November 26, 2018

Good morning!  I hope you had a relaxing break and were able to spend time with your family and/or friends.  It was well deserved.

One thing I've noticed with several of my students each year is that not everyone was looking forward to a break.  School is a safe space for many of our students, and it helped to check in with them to see how their break went.  I bet most of your students are going to be happy to be back today!

I know it's not December yet, but it's just around the corner!  Stay strong!

Nominations close today at 4 pm for anyone interested in running for the vacant State Council seat or the Alternate seat.  Information should have been placed in your mailboxes by site reps.

Not a lot has happened over the last week, so most of this email is repeated.  Please be sure to check below for any new important dates, as well as updated PBIS and technology information.

District Mandated Assessments

We are continuing to discuss the amount of hand scoring required on many of the District Benchmarks. Contract Article 27.3(d) states that the District should not increase our workload without providing reasonable assistance to handle the increase. There is no doubt, based on the comments from nearly every site, that some of the required assessments and the hand scoring of those assessments hasincreased your workloads. Even the administration of the assessments, in some cases, has increased your workload.

Based on the meeting held before the break, there will likely be some changes coming that will affect how these assessments are scored. For example, scoring only certain parts of the test, or using only one rubric to assess, or having just one thing to look for when reading the student responses. We do not know yet what the final outcome will be, but we do know that Ed Services understands that the scoring will likely not get done on time as it stands right now. Since changes may be coming to how some of these assessments are scored, it may be best to hold off on any scoring at all until we have clarification.

If you need assistance with the workload from scoring any of the District mandated tests, please discuss your needs with your site administrators. They are the first ones who should be working with you to accommodate the requests. Ed Services will also work with admin to help alleviate the increased workload for all of you.

Elementary Conferences

It seems many people were not aware that conference times were set by the calendar committee, in accordance with Article 27.6.1.2, including many site administrators. These dates and times have been published on the District calendar since it was created and shared. The Wednesday times from 2:20-6:45 include a 30 minutedinner break, and allow teachers to have their bargained prep time prior to conferences beginning. The Thursday times from 1:20-4:00 also allow for the bargained prep time,and a contractual end time of 4pm.

Many principals at the elementary level set their own conference times and are now having to backtrack to correct their error. You may hear that it is "the Union's fault" when really the mistake was made by the administrator. However, we will own that statement only in the sense that CVTA does monitor application of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, and when things are out of compliance, we ask for it to be corrected. Please remember that the Collective Bargaining Agreement is not a "Union" contract. It is an agreement between CVTA and the District,and should be respected as an agreement.

Insurance Info:

American Fidelity meetings are starting up again, and there should be no sales pitch during these meetings.  If you are interested in their products, they should have additional appointment times available to discuss that, separately from the insurance audit.

A few people have asked about the out of pocket costs for the three original insurance family plans.  This is what should be coming out of your check if you chose to remain on one of these plans:

Kaiser with PPO Dental Plan & VSP = $208.49

Kaiser with Incentive Dental Plan & VSP = $151.73

Anthem PPO 90 with PPO Dental Plan & VSP = $162.89

Anthem PPO 90 with Incentive Dental Plan & VSP= $106.13

Anthem HMO 5/10 with PPO Dental Plan & VSP = $114.89

Anthem HMO 5/10 with Incentive Dental Plan & VSP= $58.13

Extra Students in General Education Classes:

There seems to be a misunderstanding amongst administrators about how the new contract language is to be implemented.  For our general ed teachers, you can have up to 2 students over the cap and be paid for them, IF you volunteer.  Administrators should have already spoken with each grade level to determine who is willing to take extra students.  If you do not want extra students, please do not be afraid to speak up. We have class size limits for a reason!

Once there is a list of volunteers in each grade level, the students should be assigned by seniority, one per teacher,before anyone receives a second student.  Students should never be placed intoyour classroom without you knowing why they are there. For instance, if they are being placed because you volunteered to take extra students, you should be told that.

We do still have contract language stating you can get an extra student for 15 days during the year while they determine permanent placement. This would be unpaid and does not require you to volunteer, but you should be informed of the rationale for the placement.  It wouldn't make much sense to place a student in this manner if there was a teacher willing to take the student permanently.

