

**Victor Elementary Teachers' Association
Representative Council
March 9, 2010
Nisqualli Building
(Pending Approval 4/13/10)**

President Nancée Fine called the Rep. Council meeting to order at 4:17 PM.

Minutes and Reports

- Agenda for today's meeting was submitted by Nancée Fine. Steve Dinise moved to accept and Tina Hubbard seconded.
- Minutes for February 2010 meeting were submitted by Penny Edmiston. Karen Bossi moved to accept the minutes and Debra Watson seconded; the minutes were unanimously approved with no corrections.
- President's Report was submitted by Nancée Fine (green).
- Treasurer's Report was submitted by Linda Smith (white).
- Victorville Chamber of Commerce Report was submitted by Melissa Timko-Miller (green).
- CTA Equity and Human Rights Conference Report was submitted by Melissa Timko-Miller (white).
- High Desert Inland Employee/Employer Trust was submitted by Nancée Fine (green).
- Negotiations Report was submitted by Penny D. Smith (buff).

Representative Training - Election Process

Beth Fehrs and Greg Galvez gave training for VETA elections that will be held April 8 at each school site, for the positions of President, Secretary, Member at Large, CTA State Council and 3 NEA/RA Reps. Beth announced the addendum of CTA State Council office (term of 3 years), as well as the 3rd delegate for NEA/RA Rep. would be added to the April 8th election. Because of this addendum, people who may be considering running for those offices have an extended deadline of March 24, 2009 to declare candidacy. Because the addendum could not be printed in time for tonight's meeting, Beth assured Reps. that she would send via inter-district mail. Penny Edmiston handed to Beth the Declaration of Candidacy forms for Penny Edmiston, Kent Berryman and Joan Herdlein.

Site Reports

- All Sites were present and gave reports. Discussion items included:
 - **Seniority List** - When will the district have a final draft? Nancée explained that the list will not be finalized until after the meeting with teachers to draw names, lottery style, for those with the same hire date.
 - **Friday Collaboration Time** - Teachers concerned that the principal seems to increase agenda items for Friday collaboration time. Nancée reminded Reps. that it was their responsibility at the beginning of the school year to meet

with the staff and determine what type of activities would be conducted during Friday collaboration time. If principals encroach on this time slightly (15 minutes or less on an occasional basis), then it's not an issue. However if more time is used, then the Reps. should politely discuss this with the principal to clarify how the staff agreed to use Friday planning time.

- **RIF'd Teachers** - Much appreciation is given to Nancée for her support of RIF'd teachers during this difficult time. Teachers are feeling a tremendous amount of pressure as they and/or their colleagues receive RIF's. A suggestion from a member was made to allow voluntary contributions to donate to an emergency fund to assist RIF'd teachers. Nancée said she would investigate this, as well as if RIF'd teachers could utilize funds from FACT (Foundation for Aide to California Teachers) through CTA. Some teachers did not like the meetings during the school day to inform of RIF status. Nancée explained that the RIF process is a legal procedure to make sure that rights are given to each effected employee. The CTA lawyer will make sure that the district's seniority list is accurate and plead the case for any member that may have special circumstances. Nancée said that as soon as the meeting with the CTA lawyer is scheduled, she will e-mail all RIF'd teachers. She recommends that all RIF'd teachers attend so they may benefit from the CTA lawyer's experience in this process. The RIF hearing is scheduled for 4/7/10 at Galileo and RIF'd teachers should request a substitute ASAP; the substitute day will not effect the teachers' accrued sick days. Nancée reminded Reps. to make sure that RIF'd teachers complete all paperwork by 3/22/10 and have it returned to the district office with a time and date stamp. If a teacher fails to do this, they will not have the same rights during the hearing process. A question was posed whether music teachers and counselors were previously informed that they would need multi-subject teaching credentials to secure their employment within our district. A Negotiation Team member stated that this information had not been shared to those effected and the Negotiations Team was not aware that the district was considering cutting those teachers and counselors. Nancée relayed information that the VESD board members stated that they wanted to keep music programs and were aware that the district may lose many students as they transfer out of district if music programs were cut.
- **Friday Collaboration Time** - Teachers shared concerns that the principal seems to increase agenda items for Friday collaboration time. Nancée reminded Reps. that it was their responsibility at the beginning of the school year to meet with the staff and determine what type of activities would be conducted during Friday collaboration time. If principals encroach on this time slightly (15 minutes or less on an occasional basis), then it's not an issue. However if more time is used, then the Reps. should politely discuss this with the principal to clarify how the staff agreed to use Friday planning time.

