



The Advocate

November 2025

A Message from Your President

As we move into the holidays, I want to take a moment to say how thankful I am for each and every one of you. Teaching isn't easy, and yet you keep showing up for your students and each other every single day. Your kindness, patience, and dedication make a huge difference—and we hope you know how much you're appreciated.



The first few months of school can feel like a marathon, but now's a great time to pause and celebrate. Whether it's building stronger classroom connections, trying a new strategy, or simply making it through a tough week with your sense of humor intact. Those wins, big or small, deserve to be noticed. You've earned it.

Before the holiday rush begins, make time for something that lifts your spirit. Grab a coffee with your teacher bestie, take a walk after school, or hang out with friends. A little fun and connection go a long way—and taking care of yourself helps you keep showing up for everyone else. Thank you for everything you do—this month and every month.

Pop Quiz (Fun Edition!)

Go-to autumn comfort food?

 Pie

🍲 Soup

🍞 Bread

Loading...

🍫 Chocolate

📅 Voting ends in 10 hours

👁️ Votes are anonymous but results are public

Above & Beyond: Honoring Our Unsung Heroes

Erin Garcia

Erin is a truly dedicated teacher. Currently she teaches a 5th/6th grade combo class juggling two sets of TE's and two grade level teams. She isn't always the designated team leader, but she is a natural. She is the go-to person for academic questions, technology lessons or ideas, essential standards, and student behavior support strategies. Erin shows she cares about her kids by holding them accountable and preparing them for the future. She can often be found traveling around Southern California to cheer on her students on at basketball or softball games. Thank you to Erin for always being there for her students and colleagues!



Orland Cantos

Orland has taught at Del Norte for over 29 years! You won't just find Orland in the classroom, he has coached various teams like soccer, basketball, and track. He also teaches after school 4 days a week, and works summer school. He is dedicated to his craft and has a contagiously positive attitude. He is always willing to lend a helping hand to any colleague! Thank you Orland for being our Unsung Hero.

Contract Highlights

Knowing your contract empowers you and lets you know what your rights are. Here is an important topic that has come up so far this year.

Confidential Space

Need a confidential space to complete work?

With reasonable notice, the District will identify a confidential space for you to conduct assessments or hold IEP meetings.

— Article IX p37

The Power of Prompting: Harnessing AI for Our Needs

by Siobhan Tolbert, TOA for A.I.

AI has swiftly made its way into the education world, and we see more AI features being added to our familiar platforms daily. While this may be daunting or concerning, at the end of the day, the educators are still the ones responsible for *how* the content is taught, and serving as the human connection to our students, their families/caregivers, and ultimately our community. While there is much uncertainty surrounding AI, and what it will look like six months from now, we can focus on the tools we have right now, and maximize them, to serve us, how we need.

What does this mean in our daily routine? We have an adopted curriculum, we have textbooks, we have manipulatives, lab kits, and sports equipment. What can AI do for us, that we have not already done, and done well? The power of AI comes with the prompting. Educators already have well-developed critical thinking skills that serve us on the spot throughout the day as we manage the multi-tasking demands in the school environment. Transferring these critical thinking skills to AI literacy skills, will allow us to augment our day-to-day activities, in a different way.

Let's talk CAASPP. We know learning is happening in our classrooms everyday as a result of the hard work being poured into the instructional planning and care of our students, and we want that learning to shine through on the CAASPP. Here is a sample prompt that allows us to generate sample tasks, which can be printed, built into google forms, or displayed with a projector. We can use AI to align our own classroom assessments to the rigor of the CAASPP assessments. By providing a well-developed prompt, AI is taking on the task of drafting, and we then go in, critique, edit, and finalize what we are bringing to our students. What does the prompt look like? Here is a sample prompt template that can be reused, based on the content area and grade level you choose to focus on:

Your task is to generate a comprehensive assessment, with question & task structures that mirror the task models used in the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), for students, based on the following details. Act as an expert teacher.

1. *Grade Level: 3rd*
2. *Subject: English-Language Arts*
3. *Standard: RF.3 Reading: Foundational Skills*
4. *Key Learning Objective: Apply grade level phonics and word analysis.*

Please structure the output with the following components:

Assessment Title

Directions for students

Text/Primary Source/ Question

Space for student response

Using a clear and well-structured prompt with AI chatbots, and leveraging our own knowledge base and expertise in our subject areas, allows us to harness AI for our needs, while still being the final evaluator of what we use with our students.

Not All Heroes Wear Capes!

Every day, educators go above and beyond—not only for their students, but also for their colleagues and the school community. We believe these quiet acts of dedication deserve recognition. We invite you to nominate a fellow educator who demonstrates exceptional commitment, inspires others, and makes a lasting impact through their service to both peers and students.

Who can be nominated:

Any educator who has shown outstanding work, collaboration, mentorship, and dedication to our shared mission.

How to nominate:

Simply click on the Heroes Wear Capes image and complete the form!



Your nomination can help shine a light on the individuals whose passion and hard work often go unnoticed—but make all the difference.

Unsung Hero Nominations

Together We WIN!

Even with all of today's challenges, there is much to celebrate. Over the past four years, OMTA has successfully negotiated:

- Over 16% in salary increases
- More than 3% increase in benefits allotment

- Lower Special Education caps than surrounding districts
 - Higher hourly rates for timecarded work
 - Daily prep for middle school teachers at K–8 sites
 - Two new minimum days for report card and conference preparation
 - Weekly prep time for elementary teachers (2 hours)
 - Release days for Special Education teachers
-

Quick Links

 **OMTA Contract**

OMPTA Contract 

Salary Schedules

CalSTRS  **800-228-5453**

Check out your retirement benefits today! Or call to attend a class to see your retirement information!

How to register for your myCalSTRS account!

CalSTRS has reimagined the myCalSTRS portion of its website. As of September 23, 2025, all CalSTRS members (active and retired) will need to register to access the resources available to manage their accounts online.

Workplace Violence Form

Ontario-Montclair School District shall log information about workplace violence threats, incidents and post-incident responses that meet the definition of workplace violence types in SB 553.

Our website