

# Victor Elementary Teachers' Association

## Representative Council

November 18, 2008

Nisqualli Building

(Pending Approval 12/9/08)

President Nancée Fine called the Rep. Council meeting to order at 4:21

### Minutes and Reports

- Minutes for October, 2008 meeting were submitted by Penny Edmiston. Corrections were made regarding the e-mail address of Treasurer, Linda Smith, it should read: [LMSmith@vesd.net](mailto:LMSmith@vesd.net). Penny D. Smith moved to accept the minutes, Brenda Sanchez seconded, and the minutes were approved with the above noted correction.
- President's Report for October was submitted by Nancée Fine.
- Vice President's Report (Membership Report) was submitted by Beth Fehrs.
- Treasurer's Report as of 10/25/08 was submitted by Linda Smith.
- High Desert & Inland Employee/Employer Trust for November was submitted by Nancée.
- Victorville Chamber of Commerce for October was submitted by Nancée.

### Training

- **One Message/One Voice** - Nancée stressed the importance of relaying accurate information to members. It is crucial that reps use the 5-minute time allotment at the principal's staff meeting, as well as other methods, to keep members informed. Additionally, share the information that is sent to you, from Nancée, via her weekly e-mails.
- **Appropriate Student Interactions** – Nancée cautioned teachers to not use physical contact with children when giving praise. Be careful as students may approach for hugs. In this case, a side hug, pat on the shoulder, etc., would be more appropriate. Also, a teacher should never be alone with a student. She will attend each site to review this information with members.

### Site Reports

- 6<sup>th</sup> Street Prep was not in attendance, however all other sites gave reports.
- **Concerns Discussed:**
  - **CTA Political Endorsements / Expenditures - Some** members have concerns about how their dues to CTA are being spent to support political causes. Reps are advised to give the appropriate membership forms to these members so they may designate how to have their dues spent. It was clarified that VETA has not funded a PAC, therefore did not contribute to any political causes or candidates. Nancée shared that CTA spends approximately 8% of members' dues on political issues, and donated \$1,250 to VESD to help pass Measure E.
  - **Disaster Drill** – Concerns were shared that some sites had their drill interrupt teachers' lunches (without being given the option to schedule the drill for earlier in the day). Some sites handled this by allowing teachers flex time on Friday (early teacher dismissal) to compensate for the lost lunch time. Other members were told that the time for the drill could not be changed, and this further created conflict with teachers' lunch time.

- **Report Cards** – Members would like clarification about the due date for report cards handed into principals. This year report cards are due close to Thanksgiving break and various sites have different deadlines for completion. Nancée said that she would research this and report back, via weekly e-mails.
- **Measure E** – Members would like to know the district’s agenda for expenditures regarding Measure E. What is the list of items to be done, and their priority status? Nancée said she would research and report back.
- **SDC Teachers** – Some sites are in need of Special Day Class teachers.
- **VETA 5-Minute Meeting Time** – Some reps are not getting the 5 minute time allotment to share VETA news. Nancée and other reps shared strategies to handle this. It is imperative that reps speak to the principals to help facilitate the time is being given, and used, by the VETA reps.
- **Calendar Issues** – Members are wondering if the district calendar will be negotiated, or has the final decision been made. If so, how was the decision made for start and end dates? (currently, 2009 – 2010 school year is August 31 – June 25) A concern was shared that our end date is late enough to disqualify students from participating in summer school or county placement classes. Also, some reps questioned how the district gathered information to determine that it was cost effective to implement the proposed calendar.
- **Budget Crisis** – Members are concerned about possible mid-year cuts that may be mandated by the state because of the budget shortfall. Additionally, specific budget categories (ELL, PE and Music) have been frozen.
- **Compensation** – Reps shared that their sites do not compensate teachers when meetings are held beyond contract hours. Nancée encouraged those reps to speak to the principal immediately about how the site decision was made to either compensate (or not compensate) for these types of meetings (Leadership team, site curriculum teams, probationary teachers’ meetings, etc.).
- **Kindergarten Age Requirement** – Reps shared the need for CTA to more aggressively lobby for students to be at least 5 years old, by September 1, when they start Kindergarten. This bill has been before the state assembly in the past, but was not resolved. Nancée assured reps that she would investigate and share information.