- **Concerns with VETA** - Reps. shared the concern that VETA should be working hard to ensure that all possible cuts from the budget are made (i.e., transportation, supplies, etc.) before teachers are RIF'd. Nancée clarified that VETA was NOT involved in the district's list of cuts, nor did those cuts go through the negotiation process; many of these ideas had been shared at Stakeholders' meetings. Penny D. Smith informed members that Adelanto teachers approved cuts to salary and benefits amounting to 16% over 3 years and still the district RIF'd 18 teachers. Steve Dinise clarified that regardless of cuts that could have been negotiated, RIF's would have occurred. Nancée stated the statistic that if each VESD employee had reduced their salary by 24% the needed money could have been saved that might have eliminated RIF's. She further clarified that this amount of a cut in salaries was not feasible, and in spite of potentially having several teachers retire, our district is significantly overstaffed with teachers (we would need an additional 1,448 students district wide for current staffing conditions). Because of declining student population, as well as the district's elimination of Class Size Reduction, fewer teachers are needed, based upon the J8 report. Previously the district planned to staff classrooms at a ratio of 27:1. This will now increase to 32:1 which is still within class size limits stated in our Agreement.
- **Negotiation Team** - Special thanks was given to the Negotiation Team. Members appreciated their cautious approach. Also, they wondered if the Negotiation Team would be bargaining the calendar. This is an item that should be bargained and would effect teachers at Liberty; they were disappointed that the district changed their calendar without due bargaining. Penny D. Smith said that she would be attending the next board meeting March 10th at the Academy and addressing this issue.
- **Board Meeting** - Teachers thanked Nancée for her heartfelt speech presented to the VESD school board February 24th at Lomitas.
- **President Release Time** - Reps. shared a concern that the district would be cutting the VETA president's release time. It was shared that she is needed now, more than ever, to assist teachers during this time of lay offs. Nancée clarified that the district had miscalculated savings of eliminating VETA president from classroom duties. The correct savings to the district is \$34,000 (not \$75,000 as stated in district documents). Penny D. Smith clarified that even though the VETA president has a Memorandum of Understanding within the ratified agreement to be released from classroom duties, the district has the right to rescind this under extreme financial circumstances. She also added that the best way to ensure that the president has release time is for VETA to cover the entire cost of salary and benefits. Reps. asked Nancée to clarify her duties as well as time spent with VETA business. Nancée agreed to compile this data and e-mail to Reps.

- **District Report Card** - Reps. wanted to know the cost of mailing this multi-page, colored flyer to Victorville residents. It seems excessive in this time of severe financial limitations. Nancée stated that she shared this concern and was told the cost to mail these flyers was $\frac{1}{4}$ that of past years.
- **March Forth** - Several Reps. announced that their staff had great participation for this event and distributed flyers before and/or after school. There was support from the district, classified personnel and parents as well. A concern was shared that some principals were not informed of this event in a timely manner.
- **Staff Meetings** - A question was raised if it was appropriate for teachers to be docked in pay if they missed a staff meeting. Nancée said that she had not heard of this being done. Teachers should attend staff meetings as part of their professional duties, unless prior permission was obtained from the principal. She was not aware of any problems concerning this situation and advised Reps. to see her privately.
- **VETA Rep. Request** - Reps. have requested that when given assignments (voting, gathering information, relaying information, etc.) from VETA to please ensure that at least 1 Wednesday is scheduled within the deadline so Reps. may meet with their staff during the weekly Principal Staff Meeting.
- **Special Ed. Teachers** - Reps. discussed the need for Special Ed. Teachers and wanted clarification if the district would consider filling these positions internally with teachers willing to enroll in classes with a "waiver" credential. Nancée clarified that the term "wavier" was replaced with "intern" and that the district would indeed consider hiring intern teachers and this would result in fewer teachers being RIF'd. The greatest need is for educators qualified to teach moderate to sever special education students.
- **Science Presentation** - Paul Longshore was given kudos for presenting a great science demonstration. Any sites interested should contact him at Galileo for availability.

