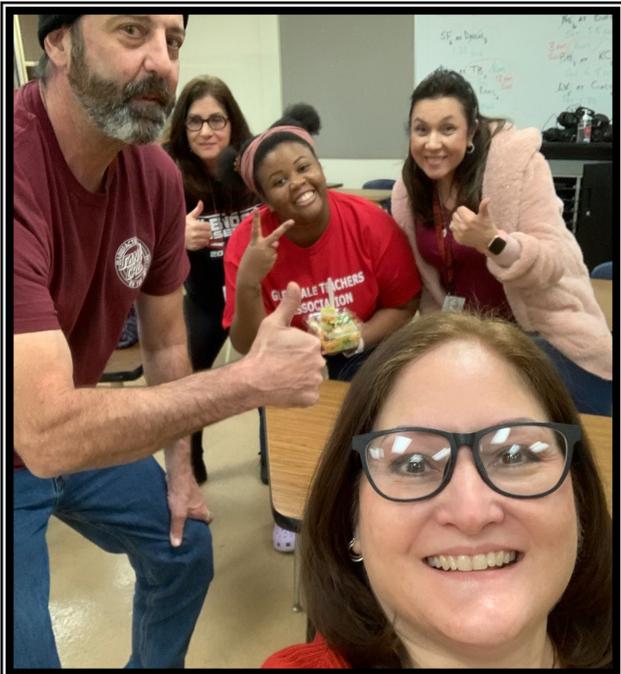
Debates and disagreements among educators about how to best serve students and how to appropriately navigate the pandemic are a natural extension. In a world that’s increasingly polarized, can we at least carry this debate on with respect and empathy? We all wake up in the morning with the same motivation: support students and do our part to build a stronger community.

Conversations in the break room or in a GTA meeting can bring about these kinds of disagreements, but schoolwide e-mails or statements in faculty meetings where members are labeled or shamed for their beliefs can be perceived as insulting, hurtful, and even traumatizing. How is a fractured school community good for students? Disagreement and debate can be positive and productive, but only when combined with empathy and mutual respect.



**GTA
United!**







Member Spotlight: **CONRAD PRUITT**

POSITION / WORK SITE: English teacher, Clark Magnet High School

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENT: Won the Transdisciplinary Dissertation Award (2021) at CGU and a Friedman Grant (2020) for my dissertation project. Prospective graduation for May 2022 with a PhD in English, specializing in African American literature, 19th-20th c. literature and Critical Theory.

QUOTE: “By continuing my education, I sought to model the very approaches to education that I endorse in my classroom, which has made my content knowledge stronger, as well as my understanding of how difficult it is to be a student. In many ways, the degree has identified the expansiveness of the fields of literary studies, and confirmed how much I have yet to learn. The difference now, however, is that I have the tools to pursue these studies. In the near future, I hope to transform my dissertation into a published work.”



Glendale Teachers Association **upcoming**

site visits

When will GTA leadership visit your site?

March

- 3** FACTS/PAEC
- 10** SELPA
- 24** Mann Elementary
- 30** Dunsmore Elementary

April

- 7** Toll HS
- 14** Hoover HS
- 21** Fremont Elementary
- 28** Clark Magnet

May

- 5** Columbus Elementary
- 12** Jefferson Elementary
- 19** Mt. Ave. Elementary
- 26** Muir Elementary

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



GTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Nate Banditelli

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

glendaleteachers.org
818.240.3924



FAIR SETTLEMENT NOW

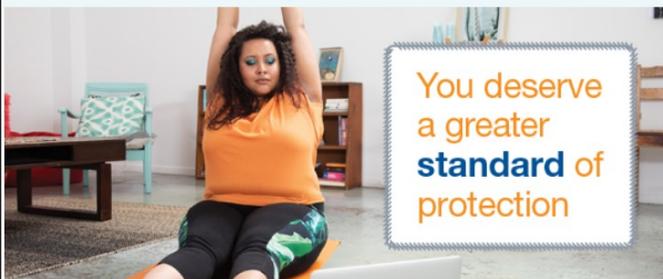
If Glendale educators show unity and support for GTA's bargaining proposals, the GUSD Board of Education is more likely to agree to our Wage Proposal.

Show your support by:

- ♦ **Wearing your "Fair Settlement Now" button *daily*.** Keep your button somewhere where you will remember to put it on each morning. Yes, you **MAY** wear your button in front of students.
- ♦ **Wearing RED every Tuesday.**
- ♦ When asked by members of the community, let them know that you support GTA's proposals because they will attract and retain the best educators in the region, keeping Glendale schools competitive and strong.



Standard Insurance Company



Special Enrollment Opportunity Starts 3/15/2022

UPCOMING SPECIAL ENROLLMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR GTA MEMBERS

GTA and CTA have made it possible for you to apply for CTA-endorsed Disability and Life insurance with Standard Insurance Company (The Standard) **without answering health questions** starting **March 15, 2022**.

- Disability insurance plan can help replace income when you are unable to work due to **illness, injury, pregnancy or childbirth**.
- Benefits are **paid directly to you** to help pay for items health insurance doesn't cover, like utilities, mortgage/rent, groceries and child care.
- Life insurance protects your loved ones to help with final expenses, mortgage payments and replacing lost income.

This kind of opportunity only comes every 2 to 3 years. Watch your email and mailbox for more information.



March—May 2022



March 2022

- 3/14 - 3/18 Spring Break! No School
- 3/24 Mann Site Visit
- 3/29 GTA Rep Council Meeting

April 2022

- 4/5 GUSD Board of Education Meeting
- 4/7 Toll Site Visit
- 4/12 Board of Directors Meeting
- 4/14 Hoover Site Visit
- 4/21 GUSD Fremont Site Visit
- 4/26 GTA Rep Council Meeting

May 2022

- 5/3 GUSD Board of Education Meeting
- 5/5 Columbus Site Visit
- 5/10 GTA Board of Directors Meeting
- 5/12 Jefferson Site Visit
- 5/16 GTA Rep Council Meeting
- 5/17 GUSD Board of Education Meeting
- 5/19 Mt. Ave. Site Visit
- 5/26 Muir Site Visit

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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