

# Victor Elementary Teachers' Association

Representative Council

March 11, 2008

Nisqualli Building

(Pending Approval 4/8/08)

President Nancée Fine called the Rep. Council meeting to order at 4:23

## Minutes and Reports

- Minutes for February, 2008 meeting were submitted by Penny Edmiston. Heather Overturf moved to accept the minutes, Barbara Dew seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously with no corrections.
- President's Report was submitted by Nancée Fine.
- Treasurer's Report for February was submitted by Linda Smith.
- Negotiation's Team Report was submitted by Penny D. Smith.
- County Coalition Report for March was submitted by Nancée Fine.
- High Desert & Inland Employee/Employer Trust Report was submitted by Nancée Fine.

## Site Reports

- 6<sup>th</sup> Street Prep. was not in attendance, however all other sites were able to discuss pressing concerns (due to time constraints, the usual Site Reports were not given).
- **Concerns discussed:**
  - **District Test (Prosper)** - A question was posed if all sites require teachers to sign and check the tests into and out of a central location daily. All Reps responded that they only do this for the State Examination, not the district test.
  - **Karen Bossi** – Recognized on the cover of the “Daily Press” because of her swimming talent.

## Old Business

- **TAC** – No report was given.
- **Good Teaching Conference** – Teachers reported that this was a worthwhile conference and they gained a great deal of information. Additionally, teachers within our district were given the opportunity to network with each other.
- **Teacher Appreciation Week** – Tanya Benitez sought input from the group and moved to purchase In – N- Out gift certificates for members on behalf of “Teacher Appreciation Day”. Rex Piatt seconded and the motion unanimously passed.
- **Political Action Committee** – Greg Galvez gave a report about PAC training that he received. He emphasized the role of a PAC is threefold: 1) elect and re-elect qualified candidates to the school board, 2) maintain relations with current school board members, and 3) recruit qualified candidates with similar vision to our Association to run for School Board positions. Greg gave a handout that detailed the amount of involvement that a PAC may choose to organize. Greg would be interested in forming a PAC, but would need the assistance of others to serve on this project. A committee must have a treasurer, president and secretary. He can be reached at Discovery School.

- **Politics** – Nancée announced that she works closely with State Representative, Buck McKeon, on legislative issues concerning education. She would like to share political information with interested members, but will need an e-mail address that is NOT from the district. Members who would like to receive this information are encouraged to contact her at [educatrnan@aol.com](mailto:educatrnan@aol.com) .
- **Elections Committee** – Beth Fehrs announced that the CTA election for NEA/RA was closing at 5:00 PM. Additionally, members wishing to declare candidacy for VETA offices had until 8:00 this evening to submit their declaration. VETA elections will be held April 8<sup>th</sup>, in conjunction with the next Rep. Council meeting. Beth announced the nominees received so far.
- **Dues** – CTA Rep, Dawn Murray clarified the need to raise dues to be in compliance with CTA requirements for establishing a “grievance / arbitration fund”. Additionally, she stated that CTA recommends that chapters have established by-laws that approve the increase of local dues each time CTA raises dues, thus eliminating the annual need to gain approval for an increase. Currently VETA members have been paying \$60 per year as an assessment to legislate educational concerns. This assessment is being eliminated with the 2008/2009 school year. This savings of \$60 can be used to cover the increase in CTA and VETA dues, with no additional out of pocket expense. By doing so, VETA will be in closer alignment to the CTA 30% requirement. Once local dues are at the 30% level, local associations are in alignment to receive benefits, if needed, during the arbitration or grievance process. Additionally, locals in compliance are eligible for CTA grants that benefit in a variety of ways. An example was given that our high school’s Association has raised the dues of its members by approximately \$100, and, as a result, is in compliance with CTA guidelines. During the recent negotiation process, CTA has contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to the high school’s Association as they bargain for their members. Nancée stated that she would break down the amounts currently spent, as well as anticipated increases in her Friday memo so Reps can forward the information to their members. This issue will be voted upon at the April Rep. Council meeting. Virginia Hallrobinson moved to schedule a General Meeting to discuss dues, Penny D. Smith seconded. The motion was not passed. Discussion included the notation that dues have been discussed since November at each Rep. Council meeting. All members have been encouraged to attend, or bring their concerns to the meetings. This item has been addressed every month and an additional meeting does not seem necessary.
- **Electronic Voting** – Jeff Bragg gave a brief report about his recent CTA training concerning electronic voting. The drawbacks to voting electronically are great, and at this time CTA does not recommend locals use this method for elections.
- **By-Laws Revision** – Elsbeth shared proposed changes to the VETA by-laws concerning Articles VIII – Officers, and IX – Executive Board. The proposed changes would use more precise language to explain that the officers of President, Secretary and one At-large Director serve terms that offset the offices of Vice President, Treasurer and one At-large Director. The term of each office is 2 years. This is the second reading of the proposed changes, in accordance with our by-laws. Elsbeth moved to accept the proposed changes in by-law language, Heather Overturf seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- **NCLB** – Penny D. Smith shared a timeline of requirements for schools facing NCLB program improvement status.

