

**Victor Elementary Teachers' Association
Representative Council
November 10, 2009
Nisqualli Building
(Pending Approval 12/8/09)**

President Nancée Fine called the Rep. Council meeting to order at 4:20PM.

Minutes and Reports

- November Agenda was submitted by Nancée Fine. Allison Stewart moved to accept, Trish Covarrubias seconded and the agenda was approved.
- Minutes for October 2009 meeting were submitted by Penny Edmiston. Trish Covarrubias moved to accept the minutes and Dale Brendon seconded; the minutes were unanimously approved.
- President's Report was submitted by Nancée Fine.
- Treasurer's Report was submitted by Linda Smith.
- San Bernardino County Coalition Report was submitted by Nancée Fine.
- Victorville Chamber of Commerce Report was submitted by Melissa Timko-Miller.
- High Desert Inland Employee/Employer Trust Report was submitted by Nancée Fine.
- Negotiations Report was submitted by Penny D. Smith.

Site Reports

- All sites were present, (except Liberty), and gave reports.
- Reps were asked to share celebrations or sympathies at each site as well as give possible dates that Nancée or another Executive Board member can visit at a staff meeting.
- **Additional Concerns Discussed:**
 - **District Interim Assessment** - A suggestion was made to let teachers keep a copy of the test so they can assist students in the wording that will be used. Teachers felt it was unprofessional for the district to attach money to the completion of the tests; this makes administering the test more than "guiding instruction", and was not fair to impoverished schools. Other teachers commented that the test did not align with the district pacing plan in regards to "Math for All", although some grades seemed more aligned than others. Only 2 third grade teachers participated in the selection of the test. Teachers' long range plans, which were made from the district's blueprint, also did not align with the objectives measured on the test. Many teachers felt that the test should cover only the items that have been taught so far in the semester. A final concern was shared that the test was given approximately 1 month before the end of the trimester, not giving enough time for students to learn the concepts that should be measured. Teachers felt that the percentage of questions asked in each domain should be similar

to the state's test. The test should be returned to teachers so students can review and learn from their mistakes. Reps. commented that with all the concerns they felt the test was setting students up to fail. Nancée encouraged reps to share concerns on a post-it and stick to the charts displayed in the room.

- **Joint Communiqué** - a recent joint communiqué discussed job shares. Reps. shared a question about whether the district was eliminating these positions. Penny D. Smith informed the Reps. that this was not being negotiated so members may still job share, as per our current contract.
- **District Writing Tests** - Members are concerned how the district establishes the criteria for grading district-mandated writing tests as well as providing the necessary time to grade. Some principals are providing substitutes for their teachers to grade, while others may be allowing time during the Wednesday staff meeting. Tonya Almeida said that Friday grade level planning could be used, as the grading of assessments is an appropriate use of collaboration time. She encouraged each site to work out possibilities with their principal. Concerns were expressed because some grades require 2 independent readers each score the paper. Nancée encouraged Reps. to speak to their principals as well as send issues to grade level councils, or contact Maureen directly. The tests will be given in May and need to be scored by the end of May, therefore a suggestion was made to use the last 2 Fridays of grade level collaboration time for the scoring of tests.
- **$\frac{1}{4}$ Day Substitutes** - Penny D. Smith explained that if a teacher needs to be gone $\frac{1}{4}$ day they can ask their colleagues to take the students, as substitutes are hard to find for $\frac{1}{4}$ days. If the colleagues do not choose to receive the pay, then the original teacher will not be docked for the $\frac{1}{4}$ day leave time. She shared that this was a "gentleman's agreement" and not in the contract. Reps. were encouraged to ask their office secretary and principal for the procedure for completing paperwork if they choose to take students and receive pay. Penny D. Smith said that she would also work on a procedure list for this.
- **Negotiations** - Reps. reported that members had questions about how Negotiations were proceeding. Nancée informed all members to take a pink flyer that announced the VETA General Meeting to be held next Tuesday, November 17. The memo incorrectly states that the meeting will be held at Del Rey cafeteria. Nancée will send an e-mail so all members know the correct location.
- **Potential Retirees** - A member gave thanks to the Executive Board and Negotiation Team for making personal phone calls to elicit information about what incentives possible retirees might need to be able to retire this year.
- **Security Breach** - Members wanted to know what the district has done to make sure that confidential information was not available via the internet

with last month's security breach. Members had expressed interest at the October VETA Rep. council to know if the district was financially responsible if a member had credit fraud as a result of this leak. Nancée said that the district would be liable and she had suggested providing credit bureau services to the district. She said she would continue to investigate and make suggestions.

