Good morning!  It's Kindness Week again!  I look forward to seeing students and our members participating (please send in photos so we can share them)!  Kindness is the basis for the culture we want in our schools,and has been found to reduce bullying as well as disruptive behavior.  The goal is to promote caring and compassionate behavior.

Retirement:

I've been contacted by several of you in the past week or so with questions around retirement.  The first thing you should do is schedule an appointment with a real STRS Counselor (not one who sends you a spam email!).  Please see below for the contact information to set up an appointment with an actual counselor to begin your planning. I have not heard anything about the District offering a Golden Handshake, as some of you have asked, and it is unlikely in a year when they believe cuts need to be made.  If you are planning to retire this year, though, please contact me, because early notification could potentially eliminate some of the need for cuts.

Use of Sick and PN:

Obviouslyif you have days available to use, you are entitled to use them, but I did want to give a word of caution regarding the use of these days on Fridays, Mondays, immediately before or after a holiday, or on days that DSUSD has a day off (like last Friday).  I've heard talk that the District may plan to look for patterns of use with some of our members.

Again, you can use them if you have them, but just be aware that the contract defines how you can use sick or PN.  It becomes a problem when more than 150 people call in sick, or use PN, on a Friday.  There aren't enough subs for that, unfortunately, and then the burden often goes to our teammates in the absence of a sub. (I've heard that several sites don't have a list of volunteers to take kids in this situation...you should never be approached and asked or pressured while you are teaching.)

CVUSD Fiscal Status Update:

Last week Dr. Gomez sent out a CVUSD Fiscal Status Update.  In response to that update, I addressed his letter at the CVUSD School Board meeting, pointing out that our District tends to overprotect their expenditures, and we believe they continue to do so.  My intent was to encourage the board to ask questions and not just take this at face value.

They RIFd more than 90 teachers and manyclassified staff in an effort to save money last year.  In doing so, their salary costs should have decreased, yet their projections show increased spending on salaries.

Having lessemployees should also translate to decreased health benefits costs. Additionally, they are no longer paying any amount over the cap.  Somehow their projections show an increase in health benefits expenditures.

While we recognize the Governor's proposed budget is just a proposition, it is not accounted for in their calculations.

Finally, Dr. Gomez referred to steep increases in step and column.  In reality, this cost innot actually very significant, and they RIFd a good amount of teachers who actually are still moving on the salary schedule.

PLCs:

Just wanted to remind you that you can collaborate with other teachers not in your grade level/department, or even at your site, as long as the PLC meets the definition of Article 2.16.3 (basically that it is focused on student learning).

You do not need to set SMART Goals unless your team decides to do so.  The only documents required from a PLC are an agenda and minutes.

Elementary Combination Classes:

If you started the year out with a combo class, please see your site rep(s) about the 2 days of prep you are entitled to under Article 17.1.  These two days are typically only given to teachers who get a combo class during the school year, but they are meant to go to every combo teacher.  You can coordinate with your adminstratorto use this prep time in increments that work for you, such as 4 half-days throughout the year.

Listening Tour/Site Visits:

Dr. Gomez and I will continue to visit sites this week during lunchtimes, and we are lucky to have Isadora Jimenez from CSEA beside us.  Please come visit us to share concerns, ask questions, or just to say hello.  Communication is key inkeeping things running smoothly, so I truly hope you come see us!

For those of you who work out of the DO, please find one of our other site visits that you could attend, perhaps JK or a site you visit each week.

Here is our schedule of visits:

DATE

LUNCH TIME

SCHOOL

January 30 - Wednesday

10:30  -  1:30

CESAR CHAVEZ

February 1 - Friday

10:25 -   1:10

CORAL MOUNTAIN ACADEMY

February 6 -  Wednesday

12:00  -   1:18

CAHUILLA DESERT ACADEMY

February 7 - Thursday

10:15 - 12:30

SEA VIEW

February 12 - Tuesday

11:10 -   1:10

JOHN KELLEY

February 13 - Wednesday

9:45 -   11:15

WSHS/WSMS

February 19 - Tuesday

10:15 - 12:30

MECCA

February 20 - Wednesday

10:55 -   1:20

PETER PENDLETON

February 27 - Wednesday

10:30 - 12:50

OASIS

March 5 - Tuesday

10:45 -  1:30

MOUNTAIN VISTA

March 6 - Wednesday

10:45 - 12: 40

PALM VIEW

March 12- Tuesday

11:44 -   1:10

TORO CANYON

March 13 - Wednesday

12:40 -   2:10

BOBBY DUKE

March 15 - Friday

10:30  -   1:30

SAUL MARTINEZ

March 19 - Tuesday

10:30 -   1:30

VALLEY VIEW

March  21 - Thursday

11:05 -   1:05

VALLE DEL SOL

Professional Development for our Members:

We have several professional development opportunities coming up.  Below inthe Important Datesyou will see that our Classroom Management PDs have been rescheduled.  You can register for these using these links: Elementary Classroom Management and Secondary Classroom Management.

On April 2nd we will have a Self-Care PD for you.  This is such an important thing to do, to take care of yourself, but is so often overlooked because we are too busy or too tired.  Please plan to make time to attend.  Registration information will also be coming for this.

We will also be holding a Legal Training, but have not scheduled a date yet as we are trying to secure a GLS Attorney to present.  This is a session we offer each year to our site reps, and it is a highly recommended one!  As soon as we have details we will share them.

Professional Library:

Don't forget to take a lookCVTA's new professional library!  We have books available for you to borrow if you want to learn new techniques, stay motivated, and more.  If you have any books you would like to donate for the library, please let me know.  You can find the list of available books here.  The list should also be available on your site's CVTA bulletin board.  Happy reading!

