

**Victor Elementary Teachers' Association
Representative Council
January 12, 2010
Nisqualli Building
(Pending Approval 2/9/10)**

President Nancée Fine called the Rep. Council meeting to order at 4:25 PM.

Minutes and Reports

- January Agenda was submitted by Nancée Fine. Steve Dinise moved to accept, Starlett Hale seconded and the agenda was approved.
- Minutes for December 2009 meeting were submitted by Penny Edmiston. Penny D. Smith moved to accept the minutes and Steve Dinise seconded; the minutes were unanimously approved with no corrections.
- President's Report was submitted by Nancée Fine (pink).
- Treasurer's Report was submitted by Linda Smith (white).
- Victorville Chamber of Commerce Report was submitted by Melissa Timko-Miller (pink).
- High Desert Service Center Council Report was submitted by Nancée Fine (pink).
- CTA State Council Report was submitted by Nancée Fine (pink).
- Negotiations Retirement/Resignation (draft) was submitted by Penny D. Smith (white).

Representative Training - Election Process

Greg Galvez and Beth Fehrs gave training for VETA elections that will be held this year at each school site, April 8 for the positions of President, Secretary, Member at Large and NEA/RA reps. Training items included:

- Reps. must attend of at least 2 training sessions that will be held during the Rep. Council meetings (January, February and March).
- Reps. must sign a commitment letter each training session.
- Election procedures, as outlined in the training session and handout, must be maintained to ensure ballots are secure and CTA guidelines upheld.
- Members wishing to change their polling location from their school site to Nisqualli must notify Beth Fehrs by February 9, 2010.
- Reps. were given membership rosters to review with their staff. Any changes to the membership roster, including membership status, must be done within 30 days of the election to be eligible to vote.

Site Reports

- All sites were present and gave reports.
- Reps were asked to share celebrations or sympathies at each site, give possible dates that Nancée or another Executive Board member can visit at a staff meeting,

and discuss how the site has voted to use conference money (continued from December Rep. Council Meeting).

- **Concerns Discussed:**
 - **Conference Money** - Several Reps. were not sure how money is being spent, however those that did have information shared: Sites have cut all conferences; some sites have allocated a various amount per teacher (ranging from \$250 - \$600 per site; principal sends additional members to conferences at their discretion; grade levels received money from the district from "Learning for All" and could use those funds for conferences; some sites allocate conferences as the teachers request; some sites have allocated up to \$1,000 per classroom that can be used, at the teacher's discretion, for supplies and/or conferences; some members only attend conferences if the principal directs; some members have been to as many conferences as they have requested; some sites that allocate a certain amount per teacher allow unused funds to be distributed to other teachers who want to attend, and then roll over funds to the next year.
 - **Seniority List** - Some Reps. wondered how seniority would be determined when several people have the same start date. Nancée said that this was being discussed in Negotiations and she would relay information as soon as she received it.
 - **Summatives** - Teachers who have any questions regarding their summative reviews should contact Nancée for assistance/advice.
 - **State Council** - Reps. asked for an update about CTA supporting later kindergarten start date and class size reduction. Nancée reported that she has brought these issues to CTA State Council and will continue to follow up on status.
 - **Possible Cuts** - Some members have reported that if cuts to salary are being considered, they would rather see furlough days implemented. They emphasized that above all, they are supporting NO cuts!

Old Business

- **State Budget** - Nancée announced that the district budget committee would be meeting tomorrow with School Services and we would soon be receiving their notes. She also reported that Governor Schwarzenegger has stated that there will be no more cuts to education in 2010 and 2011, yet he is supporting Race to the Top (RTTT) which has several new mandates for reforms. Nancée will e-mail a synopsis of his budget concerning education and RTTT to Reps.
- **TAC Response** - Nancée shared the following timeline that was announced at the TAC meeting:
 - **January 20** - VESD Board will vote on the proposed Retirement/Resignation Incentive at the board meeting.
 - **February 10 - 20** - District will distribute a draft list of potential cuts.
 - **February 24** - Board will act on possible cuts.

