

the

FMEA Observer

Welcome Back!



A letter from the president, Scott Shulimson

Hello all returning FMEA members, and welcome to the more than fifty new members!

I hope this first month of school has gone smoothly because it really is the start of a new era in Franklin-McKinley. There's new leadership in the district office and new principals at many sites. And yet some familiar problems are appearing already, with some even bigger hurdles on the horizon. I believe our district is going through a major realignment. With some hard work and good luck, we may emerge as a more functional and effective school district.

As you know, Dr. Porter has stepped down after nine years, and Juan Cruz has taken over as superintendent. Mr. Cruz has a reputation for being a good listener and thoughtful leader. While Dr. Porter was known for his "visionary" out-of-the-box thinking and starting many new collaborations and programs, Mr. Cruz appears to be more focused on the effective implementation of programs that are already here. This may be just what is called for in a district that has, for many years, gone in too many directions at once without a sustained focus.

Save the Date!

Oktoberfest

October 1 @ 3:30pm

Free food, beer, and fun to celebrate the new school year! Details within!

Punch and pie.

Fall Vacation

October 12-18

We've earned it. Enjoy your time off!

FMEA Trivia Night

October 29 @ 7:00 pm

Come show off what you know at FMEA trivia night.

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From my limited experience with Mr. Cruz, it seems our new superintendent is invested in building solid relationships and making informed decisions that support the students, employees and community. I'm sure there will be plenty of disagreements between FMEA and the district, but I remain optimistic that, ultimately, FMSD has the right leader for this moment.

Our Human Resources Department is also going through a radical transformation as Paula Boling takes over after Rudy Herrera's 19 years as Deputy Superintendent. So far, I've been very happy with the changes I've noticed in that department. Her stated intention is to have the Human Resources Department better utilize technology and become a service-oriented department. I think this will be a welcome change.

Some issues continue to plague our district. Lack of communication from administration is an ongoing problem, and decisions that impact teachers and students are still being made without adequate input from teachers or consideration for the challenges being created. Also, the Special Education Department continues to generate a huge amount of frustration for those working with our special-needs students. Currently, the department is being run by a newly-hired interim director, Lynn Stacey, who retired from San Jose Unified. There will be more department meetings this year and a greater focus on communicating with teachers. Unfortunately, what I'm hearing from many of you is that the problems of the previous years are already reappearing. Many special ed folks are still being put in untenable situations where decisions made by administration are making it hard, if not impossible, to be successful with students. I continue to work on these issues daily and do hope things will get better for special ed in our district soon.

Over the summer, California passed a very healthy state budget. This year marks one of the largest increases in funding to our district ever. Much of it is one-time money, meaning it will be harder to press the district into using it for an ongoing raise, but there is plenty of funding that is ongoing. We returned to the bargaining table last month and have established bargaining dates that reach into 2016. Neither side has yet presented any proposals on compensation, but I am cautiously optimistic that we will receive another solid salary increase this year. I also would very much like this to be the year that we tackle our health benefits language that has left us paying much more for benefits than many of our neighboring districts.

Last year we settled on a 3% raise with a 1% bonus and contingency language that the 1% would become permanent depending, on the state budget. That 1% has now been made permanent. Some of you may notice you are earning slightly less this year than last. That is because we worked an extra day last year, which led to slightly increased pay. I expect that once we settle this round of bargaining, all of our salaries will be larger this year than last.

There's reason to be hopeful at the start of any new era. I'm an optimist by nature and give people the benefit of the doubt. Time will tell how this year's changes will affect our district. In the meantime, let's do our best to make Franklin-McKinley a successful, supportive, and enjoyable place for all. Let's make it a great year!

As always, don't hesitate to contact me with any ideas, questions or concerns you have.

Sincerely,
Scott Shulimson

Grievances

- There are multiple class-size grievances but fewer than in recent years.
- There is an arbitration filed at Kennedy regarding a “written verbal” letter.
- There is an arbitration filed at Los Arboles regarding a “written verbal” letter.
- There is an arbitration filed at Franklin regarding a letter of reprimand.
- There are three arbitrations filed at Los Arboles regarding a letter of reprimand, evaluation and other matters.

Discussions are under way to resolve most of these arbitrations.

Board Briefs

August 11

- Several SLP members spoke in favor of Carrie Jessie Macy becoming Director of Special Ed
- The District released their 45-day budget revision that projects the District total reserve will increase from \$7m to \$12.5m this year.
- The approved ELA pilots Core Knowledge and Expeditionary learning.

August 25

- The Board approved increased admin pay by 1% in line with the raise for FMEA members
- The Board approved hiring a large number of certificated staff, filling a number of vacancies.

September 8

- A lengthy overview of summer school programs was presented.
- The Board approved changes to contracts with the District's three Assistant Superintendents.

