

# OPTA NEWS

November 2021



Check out  
[www.opta97.com](http://www.opta97.com)  
for contact info,  
resources, links &  
more.

## President's Report

Prior to the November meeting, the Exec Board was notified of the need for a replacement representative for Mann on Ed Council. Per the Bylaws, Mann School members were notified of the need to fill the post, and two members came forward. At the November meeting, the Executive Board approved Rhapsody Armstrong to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the school year. Thank you Rhapsody!

Several complaints have been brought to our Association Reps about the block scheduling at the middle schools as well as concerns about the differences in the schedules between Brooks and Julian. D97 would like to survey our membership to gain further insight. We have suggested using the IEA survey system as a means for gathering more honest feedback. This survey will likely happen after winter break.

Please consider applying for a SCORE Grant. The next application deadline is January 15. More information and ideas for projects can be found at <https://ieanea.org/score/>

If you know an amazing TA (and we all do), please consider nominating them for IEA's ESP of the Year. More info can be found at <https://ieanea.org/members/esp/esp-of-the-year-award/>

## Bargaining Team Updates

The bargaining team met multiple times in November and hosted three Listening Sessions to kick off their information gathering for the upcoming bargain. The first session invited all members to address topics from our current contract. The second session focused on Special Education Related Services concerns, and the third considered topics from our Special Areas educators, Specialists, and Retirees. Members of the bargaining team are planning to meet with Minority Caucus at a future date. At all sessions, bargaining team members took notes about specific member questions, concerns, and "love-its."

At the beginning of December, the team will begin training with the D97 Bargaining Team about Interest-Based Bargaining, setting ground rules, and setting dates for upcoming bargaining sessions. In addition, the Bargaining Team will begin planning events with the Negotiations Support Team. Be on the lookout for future ways to connect and provide input.

Please make sure you are familiar with who is on the Bargaining Team. Refer to [opta97.com](http://opta97.com) for the list of Bargaining Team members.

## In Other News

**Elections** - Our elections for IEA RA delegate (spring) will be held on December 7. Elections for NEA RA delegates (summer) will be held on March 1.

**Communications** - We encourage everyone to follow us on Facebook both our [public](#) and [private](#) pages. Please participate in our [Membership Spotlight](#) series for our public OPTA Facebook page.

**IPACE** - We are working together to build a more collaborative relationship in D97. We would like to create some small communication groups to meet with BoE members on a casual basis. We will have a group of OPTA and OPTAA members meet with board members for dinner once in January, once in March and once in May. **If you are interested now, have further questions, or would like to be considered for the future, please complete [THIS SURVEY](#) by January 3, 2022.**

**Region 46** - Are you interested in politics or policy? Our Region Grassroots Political Activist is looking for members to be added to our GO-Team. Please contact Jonathan Baymon ([jonathan.baymon@ieagpa.org](mailto:jonathan.baymon@ieagpa.org)) for more information. You can opt in and out of campaigns as necessary so to stay up to date, please email him directly.

**Board of Education Meetings** - Public Comment - At our October Membership Mania, five members of the BOE came to meet with our membership. They spoke about wanting to hear from our members more about their experiences in the school buildings. Please consider sharing via email. The board will read aloud all public comments received by 7 p.m. on the day of the meeting. To submit a public comment, please email [d97board@op97.org](mailto:d97board@op97.org) with the subject, "Public Comment." Your message must include your first and last name in order to be read aloud.

## Important Dates/ Upcoming Events

December 6 - Ed Council (Zoom)  
December 7 - Executive Board (Zoom)  
December 9 - Association Reps (Zoom)  
December 14 - Board of Education (Zoom)  
December 14 - Region 46 (In-person - ballot counting)  
December 18- January 3 - WINTER BREAK  
January 10 - Ed Council (Zoom)  
January 11 - Executive Board (Zoom)  
January 11 - Board of Education (Zoom)  
January 13 - Association Reps (Zoom)  
January 17 - Dr. MLK Jr. Day - NO SCHOOL  
January 25 - Board of Education (Zoom)



\*Please use a personal device/email to log into session via Zoom. Links can be found on [www.opta97.com](http://www.opta97.com) under Member Resources. Contact Adrienne Court or Stephanie Suerth ([communications@opta97.com](mailto:communications@opta97.com)) for the password.