Old Business

- **Human Rights Conference** - Melissa Timko-Miller gave a report and written information about this conference she attended on behalf of VETA.
- **Unconscious Bias Training** - Melissa Timko-Miller informed Reps. that this training was scheduled for April 29, 2010 starting at 8:30. She recommended registering quickly as there may be a shortage of substitute teachers. If 35 or more people register she will be able to schedule an additional trainer.
- **Distinguished Schools** - West Palms was receiving a final visit to verify their Distinguished Schools application.
- **Good Teaching Conference** - Linda Smith reminded Reps. that this conference was being held at the Bonaventure Hotel, Los Angeles March 12 - 14. Nancée asked

Reps. to share with members who were registered that VETA will host a reception, please see her during the conference for time and location.

- **Membership Rosters, NEA Election** - Beth Fehrs, Vice President, announced that only 6 of the 19 site Reps. had returned the membership rosters that were distributed in February asking members to update information. She stated that 4 sites had still not returned ballots for the recent NEA election, which were due February 23. It is imperative that Reps. follow procedures, especially with the upcoming elections being held at each site. She is concerned that the same disregard for instructions will be given to VETA elections and the voting guidelines will not be upheld. Reps. shared concerns that the NEA election was handled poorly with little time to conduct an election. The time given to conduct the election did not include a Wednesday staff meeting and required the Reps. to meet with members outside of normal meeting days, or individually; this was especially difficult for Reps. who tutor during extended days. Beth apologized and stated that CTA had changed the election deadline and she had been given only a week's notice. Nancée clarified that the Service Center Council sets election deadlines.

New Business

- **VESD School Board** - Nancée announced the need for electing 4 positions in the upcoming VESD school board election (3 positions because of expired terms, 1 because of resignation). She announced that VETA will become involved and will establish a panel to interview candidates. Nancée encouraged members to have potential candidates contact her.
- **VETA Scholarships** - Linda announced the opening and distributed applications of VETA scholarships for graduating high school dependents of members. She mentioned that additional applications would be available on the web site (www.vetaonline.org). Applications with transcripts and letters of recommendations must be postmarked by April 13, 2010.
- **Teacher Appreciation** - previously scheduled on Day of the Teacher, May 10, which coincides with the official RIF day. Nancée announced VETA would reschedule this year, possibly in April or another date in May.
- **Attendance Reporting System** - Nancée shared that our district was considering using a system similar to the high school district's for keeping attendance records. It would require teachers to take attendance on-line and would automatically send SARB letters to appropriate students. Some districts, using similar programs, have seen ADA increase from 92% to 96%. Our ADA is 94% and the state average is 96%.
- **Raffle** - \$10.00 gift certificates were won by Ann Hernandez, Sue Halperin and Kelly Pfannenstein.
- **5 / 10 Minute Meeting Items:**
 - Political information - non VESD e-mail address needed
 - Continue to collect pink Yoplait lids and toiletries

- NEA Social Security Survey, as printed in agenda
- New attendance reporting system
- Unconscious Bias Training, April 29th, Nisqually
- Addendum to VETA April 8 elections to include: NEA/RA (1 additional position) and CTA State Council (1 position). The extended deadline to declare candidacy for these positions is March 24.
- VETA Scholarships open to graduating high school dependents of VETA members. Application, transcripts and letters of recommendation must be postmarked by April 13.
- **Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 PM.