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OUR SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES FIRST

Members begin work to improve funds for public education. Veronica Herrera (HS), Corinna Villanueva (BGE), and Sheryl Gordon (SUE) sign the School and Communities First Initiative Petition for qualification for the November 2020 ballot.

Law Gives Teachers the Final Word on Students' Grades

The California Education Code protects teachers' rights to grade students. When grades are given for any course of instruction taught in a school district, the grade given to each pupil shall be the grade determined by the teacher of the course and the determination of the pupil's grade by the teacher, in the absence of clerical or mechanical mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetence, shall be final. § 49066: if a parent, student, or administrator challenges a grade the teacher has the right to defend the grade. An Association representative should always be present at such a challenge.

Teachers Are Responsible for Student *Failure Notices*

Classroom teachers are directly responsible for notifying parents of possible failing grades. Whenever it becomes evident to a teacher that a student is in danger of failing a course (D or F grade), the teacher must arrange a conference with the student's parent/guardian or send the parent/guardian a written report (failure notice). In all cases the notification must come prior to the assignment of the grade.

The teacher's responsibility for failure notices is stated in California Education Code 49067 and Montebello Unified School District Administrative Regulation 5121 (a).

You Determine Who Volunteers in Your Classroom

Teachers often request parent volunteers in their classrooms. It is the decision of the teacher whether or not parent volunteers fit the instructional program. Additionally, teachers decide how and when to utilize volunteer requests. Education Code 51101 states that parents may:

*...volunteer their time and resources for the improvement of school facilities and school programs under the supervision of district employees, including, but not limited to, **providing assistance in the classroom with the approval, and under the direct supervision, of the teacher.** Although volunteer parents may assist with instruction, primary instructional responsibility shall remain with the teacher.*

Have You Ever Thought About Aging?

Medicare and the Trust Fund

By Lisa Quemada

I was sitting with my mum the other day for tea (4:00 if you were wondering) and I asked her how retirement was going. It's an area of concern-- not because she's on a fixed income, but because she and my father are so culturally opposite they might as well be living on different planets at times. They're both first-generation Americans, but he's a loud and proud California Chicano who got kicked out of catholic school (and a few bars); she's an analytical, quiet, left-handed Brit from Compton. She's never been kicked out of anywhere. Despite their incredible differences, they do agree on a few things: Money is important, traveling is awesome, and medical care is nothing to mess with. Especially when you're retired, 65ish and figuring out your supplemental with Medicare.

No one, and I mean NO ONE wants to have a conversation about Medicare when you need medical coverage and you find out Medicare only covers 80% of whatever expensive procedure you need done, which is why MTA works with MUSD to address the additional 20% in medical insurance coverage for you until you no longer need it.

Consider an American retiree. The average American will retire somewhere between age 57 and 66, pick up Medicare at age 65, and buy a supplemental medical plan to cover the remaining 20%. This costs money.

Do you HAVE to buy a supplemental? No. No one will force you to get one. Nor do you need to brush your teeth, get a physical, or put gas in your car for that matter-- but it sure helps. You could use your body or car in any fashion you wish and pray for a hail mary when things get dicey. I call this the college student strategy. It usually works best when you have parents to back you up.

I don't know about you, but I can't afford the college student strategy anymore. At 20, I could have carried on with the flu or a broken toe, and if that were the extent of my future medical needs, I'd go for it. But I'm not 20 anymore, and I'm going to take a wild guess that I might need to fix a thing or two in my 70's. My Medicare 80% coverage won't cut it. Paying 20% on my own will eat a bunch of my retirement money, money I'd rather spend in less responsible and more pleasurable ways than medical coverage. I've seen people go bankrupt in their 60's and 70's on the college student plan because they can't cover their 20%. Its a real thing, and it's no fun.

As an MTA member, you're taken care of. When you retire, up until age 67, MUSD reimburses your medical insurance. At age 65, you are required to pick up Medicare- which means you enroll in Medicare and notify CALPERS of the change. Your current medical plan switches from the primary to the supplemental because Medicare will become your primary. Once you turn 67, the district stops reimbursing your supplemental.

Wait, what? I know what you're thinking, **who pays that 20% now?**

Ah, the Trust.

As an MTA teacher, you've been investing in your future little by little each month with your contributions. That money has grown in the trust and is ready for you when your supplemental is no longer covered by MUSD. It's a plan worth investing in. It's a plan you can only use if you've invested with MTA. It's a plan that works.

True, you don't need a supplemental, just like you don't need a car with gas in the tank. You are free to walk that road, broken toe and all, and hope someone along the way likes hitchhikers enough to stop and help you out by paying for the gas you didn't want to buy before you ran into trouble. Maybe you'll get lucky. While my dad might be willing to pick up a stray or two out of curiosity, my mum, the careful analytic, is more careful than curious. She's also an MTA retiree who rests easy every night knowing her health and retirement are more protected than the average American, and that's something both she and my father can agree on.