

# FMEA BEACON

Educators Empowering Diverse Communities

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## Membership

It is easy to join the union.

Just go to

[www.cta.org/join](http://www.cta.org/join).

If you have any

membership questions

contact Scott Shulimson.

Remember to wear your

FMEA shirts the first

Thursday of every month!



### A Letter From President Scott Shulimson

Hi FMEA members,

I hope your 2024 is off to a great start. After a very turbulent fall with all sorts of drama at our district Board meetings, things have started to settle into familiar patterns. We are no longer having contentious board meetings packed with people from outside our district. And at the bargaining table progress has once again slowed, with little movement from the district on the key issues. Read on for more.

(continue reading on page 2)

The election of Board member Marc Cooper in the fall of 2022 really shook things up in our district. At first the impact was minimal. Board





## Contract Corner

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4.6.1.1 Unit members at each site shall form a joint committee with the site administrator to prepare a plan for providing the daily instructional minutes. The plan for instructional minutes shall be presented to the local staff. Should the staff be unable to reach agreement through a majority vote, the issue shall be referred to the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services for a final decision.

7.1 Unit employees shall not be required to perform tasks which endanger their health or safety. A unit member who notes such conditions must report, in writing, to the site administrator or designee the location of the hazard and the type of injury which is likely to occur.

votes on things such as Pride Month were no longer unanimous, and there was a lot of discussion about parents' rights, but the theatrics were minimal. That all changed after IPSV (Informed Parents Silicon Valley), the extremist parents' rights group, started to focus their efforts on FMSD in August in their attempts to convince parents to opt out of various district curriculum and programs. After IPSV put together a community meeting that appeared to be endorsed by Marc Cooper (and by extension FMSD), all hell broke loose. Trustee Cooper was formally censured by the others on the Board and, while a censure is just a statement of disapproval and carries no real penalties, it drew the ire of extremist groups from around the county and beyond. There were multiple FMSD Board meetings with hours of inflammatory comments from individuals who had no affiliation with our district and knew little about what we do.

Thankfully, these sorts of meetings have not recurred in the last few months. Trustee Cooper continues to scrutinize disappointing FMSD test scores and highlight the success of charter schools at Board meetings. And there are still tense standoffs among the Board members around DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) issues, but these almost always end in a 4-1 vote, with no others joining Trustee Cooper. However, this could change in the not-far-off future. Board members Milan Balinton and George Sanchez, both previously endorsed by FMEA, will be up for reelection this fall, and it is very likely that Moms for Liberty and other extremist groups will be bankrolling more candidates to run against our incumbents. It's time to start thinking about what you are willing to do to protect our district from these groups who are coming with a very clear agenda far from the values and norms that many of us have taken for granted here in FMSD.

## Marketplace

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### Rental:

Single house in a quiet neighborhood with parking for share, comes with a large master bedroom with full bath. Home is close to freeways, Franklin McKinley School District, local markets, and parks.

Please contact Thuy,  
408-826-2614.

### Emails

Are you an FMEA member not getting regular FMEA Update emails? Just send an email to [fmeapresident@yahoo.com](mailto:fmeapresident@yahoo.com) to be added.

### *President's Letter Continued*

At the bargaining table, things are progressing slowly. We are bargaining for next year's contract, and there are quite a few articles open this round. After some early progress, the district has shot down our proposals in Hours and has not responded to our Compensation proposal. This year our team is really focusing on cutting back the number of meetings. It is unusual that a district has such a high number of after-school staff meetings along with early-release meetings every other week. This would be a great time to email or call our Board members to let them know just how excessive and unneeded all these meetings are. All Board contact info can be found in the back of this newsletter.

Complicating this round of bargaining is the downturn in the state budget. After years of our state being flush with cash that they passed on to schools, next year, school funding will take a downturn. The timing of this is worsened since we are now seeing the end of federal COVID money and getting closer to the expiration of one-time state money. There will be a lot of discussion in the coming months regarding potential budget cuts. Any reductions to FMEA would be done through attrition, not layoffs, but that may not be the case for administration and Classified staff, who may receive layoff notices this year. Next year, we will likely see some unwelcome effects of the budget reductions, including all classes being much closer to contractual class-size caps, possible reductions in paraeducator hours, and slower district response, as positions are cut that support our work. The state's one-time funds are sufficient to pay for SSS (Student Support Specialists) for one more year and social workers for two more years. Hopefully state finances will turn around in the next year so that district cuts don't have to be too drastic.

## Winter Calendar

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**February 13:** School Board 8pm

**February 17-25:**  
February Break

**February 27:** School Board 7pm

**March 4:** FMEA Rep Council

**March 12:** School Board 8pm

**March 20:** FMEA Spelling Bee

**March 26:** School Board 7pm

**March 30-April 8:**  
Spring Break

### *President's Letter Continued*

The topic of school closures has been batted around for over a decade. While many of our schools are now close to half what they were at their peak, there are no imminent plans to close any schools. For closures to take place our Board would have to vote to implement a timeline and schedule of community meetings. Any formal discussions or decisions about potential school closures must happen in public. There have been all sorts of rumors for years, but I would disregard these as no decisions have been made. Considering that our Board has not implemented any actions on this matter, it's clear that no school will be closed this August, and it's unlikely that the process could happen in time for any schools to be closed by August 2025.

I'm very excited that, for the first time since the pandemic, FMEA will once again hold all three of our student events this year. The track meet (completed), spelling bee (March 20<sup>th</sup>) and basketball tournament (May 11<sup>th</sup>) all take a lot of work, and I'm proud that FMEA is one of the only teachers' associations around that puts so much energy into giving back to our students and community. Thank you to everyone who helps make these events happen. If you want to help your school participate in either the spelling bee or basketball tournament, let me know.

Thanks all and have a wonderful February break!

Sincerely,

Scott Shulimson

## FMEA Members: Please, Update Your Info. Today!



### *FMEA Member Updates 2023-24*

Dear Fellow FMEA Members,

As your FMEA Membership Chairperson, I am working to update our membership database to make sure we have the most current information on file with CTA.

Please take a few minutes to complete this form. I will compare the information you provide with what is listed in the CTA360 database to make sure everything in your member profile is up-to-date. Your information will be kept confidential in every other regard and will not be used for any other purpose.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out! You can email me at [Rachel@alumni.ucdavis.edu](mailto:Rachel@alumni.ucdavis.edu)

Thank You! I really appreciate your assistance with this process!

Mrs. Rachel M. Witmeyer  
6th Grade Teacher at Franklin  
FMEA Membership Chair

## FMEA CONTACTS

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## FMEA Communication:

There are numerous ways to keep in touch!

Our FMEA website is [www.fmea.mobi](http://www.fmea.mobi)



Find FMEA on Instagram  
@fmeaeducators



Request to join the FMEA Facebook group.  
You can join our text blast list by texting “@fmeamember” to 81010

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# Until Next Time!

Please email any articles, suggestions, and advertisements for the next issue of *The Beacon* to [brennamarie26@gmail.com](mailto:brennamarie26@gmail.com)