Member Benefits:

CalSTRS Counselors at the CTA Palm Desert Office: Now you can schedule sessions locally (usually we have to drive to either Palm Springs or Riverside).  One way to schedule an appointment with these counselors is on the www.myCalSTRS website. You can also schedule by calling (800) 228-5453 and selecting option 3.  STRS Counselors will never contact you unsolicited via your District email...you need to contact them to set up an appointment.

There are three options for meetings: group informational for those just getting started looking at STRS info, smallergroup for those of you 5-6 years out from retirement needing more personalized information, and individual meetings for those about to retire.  Don't hesitate to call...they book up 6-8 weeks out, as space is limited.

Contractual Issues Happening Right Now

Remember that the contract is an agreement between CVTA and the District and it was bargained in the best interest of students and teachers.  That means that both sides agreed to abide by what is included in the contract, so when something needs to be cited from the contract, it isn't what "the District said" or what "CVTA said"... it is what was agreed to and is therefore legally binding.

Find the contract here. Here are the things we are working on:

We have an ongoing grievance that is at the informal level affecting our sites with newadministration (hired during this school year). The Collective Bargaining Agreement states that you need to be notified of the identity of your evaluator by October 15th.  If your evaluator leaves, there is no provision to allow for an alternate evaluator, unless you request it or agree to it.  We are continuing our discussions on this matter since it seems many of you have just been "informed" that you have a new evaluator.  One thing to keep in mind, however, is that if you are probationary, the District will need to make a decision, with or without an evaluation, in regards to your employment for next year.  Please contact me if you have questions about your evaluation process this year.

Grievances need to start at the informal level.  This means that you have a conversation with your immediate supervisor, whether face to face or via email, in order to give them the opportunity to remedy the situation.  It is important that you actually state, "This is my informal grievance."  This will begin the timeline,and will ensure your administrator understands that there is a timeline to follow.

Williams Complaint Form - Some of you have asked for this form, which can be used for complaints about facilities and textbooks or instructional materials. This form could be an option when a grievance isn't the appropriate path to deal with a situation at your site.

Here are some important dates to keep in mind:

January 31st - Elementary Classroom Management PD at the CTA Office in Palm Desert, 4:30-6:30 pm.  Watch for registration information soon.

February 7th - Secondary Classroom Management PD at the DSTA office in LQ, 4:30-6:30 pm.  Watch for registration information soon.

February 11th - Holiday

February 13th -  Rep Council Meeting, CDA Library, 4:30 pm

February 14th - School Board Meeting @ CC, 5:30pm

February 18th - Holiday

February 26th - CVTA Executive Board Meeting, CVTA Office, 4:30pm

February 28th - School Board Meeting @ DO, 5:30pm

PBIS Tip:

Week of January 28, 2019:

Universal Expectation :Assembly

Classroom Survival Skill: Getting the Teacher's Attention

Growth Mindset Affirmation: I am smart.

Restorative Question: If you could only eat one thing for the rest of your life, what would it be?

A Tip from Technology Services:

The iCenter Team wanted to remind everyone about our brand new page to our website: Academic Content! On the Academic Content page, you will find links to resources for each of the following areas: English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Special Education, Visual and Performing Arts, Foreign Language, and Physical Education. These pages provide quick access to resources that consist of videos, applications, websites, strategies, blogs, and other tools for you to use with your students. We hope you find these new tools useful. For even more resources, make sure you check out our Digital Curriculum Map for Elementary and Secondary,and don't forget to book our iCenter Team for a deeper dive!

We also wanted to share information regarding our local CUE Affiliate's Tech Fest 2019! Cahuilla CUE's Tech Fest is a smaller version of the National CUE Conference in Palm Springs and features speakers from around the country to present on educational tools such as Google Suite, Flipgrid, HyperDocs, Seesaw and more! The Tech Fest will be taking place February 2nd at Desert Ridge Academy in Indio for the low price of $25! Register today at bit.ly/TechFest19 to secure your spot and we hope to see you there!

If you need any assistance with incorporating technology tools into your lesson design, don't hesitate to book a member of our iCenter Team. Also, our EdTech Profile window will be closing January 31st so please be sure to fill out the survey if you haven't done so already. Your input is greatly appreciated!

A Tip from EL Services:

Activating prior knowledge is fundamental to teaching all of our students, both those who are proficient in English and those who are attaining English language skills. Brain research from Carnegie Mellon psychologists confirms that it's easier to learn something new when we can connect it to something we already know. Other research, including the study "Prior knowledge activation: Inducing engagement with informational texts," maintains the idea that activating prior knowledge is a critical step in the learning process and a key factor when it comes to reading comprehension. Click on the link to learn  4 practical ways to activate studentsâ€™ prior knowledge and build further background knowledge in preparation for new learning. Additionally, our EL TOSAs are available to work with you to develop activities that activate prior knowledge in your classrooms. Schedule an appointment by emailing or clicking on their booking links: Araida Flores araida.flores@cvusd.us, araidaflores.youcanbook.me/  and Maribel Carrillo macarrillo@cvusd.us, maribelcarrillo.youcanbook.me/.

Please share this email with anyone you know that does not already receive it.  There is a link near the top to sign up on our mailing list.  These newsletters are always posted on our Facebook page, as well, which can be accessed even if you don't have a FB account.  It is a public page and can be seen by anyone who visits it. Thank you!

Carissa Carrera

CVTA President

"You can't do it unless you organize."