The thing to remember here is that should a new student be placed with you at any time, you should be told the rationale for that placementprior to them being placed with you.  Please make sure this happens...it is in your contract!

Professional Library:

We are excited to share that CVTA has started up a professional library!  We will 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.  Your reps will also place the list on your CVTA bulletin board.  Happy reading!

Professional Development:

There will be two Classroom Management PD sessions offered, one at the Palm Desert CTA Office on Cook St. in PD, and one at the DSTA Office in LQ.  This is a joint effort brought to you by PSTA, DSTA, and CVTA, and it's free!  Dates are listed below in the calendar, and it will be limited space.  Please watch for flyers with registration links to be posted soon. The flyer and registration link for the Secondary Classroom Management on November 29th can be found here.

There is a New Educator Weekend in December being offered by CTA.  Find more information here.

Find information on the incentive grants being offered for CTA Statewide Conferences here. There are some great conferences, and you may qualify for a grant!

Cahuilla CUE will be hosting it's 1st Tech Fest! The Tech Fest will be similar to the CUE Conference in March,but will come at a much lower price. If you aren't able to attend CUE this year in Palm Springs, this might be a great way to attend EdTech sessions and still receive information about some cool tools and strategies you can use for your classroom. Check out the information in the attached flyer for more information.

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.

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.

New Benefits Exclusively for CTA Members

CTA is always looking for ways to enhance their member benefits. CTA understands the emotional and financial burden members may experience due to outstanding student loans or being out of work on a disability claim due to a Cancer diagnosis. That's why CTA created and is providing the Student Loan Benefit and Cancer Benefit for CTA members. These benefits will be available at no additional cost to Members enrolled in the CTA-endorsed Voluntary Disability Insurance plans from Standard Insurance Company (The Standard). MORE

California Casualty's $7,500 School Lounge Makeover is Back

Serving CTA since 1951, California Casualty knows the importance of a designated space where instructors and school staff can take time to relax, recharge and share with their colleagues.

Your school could join these California schools that have received a makeover: Warner Middle School in Westminster, Sunnydale Elementary School in Lancaster, Gilbert High School in Anaheim, and Madrid Middle School in El Monte

California educators can transform their school lounge by simply entering for a $7,500 School Lounge Makeover at www.NewSchoolLounge.com/CTA. All staff members can enter to increase their school's chances of being picked.

The deadline to enter is July 12, 2019. A winner will be announced later that month.

Founded in 1914, California Casualty has partnered with CTA to provide members auto and home insurance tailored to their professional needs since 1951. To learn more, or to request an auto insurance quote, please visit www.CTAMemberBenefits.org/calcas, or call 1.800.800.9410. MORE

Contractual Issues Happening Right Now

Remember that the contract is an agreement between CVTA and the District.  That means that both sides agreed to abide by what is included in the contract.  Find the contract here. Here are the things we are working on:

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:

November 26th - Nominations close for State Council Election, 4pm

November 28th - Elementary Conferences 2:20-6:45

November 29th - Elementary Conferences 1:20-4:00

November 29th - Secondary Classroom Management PD @ CTA Office 4:30-6

December 5th to 7th - Online voting for State Council election...check your personal email

December 6th - Elementary Classroom Management PD @ DSTA Office 4:30-6

December 6th - School Board Meeting @ DO, 5:30 pm

December 12th - CVTA Rep Council @ CDA, 4:30 pm (Elementary and Secondary House meetings prior @ 3:45 and 4:00 respectively, open to all)

December 19th - You can go home at the same time as the students (or after any duty you may have), per contract Article 12.1.6.  This would normally be a PD and Staff Meeting day, but those meetings will need to be optional.

December 20th - School Board Meeting @ DO, 5:30 pm

January 7th - Return from break

PBIS Tip:

Week of November 26, 2018:

Universal Expectation :Assembly

Classroom Survival Skill: Working with Others

Growth Mindset Affirmation:Iview challenges as opportunities for growth.

Restorative Question: What is something you love about your life?

A Tip from Technology Services:

Last week, we shared with you the EdTech Profile Survey. This is an anonymous survey that will help us figure out where we are at and where we want to go in terms of EdTech integration. We will analyze the data to determine how to best support teachers and students with EdTech integration. The survey should only take a few minutes to complete. Your input is valuable and greatly appreciated!!

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 FBaccount.  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."