### Old Business

- **TAC** – The recent TAC meeting discussed the proposed 2009 – 2010 school calendar. Buy Back days will be held after August 31 and students would begin school on September 8. Teacher contract days would be from August 31 – June 25.
- **Standing Committees** – Nancée announced we have several vacancies on standing committees and could use volunteers, especially with By-laws and Elections. Trish Covarrubias volunteered to help with elections.
- **Quorum for VETA meetings** – Considering there are 30 representatives to VETA, 16 reps will need to be present at VETA meetings to vote on issues, this will constitute a quorum. An issue will need at least 9 votes to pass.
- **Medicare** – Nancée shared information that was recently distributed from the district about Medicare benefits. Reps should share with members that if they (or their spouse) are at least 65 years old, the district’s benefit package is at least as good as, if not better, than Medicare, Part D.
- **Fall Leadership Conference** – To be held November 21 – 23 at the Orleans Hotel in Las Vegas. Families are invited to the Friday reception. Breakfast and lunch on Saturday will be paid for

VETA members, and members were responsible for their own meals Saturday evening. Linda announced that reps would receive their deposit checks when room check out notification was given to her. If there are any problems, let her know; she can be reached via district e-mail at: [LMSmith@vesd.net](mailto:LMSmith@vesd.net)

## **New Business**

- **VETA Scholarships** – Nancée shared that some members had expressed a desire for VETA to extend the VETA scholarship program beyond graduating seniors. The VETA Executive Board has discussed this and has decided not to extend the scholarships. Nancée explained that this has been an expense for VETA that is considered “non-chargeable” by CTA and we can spend no more than 20% of our budget on “non-chargeable” expenses. However, we do try to fund as many scholarships as possible to all graduating seniors who are children of VETA members to help them pursue expenses for further education. Jeff Bragg and Linda Smith will work to make the sure the VETA scholarship applications are posted on the VETA website ([www.vetaonline.org](http://www.vetaonline.org)).
- **CTA Scholarships** – Nancée shared handouts to 1 representative per site from CTA about 6 scholarships that are being offered. She asked that reps please post these on the VETA bulletin board at each site and make members aware that the forms are available to be copied. Additionally, members can log on to CTA’s website ([www.CTA.org](http://www.CTA.org) and [www.mycta.org](http://www.mycta.org)) and download the forms.
- **Confidentiality** – Nancée urged reps to remind members to not send anything confidential to VETA using district e-mail. To help increase security for confidential matters, Nancée will no longer use the district’s server when replying to e-mails from members. Nancée will access the internet at work via a wireless plug-in modem that is separate from the district’s system.
- **Good Teaching Conference** – Nancée asked reps to start compiling a list of members who would be interested in attending this conference. It will be held March 13 – 15 in Anaheim. VETA will pay for the conference and hotel rooms (shared 2 members per room). Private rooms can be reserved if members pay the difference in cost. Reps will decide at the December meeting who will attend and how many people to send to this conference.
- **Health Trust** – Nancée shared information about using our insurance cost effectively. It is important to try to avoid using the emergency room, when possible; instead use Urgent Care. A Nurse Help line is established 24 hours each day to help, 866-543-3728. Also, when possible, request generic brands of prescriptions.
- **Student Survey** – A draft of the proposed student survey was shared. Reps gave input regarding revisions and Nancée will share with the district.
- **Marty Rose** – A classified employee has recently passed away. A collection was taken and \$130.00 will be contributed to a fund established in his honor.
- **Staff Development** – Melissa Timko-Miller shared that teachers can enroll in many district training opportunities by going to the district web-site, under “Educational Services”. It is important to reserve a spot, as well as notify Ed. Services if your plans have changed and you can not attend your reserved conference.
- **Raffle** – \$10.00 gift certificates were won by Brenda Sanchez, Debbie Nelsen and Bob Thweatt

- **5 / 10 Minute Meeting Items:**

- Good Teaching Conference – Announce this opportunity for training and make a list of teachers who would like to attend.
- Scholarships - CTA and VETA scholarships are available.
- Health cost containment - Urgent Care should be used instead of the Emergency Room, when possible; generic prescriptions should be chosen, when possible. The Nurse Help line is established.
- Election and By-laws committees need volunteers.
- CTA spends 8% of members' dues on political causes. Members can choose to change the amount of their dues allocated to political concerns.
- Professional Development opportunities are available through Educational Services of our district.

- **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 6:14.