## New Business

- **Open Enrollment** – Open enrollment for members to change health insurance plans will be held from May 15 – June 15. Informational meetings will be held at the Nisqualli building’s café from 3:00 to 5:00 on May 20 and 22. This is an opportunity for members to change between HMO and PPO plans.
- **American Fidelity Assurance Company – “125 Pre-tax Benefit Program”** – Jennifer Dikitanan and Nicole Richards informed members of their services. Members may choose to use pre-tax money to establish a fund for paying for approved medical and childcare expenses. This fund helps to diminish the amount of taxes paid on earnings. It is imperative that members who choose to participate in this fund estimate their contribution correctly. If the money allocated to the fund is not used, the member does not get reimbursed, and will have to pay taxes on it. Members may contribute up to \$3,600 for medical expenses and \$5,000 for childcare expenses. A representative of American Fidelity should be scheduled at each site, or members may contact Jennifer at 909-941-1175 or [Jennifer.dikitanan@af-group.com](mailto:Jennifer.dikitanan@af-group.com) . The deadline to enroll in this plan is May 22, 2008.
- **Central CELDT Testing Center** – This item has been removed from the agenda.
- **High Desert Service Center Council** – Nancée reported that the next meeting will be held in Lancaster on March 22. Issues of domestic abuse will be discussed and all members are invited to attend.
- **Consensus – vs- Collaboration** – Nancée gave training on the difference in these two decision making models. She gave a handout from our contract that defines each model and asked each rep to train their members about the difference between these 2 styles. It will be important that members understand the difference so they can make informed decisions at the first staff meetings, held in September. This meeting determines the type of model used by the site for the year, and the provisions for changing models during a school year.
- **Raffle** – \$10.00 gift certificates were won by Steve Dinise, Starlette Hale, Debbie Nelsen and Penny D. Smith.
- **5 / 10 Minute Meeting Items:**
  - Elections to be held April 8.
  - Scholarships are available, check the [www.vetaonline.org](http://www.vetaonline.org) to see VETA, CTA and NEA sponsored scholarships.
  - A proposed increase in dues will be voted upon at the April 8 Rep. Council meeting. Reps should be prepared to vote, on behalf of their members concerning this issue.
  - Reps should elicit their members to see who would like to receive political information. Those members need to provide an e-mail address that is NOT connected to the district’s e-mail system.
  - If members are interested in establishing a PAC, contact Greg Galvez at Discovery.
  - Open Enrollment for health insurance is from 5/15 – 6/15/2008.
  - The deadline to enroll in the “125 Pre-tax Benefit Plan” is 5/22.
  - Reps need to provide training to their members regarding the two decision making models (consensus – vs- collaboration).
- **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 6:17.