



The Advocate

December 2025

A Message from Your President

CTA's Prop 55 Extension: What It Means for Our Schools

CTA is working to place an extension of the current Prop 55 income tax rates on the November 2026 ballot. These voter-approved tax rates, originally established in 2012, apply only to high-income Californians and are currently set to expire in 2031. The proposed extension would continue these existing rates—*not create new taxes*—and would help protect critical funding for public education.



Under the current structure (using 2024 income levels), the tax rates apply to annual personal income over about \$360,000 for single filers, \$721,000 for joint filers, and \$490,000 for heads of household. These thresholds are adjusted each year for inflation.

Revenue from Prop 55 plays a major role in supporting public education across the state. Funds are allocated 89% to K–12 schools and 11% to community colleges, helping maintain class sizes, student programs, and essential staff positions. While local school boards determine how funds are used, the measure prohibits spending this revenue on administrative costs, ensuring dollars go where they are needed most—directly to students.

To move this extension forward, CTA is currently gathering signatures to qualify the measure for the 2026 ballot. Site Representatives have petitions available for members who would like to help with this important effort.

With enrollment continuing to decline, we simply cannot afford to lose this revenue. For OMSD, the potential loss is \$27 million.

Together, we can help secure stable, long-term funding for our schools and students.

Pop Quiz (Fun Edition!)

How do you like to celebrate the new year?

 Party

 Relax at home

 Reflect & set goals

Loading...

 Travel

 Voting ends in 17 days

 Votes are anonymous but results are public

Above & Beyond: Honoring Our Unsung Heroes

Craig Rothwell

Craig Rothwell has taught PE in OMSD for 20+ years, and has taught not only the students he gets each year, but also the aides he mentors on his team. Two of those aides have earned PE teaching spots in the district thanks to his ability to teach them the fundamentals and importance of health and fitness. Craig is always focused on building what students already know and expanding on their knowledge.



Regina Purcell

Regina is someone we can always rely on. She consistently steps in to support our school and her colleagues, offering her time, guidance, and advocacy whenever it's needed. As one of our OMTA Reps, she makes herself available to listen, assist, and help members navigate concerns with care and commitment.

She builds strong, positive relationships with students and staff alike, and her spirit makes every team she works with better. Regina's dedication, kindness, and unwavering support make a meaningful difference each day. We are incredibly lucky to have her. Thank you, Regina!



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.

WHO IS IMMEDIATE FAMILY?



1 Your Family

Spouse, domestic partner, parents, step-parents, foster parents, legal guardian, children, grandparents, grandchildren, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, nephews and nieces.

2 Your In-Laws

Parents, step-parents, foster parents, legal guardian, children, grandparents, grandchildren, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, nephews and nieces *of your spouse*.

3 Your Household

Any person permanently residing in your immediate household.

Seedlings to Scholars at Bon View IB World School

by Cynthia Lopez Elwell

From Seedlings to Scholars is the comprehension school gardens program at Bon View IB World School. The program began about 14 years ago in a partnership with Home Depot. A small plot of playground space was fenced in, planted, and labeled "The Reading Garden." A few classes used the space to read or spend some time in the sun but the garden remained largely unused.

Simultaneously, a group of Ontario parents and community members recognized the need to bring healthy home grown food to the surrounding community. This group became the founding committee of "Huerta del Valle," a large, and now multi-sited, community garden. As luck would have it, the initial Huerta del Valle space is within walking distance of Bon View and several Bon View parents were involved in its inception.

With guidance from the parents and community members involved with Huerta Del Valle and a core group of teachers interested in gardening and outdoor education, our garden program began to grow. OMTA members Elizabeth del Real and Veronica Jimenez led the charge as the program grew from one garden to five gardens.

The gardening efforts continued with the support of mini-grants from Home Depot and Lowes. Their generosity paid off in beautiful outdoor spaces and multiple opportunities to connect our learning and inquiry efforts to outdoor education activities.

Soon, the need for on-going maintenance and renovation has led us to seek grant funding. The number of small grants we received, \$400, \$2000, etc., increased but so did our desire to do more and to make the program sustainable over the long run.