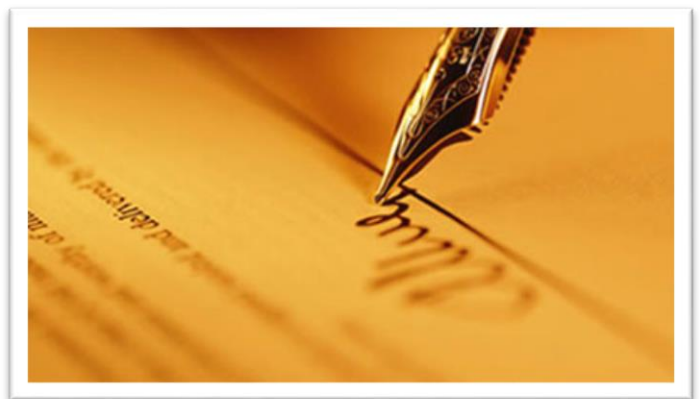
Contract Issues

8.13.1 Compensable [Class Size] Overages

Members shall be entitled to extra compensation for overages, except in the following circumstances:

a. Members are not entitled to extra compensation for any overages that occur before Labor Day.

b. Members are not entitled to extra compensation for overages that occur after Labor Day, up to a total of five school days of overage. Any days of overage occurring before Labor Day shall count toward this five-day grace period, such that a member who has one day of overage before Labor Day may be assigned up to four days of overage after Labor Day without compensation; Members who receive two days of overage pre-Labor Day may be assigned up to three days of overage after Labor Day, and so on. Members who receive five or more days of overage pre-Labor Day shall be entitled to compensation starting with the first day of post-Labor Day overage. The five-day grace period is based on student enrollment and not student attendance



Election Announcement

Kara Morrison was elected to the position of Director-At-Large on the FMEA Executive Board, but has moved to another district. Therefore FMEA will be holding a new election for this three-year position. Send a bio of 25 words or less to Scott Shulimson by 4:00 pm on October 6.

Director's Duties as Written in FMEA Bylaws

*The duties of the **Executive Board** [Directors and Officers listed above] shall be to:*

- 1. Coordinate the activities of the Association;*
- 2. Act for the Representative Council when school is not in session;*
- 3. Direct the bargaining activities and grievance procession of the Association, subject to policies set by the Representative Council;*
- 4. Approve appointment and removal of bargaining team members;*
- 5. Recommend a budget for the Association to the Representative Council;*
- 6. Approve all appointments to committees, including chairpersons;*
- 7. Adopt the Standing Rules for the Association;*
- 8. Adopt grievance procedure;*
- 9. Direct the grievance activities of the Association; and*
- 10. Exercise all the business and organizational powers and duties for the Association as prescribed by law and these bylaws.*



FMEA Fall Calendar

- September 22 - Board Meeting @ 7:00 pm
- October 1 - FMEA Oktoberfest Party At Kelly Park @ 3:30pm
- October 6 - Bargaining
- October 12 - October 18 Fall Vacation
- October 19 - Rep Council
- October 27 - Board Meeting @ 7:00 pm
- October 28 - Bargaining
- October 29 - FMEA Trivia Night @ 3:30 pm
- November 10 - School Board Meeting @ 8:00 pm
- November 11 - Veterans Day
- November 12 - Bargaining
- November 23 - Rep Council
- November 25- November 29 - Thanksgiving Break

Other Bits and Pieces

The Standard

Disability Insurance is available through CTA-endorsed vendor, The Standard, and in your first 120 days of employment in a new district pre-existing conditions are covered. More information available at:

[The Standard - Disability Insurance](#)

FMEA Charter Organizing Committee

FMEA along with CSEA was able to convince our local School Board to turn down Rocketship last year. Unfortunately, the County Board overturned that decision in June. FMEA is putting together a charter organizing committee to look at how we can effectively educate area families about all that traditional FMSD schools offer, so that they get more than the charter school perspective. If you are interested in working on this exciting committee contact Scott Shulimson.

Community Ads

Advertisement service is provided as a convenience for FMEA members and our parent community. Ads may be run two times. Please send your ads to hondita@gmail.com!



CA Charter Educators Move to Gain a Stronger Voice for Students

Education activists all across the nation are working with parents, community leaders, and elected officials to ensure that public dollars invested in charter schools are used to make sure that students get a quality education.

Activists are pushing elected leaders at the local and state levels to adopt the charter school norms put out by the Annenberg Institute at Brown University. The Annenberg standards are designed to promote more transparency and accountability for charter schools and make them more accountable to students, parents, and taxpayers.

However, in the absence of legislation implementing higher standards for charters and more protections for students, many charter school educators are banding together to form a stronger, more collective voice in the workplace—one they can use to make sure students get the best educational experience possible.

One of the latest charter schools to unionize is the MAAC Community Charter School (MCCS) in San Diego, California, where school employees (pictured above), [in a letter](#) to parents, the community, and school personnel, said the decision to do so was all about the students.

