



## *Short Weeks but Are They?*

As we enter the fifth week of school, you will experience three short weeks in a row. Even though they are short in terms of time, it seems these are the weeks in which time stands still and things increase in terms of workload, discipline, and the level of tiredness that teachers beyond description. During these short weeks, you have experienced the first grading window, open houses, homecomings, professional development, curriculum days, and a wide range of other activities that require you to put in more time beyond your duty day. A shortened week seems to be more work than a normal week and you are not wrong.

The OEA has been working directly with the district to address some key areas of concern that teachers are facing staffing shortages (most notably in Special Education), large class sizes, and the level of student violence. Please know all these issues are of key importance because they have been brought to our attention by you, the members of the OEA.

**Staffing:** In conversations with the district, there are still approximately 150 openings for classroom teachers (120 in Special Education). We are working with the district to find ways to better utilize the staff currently in place and support you, the teachers, who are having to take on additional work because of the shortages. You have all done amazing work given the situations and conditions that many of you are in. We know that you all are doing a tremendous job. I can't thank you enough.

**Class sizes:** Class sizes are a direct result of not having enough staff. If your class sizes at the elementary level exceed 24, work with your administration and contact Kathie Garabrandt ([Kathie.garabrandt@nsea.org](mailto:Kathie.garabrandt@nsea.org)). If your class sizes exceed 28 students at the middle school level and 35 at the high school level

(exceptions made for music and physical education), work with your administration and contact Liz Figueroa ([Elizabeth.figueroa@nsea.org](mailto:Elizabeth.figueroa@nsea.org)).

**Behavior:** The violence occurring in school must be documented. If you have been involved in a situation with a student where you have been injured (scratched, bit, kicked, physically assaulted) please file a report with the administration and seek medical attention through workman's compensation within 24 hours of the incident. The OEA would also request that you fill out the assault form found on the website ([OEA Teacher Assault Form](#))

**Conferences:** As the first quarter closes, please be reminded that parent teachers conferences will be held in October. Senior High Conferences are the week of October 10<sup>th</sup>. Middle School Conferences will occur during the week of October 17<sup>th</sup>. Elementary schools will close the season with conferences taking place the week of October 24<sup>th</sup>. This is the perfect opportunity to continue to build those relationships to encourage not only academic success but also personal success.

**OEA 101:** If you are interested in some personal and professional development, the OEA will be sponsoring some events in the coming months. The first will be a virtual 101 Workshop "How to Read Your Paycheck" on Sept 21, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. If interested, please email Caitlin O'Connor at the OEA office ([Caitlin.Oconnor@nsea.org](mailto:Caitlin.Oconnor@nsea.org)) to register.

**Overages:** Please be aware that for those of you teaching an overage, payment will begin with the October 15<sup>th</sup> paycheck and continue through end of the semester. Second semester overage pay will begin in February and continue through the end of second semester.

**Community Learning Opportunity:** Another learning opportunity is cosponsored by the OEA and the Educational Rights Counsel. The series is titled "Protect Your Students: Successful Advocacy in Tough Times". It will be a series of 3 presentations held in the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center (CEC), 2<sup>nd</sup> floor at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. It is not necessary to attend each of the presentations because they are independent of each other but recommended. The dates for the sessions will be October 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022 from 9:00am to 11:00. The OEA will provide a continental breakfast and parking will be in LOT E on the north side of CEC. Participations is limited to 50 individuals and is open to members,

non-members, and UNO Aspiring Educators. You may register by emailing Caitlin at the OEA office ([Caitlin.Oconnor@nsea.org](mailto:Caitlin.Oconnor@nsea.org)). Please see and share flier - [ERC Event](#)

**Member Organizers and Social Media:** If you are interested in being a Member Organizer for the OEA please reach out to Kathie Garabrandt ([Kathie.Garabrandt@nsea.org](mailto:Kathie.Garabrandt@nsea.org)) with your information. The OEA is also looking for someone who is interested in assisting with social media updates and such. If you think you would like to keep up with all the socials, please reach out to me directly ([Michelle.Settlemyer@nsea.org](mailto:Michelle.Settlemyer@nsea.org)).

**Survey:** Please take a few minutes to complete a survey created by the Compensation & Benefits Committee. The survey is open to everyone (members and non-members) served by the current negotiated agreement. You can access the survey here using the provided link, [Comps & Benefits Survey 2022 - Class Size, Case load and Extra Duty](#). Please share the link with any nonmembers in your building. The survey will close on Friday, September 30, 2022 at 6:00pm

As we start this week, please remember to find time to relax, rest and recharge each day. I know it is very difficult to do given the workload and expectations that you are all working under. I encourage you to make the concerted effort to disconnect from all things school/work related by 6:30pm daily (M-F) if possible and take at least one full day of the weekend to do the things that bring you joy and happiness. For me that is watching sports, spending time with family and friends, sharing meals and great conversation. The level of admiration, respect, and appreciation I have for each of you knows no limit. You all are doing what is necessary to ensure the success of our OPS students and it does not go unnoticed by me.

In Solidarity,  
Michelle

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