Besides collecting garden spaces, the garden group-now the garden committee-has collected equipment, teaching materials, literature, and people interested in helping the program grow. Transitioning the "garden group" into an official extra-curricular "committee" as part of the official school structure has really been game-changing. Committee members are able to formalize many of our procedures and establish a democratic and representative process to benefit all of Bon View's stakeholders. The gardens belong to the whole school, not just the garden groupies. The process to formalize our garden efforts, while staff driven, was achievable with administrative support. Our former Elementary Administrative Assistant, Leslie Ramirez, and our Principal Eddie Franco have been incredible cheerleaders and active supporters of our efforts. They have been, in their own words, because they see the benefit to our students and community.

Students and parents alike are enthusiastic about the possibilities that our gardens represent. So, we decided to go for it! We knew that we needed a large infusion of funding to get us over the line: new systems, new programs, more transdisciplinary connections and increased accessibility for all our everyone-students, staff, parents, and community members.

For us, that meant applying for a California Teachers' Association Institute for Teaching (CTA-IFT) Impact Grant. Impact Grant applicants can apply for up to \$20,000 to fund programs that are teacher driven and "based on what is working and successful in our schools and classrooms." OMTA colleague, Marykay Scheid, had previously received a CTA-IFT Impact Grant. Her grant funded a theater production program at Vernon Middle School that culminated in a live theatrical production at Chaffey High School theater. Our endeavor to formalize and expand our garden program would be no less ambitious.

Thus, Seedlings to Scholars was born. The grant addressed different aspects in each of our school gardens: vegetable garden, sensory garden, reading garden, pollinator garden, and reflection garden. In addition to providing planning and collaboration time for teachers alongside garden committee members, the program has dramatically increased action and student agency as

learners engage in inquiry, research, planning and executing outdoor education learning experiences.

The integration of culturally responsive practices within our classroom inquiry and the structure of garden learning activities, includes culturally significant gardening practices, plants, and caretaking knowledge. Our Reflection Garden is the first new garden to be added in several years and serves as a space for inspiration, reflection and remembrance for staff, students, and community. This year we are adding the first bricks from our engraved brick campaign and we look forward to using the Reflection Garden as a space to hold cultural events and a parent led menu of community events.

Collaboration has been a key component of the success of Seedlings to Scholars and this year feels like we hit a homerun. For the last year, we have been working with Lowe's Home Improvement to execute a huge project through their Heroes Community Service program. On November 6th, a team of 25 volunteer Lowe's associates (including volunteers from two Lowe's vendors) descended on Bon View and completed a major renovation of four Bon View gardens. When the project began planning, there were 5 gardens. Then we got a portable dropped on our Reading Garden space. Undeterred, the committee created 2 new reading spaces equipped with Little Reading Libraries in the vegetable garden for upper graders and in the sensory garden for primary students. Another accomplishment that occurred while we were in planning with Lowe's was that our pollinator garden was awarded the designation of a Monarch Waystation.

Last year was the first year our E-LOP garden club entered its themed vegetable garden into the agricultural competition at the LA County Fair. Judges from the fair visited Bon View to receive the poster and documentation binder from the students. They walked the gardens with the club members and interviewed them about their experiences working in the garden(s) and the knowledge that they have gained through their experiences. Their efforts resulted in a First Place award and the admiration of the judges for their enthusiasm and knowledge.

Our vision of the garden program embraces the belief that participation in our garden programming will build self-efficacy in our students. This is on clear view when parents, teachers and students work side by side on our SMUA aligned Garden Workdays throughout the year. These days are frequently attended by as many as 20 people spread out among the various gardens.



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
- PLCs within the workday and not after school

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

 **myomta.org** 

Contracts, TIF information, Chapter Information, and more!

Calendar

Upcoming Dates...

Winter Break
Family time and Rest!



Martin Luther
King Jr. Day

Rep Council
OMTA at 3:45p

Executive Board Mtg

School Board Mtg
Join us at Central
Language Academy
at 6pm.

Join OMTA Today!



Tisha Curry
President

[Contact](#)