- **Cabinet Site Visits** - Nancée reported that she has been able to attend 2 of these meetings (held during staff meeting time, or in lieu of staff meeting time) and is pleased that consistent messages are being shared along with timely information. A rumor has been shared that 90 teachers will be cut, Nancée stated that this was not a fact, cuts have yet to be determined.
- **Good Teaching Conference** - Nancée would like Reps. to gather information from their members about who would be interested in attending this conference at the Bonaventure Hotel, Los Angeles March 12 - 14. In the past we have recommended sending a probationary and veteran teacher, yet each site can decide how to allocate spaces. She encouraged sharing information with the principals as they have often funded additional teachers. VETA will provide (2 members per site) registration fees and the cost of hotel room (2 members per room). Members may pay the additional cost if they would like a private room, approximately \$63. VETA will sponsor a reception Friday evening, and the luncheon topic on Saturday will be recent political changes. Linda Smith will e-mail all Reps. the details for registering, so they may forward to the selected members. Linda also asked Reps. to please notify her how many members (up to 2) each site is sending; in the case of some sites sending less than 2, additional sites may send more members. Linda can be reached at: LMSmith@vesd.net
- **Race to the Top (RTTT)** - This grant, through the Federal Stimulus Package, will be available to selected states and/or districts and give additional funding for education, provided specific reforms are made. States and school districts are assigned points for levels of willingness to participate. The points earned will help determine states and/or districts that will receive this money. Nancée informed members that our district was given a chance to participate in December, thereby necessitating a commitment letter signed by a December date. Our Superintendent chose to sign this letter, while the president of VESD Board and the president of VETA chose to NOT sign the commitment letter. Our district, upon Dr. Marsden's letter, is eligible to be considered for this grant, yet not obligated at this time to the requirements. Intent to participate may be revoked at any time. There is MUCH controversy concerning RTTT and members are encouraged to investigate. Currently, CTA recommends that associations do NOT participate as districts will spend much more to implement than they will receive and the mandated reforms may severely affect teachers' rights.

New Business

- **Health Care Reform (BLITZ)** - Congress and the Senate are considering a Health Care Excise Tax that will require employers, such as VESD, to pay a tax on the health care benefits given to employees. An e-mail from Nancée was sent this week, and hard copies (pink) given tonight that explain CTA's Blitz Phone Call strategy. Members are encouraged to call their congressperson and representative and share their opinions (1-877-323-5246). The Blitz will begin January 13 and phone calls can

continue to be made after that date. CTA encourages members to speak AGAINST this proposed reform as it will force districts to pay a significant amount tax on the health care benefits to offer their employees.

- **NEA Social Security Offset Survey** - School district employees who have held other jobs that paid into social security are affected by the proposed Social Security Offset. Reps. are asked to share with those members the following web site: www.surveymonkey.com/s/GQ76GHB Also, they should forward this to any working or retired teacher who may be affected.
- **Class Size** - Reps. had questions regarding class size. Currently our Agreement states that 33 students may be in kindergarten; 32 in grades 1 - 3; and 34 in grades 4 - 6. After the P2 attendance date in May, class sizes may increase with no limits. Nancée said that she would ask what the actual class size average is within our district and report to Reps. She was also asked to verify the amount of students that may be allowed in a classroom, per fire ordinances.
- **Retirement/Resignation** - The Negotiation Team shared a draft of possible incentives for retirement and resignations. This draft will be discussed at the next board meeting, and if approved, can provide members leaving our district a 70 - 80% incentive based upon current salary. VETA will sponsor a workshop with Jack Cantrell on February 16 to assist members with possible concerns/questions. Additionally, members are encouraged to contact John Crump at STRS (1-909-777-0999) to discuss their specific situation regarding retirement as well as check out the STRS retirement calculator on-line. VETA wants to emphasize that members are not being "pushed out"; rather this incentive might help make a decision that is mutually beneficial to members and the district. The Negotiation Team extended special thanks to Dawn Murray who has been actively assisting our team.
- **NEA Board Report** - This pink handout was given and shares how NEA is working to maintain and improve education through legislation.
- **Raffle** - \$10.00 gift certificates were won by Sandy Walker, Paul Valerio and Starlett Hale.
- **5 / 10 Minute Meeting Items:**
 - Political information - non VESD e-mail address needed
 - Continue to collect pink Yoplait lids and toiletries
 - Good Teaching Conference - VETA will sponsor 2 members per site, principals are encouraged to also send members. The conference is held March 12 - 14 at the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles.
 - RTTT - Stay informed, this is very controversial!
 - BLITZ Congress with phone calls to express your opinion about taxing health care benefits.
- **Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned at 6:37 PM.