Our students' success depends on educators being integral and respected partners, alongside families, administrators, and students, in collaborative decision making. As MCCS continues to grow into a 21st century school, we want to ensure a strong foundation of student-focused, teacher-led collaboration in line with

our stated mission of providing an effective, qualified, and caring staff who are available to mentor and advocate for all students.

We have determined that an essential component of advocating for our students is advocating for ourselves. As such, we, the teachers of MCCS, have decided to form the MCCS Teachers Union...in order to have a collective and effective voice in the decision-making processes at MCCS.

The letter was given to MCCS administration officials, and it asks them to respect educators' decision to unionize, a decision supported by every credentialed teacher at the school.

Charter schools are privately run schools that are funded with taxpayer dollars.

[Click here to learn more about them and their impact on public education.](#)

Brian Washington

NEA

NEA Reports: School Takeovers Deprive African-American and Latino Communities of Rights

According to a [new report from The Alliance to Reclaim our Schools](#), school takeovers and privatization are leading to the disenfranchisement of large numbers of students and their families, mostly in African-American and Latino communities.

School takeovers, sometimes marketed as the “[New Orleans Model](#),” strip districts of local control, placing them under the jurisdiction of politically appointed and unaccountable school boards that community members don’t even have the right to vote for. In many cases, these takeovers are simply a way to put a school district into private hands by removing voters from the equation and shuffling low-income students into charter schools that have been proven to, at best, perform no better than public schools.

According to the report:

Despite the failure to produce the promised renaissance in New Orleans, the “New Orleans Model” of state takeover and charter conversion has been marketed nationally as a new direction for troubled school districts. At the urging of the charter industry and its supporters, state legislatures across the country are now enacting or considering state-run school districts modeled after Louisiana’s RSD. These laws allow state governors or state education departments to selectively remove individual “failing” schools from their home district, and put them under state governance in what are euphemistically called “achievement districts” or “opportunity districts.” In most cases, the seized schools are immediately, or soon converted to charters.

In many cases, voters in the takeover districts have previously rejected the idea of privatization of their local schools, so mayors or

state leaders take the decision out of the voters’ hands by taking over the district and then unilaterally imposing privatization schemes. Even more unsettling, of the 47,596 students enrolled in state-run districts in 2014-2015, 97% were African American or Latino.

One example of a school takeover district gone bad is Newark, New Jersey’s One Newark. According to Roberto Cabanas, the lead organizer for New Jersey Communities United:

Under state control, Newarkers are experiencing the worst of so-called ‘education reform.’ One Newark has intentionally shifted students from their neighborhood schools into charters, while also creating under-enrolled public school facilities, making them ripe for closure and charter expansion. It has placed special needs students and bilingual education students in classrooms that are not equipped to deal with their needs and the needs of their families. Essentially, state-control of Newark Public Schools has stripped the community of our voice and our self-determination. Newarkers have been told that we do not know what’s best for our own children. This type of colonialism is not ‘reform’ — it’s anti-democratic. And the people of Newark are keenly aware of this.

You can read the [complete report](#) at ReclaimOurSchools.org, or [click here to sign the petition calling on legislators to adopt stronger standards for charter schools](#).



Join Us For Oktoberfest!

You know you want to....

Why not start your pre-weekend off right by joining us at Kelly Park on Thursday, October 1? There will be free food and fun to be had by all! Also...beer! Did I mention the beer is free as well? So please come enjoy some great company, food, and beverages in celebration of the brand new school year. Cheers!

FMEA Oktoberfest Party

Where?

Twin Oaks Picnic Site
Kelly Park
300 Senter Rd, San Jose, CA 95112

When?

October 1st 3:30-6:00pm

What?

Please join us to celebrate the beginning of the school year! We will have **free** food, beer, and fun! For free parking, please RSVP to Scott at fmeapresident@yahoo.com!



Until next time!

Please email any articles, suggestions, and advertisements for the next issue of The Observer to <mailto:hondita@gmail.com>. Please put "FMEA - The Observer" in the subject line.

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Important Contacts and a Brand New FMEA Website!

New FMEA Site: fmea.mobi

FMEA Contacts

Name	Position	School Site	Email
Scott Shulimson	President		fmeapresident@yahoo.com
Tim Barrington	Vice-President	SUCCESS	tim_barrington@hotmail.com
Lisa Pitino	Treasurer	Shirakawa	lkpitino@hotmail.com
Krisit Billings	Secretary	Franklin	kdbcurly@hotmail.com
Shanti Arnold	Director at Large	Ramblewood	shantiarnold@yahoo.com
Carissa Harris	Director at Large	Bridges	carissa7harris@gmail.com

FMSD Contacts

Name	Email
Rudy Rodriguez	rudy.rodriguez@fmsd.org
John Lindner	john.lindner@fmsd.org
Omar Torres	omar.torres@fmsd.org
George Sanchez	george.sanchez@fmsd.org
Thanh Tran	thanh.tran@fmsd.org