- **Veterans' Day Activities** - West Palms announced activities they would hold for the public to commemorate Veterans' Day.

Old Business

- **State Budget** - Nancée announced that nothing was getting better with the budget, and as of now, nothing was set in stone. She reminded Reps. that the new cycle of budget discussions begins in January.
- **Monday Memos** - Nancée shared that many of her e-mails are getting returned because she does not have accurate e-mail addresses. She has asked Reps to please make sure that they have supplied her with the accurate information and let her know if they are not receiving memos from her. Some reps noted that sometimes the e-mails were hard to open, or hard to read with extra symbols contained within. Nancée advised Reps. to get a list of alternate (non-district) e-mail addresses of their staff members who would like to receive political information.
- **TAC Response** - Reps. commented that the last TAC meeting was lively and productive. They would like to see a follow up to the questions asked at the October TAC meeting.
- **5-Minute Meeting** - Nancée stated that she is able to share a lot of information with members when she has the opportunity to substitute at the various schools. In addition, she would like to have the opportunity to meet with members at the 5-minute VETA portion of the principal's weekly staff meeting. She would like to extend to members the availability of including her, or other Executive Board Officers, at these meetings, when possible. Additionally, she suggested reading the CTA Organizing Plan for CTA suggestions about how to run meetings.
- **State Council** - Nancée shared that she would be discussing concerns at state council:
 1. Report back on status of Class Size Reduction
 2. Kindergarten entry age
 3. Open enrollment - starting in January any student may attend any school, providing there is space available. Students will not need inter- or intra-district transfers.
 4. Race to the Top - Nancée announced that districts that participate might be eligible to share in the \$435 million incentive. However, to participate, districts would need to allow unlimited amount of charter schools, tie teacher evaluation to students' achievement and align

standards to the assigned south west consortium's standards (which may be lower).

5. CTA and NEA are working with Duncan and Miller on the "No Child Left Behind" program.
- **Political Information** - Nancée reminded reps to let their members know to provide her with an alternate (non VESD) e-mail address if they would like to receive political information.

New Business

- **NTA** - Terri Bender and assistant Elaine presented flyers from NTA/TSA. They also provided tonight's dinner.
- **Elections** - This year elections will be held at the sites, therefore it is incumbent upon the Reps. to abide by the guidelines and rules to ensure security of the ballots. Reps. will begin receiving training in December about their responsibilities. VETA will also need volunteers who can work on the Election Committee; this will entail about 1 - 2 meetings, in addition to assisting on election day. The election timeline will be distributed in December or January.
- **Human Rights Chair** - Nancée announced that we have an opening for someone to chair the Human Rights Committee and attend the conference. If interested, please see her.
- **Health Trust** - Nancée and Linda Smith discussed this recent conference and urged members to use the nurse line and urgent care before going to the emergency room, when possible. This will help to contain costs. Also, using generic drugs and utilizing "Best Doctors" for 2nd opinions will cut costs. Some sites such as Discovery and West Palms have started fitness programs and members may want to contact those Reps. if interested. There may be additional Weight Watchers certificates distributed this year. A Rep. expressed a concern that our insurance does not cover hearing loss. Nancée informed Reps. that this was correct, but our insurance does provide discounts to health providers regarding services in this area. A flyer was distributed that lists approved urgent care facilities in the high desert.
- **American Education Week** - celebrated the week of November 15 - 21. Nancée reminded Reps. that we celebrate our Education Week in the spring.
- **CTA Organizing Plan** - Nancée distributed a letter from CTA discussing how to help organize associations. She asked Reps. to please give her input after they have read it.
- **CTA 2008/2009 Expenditure Review** - Nancée shared a handout that shows how CTA spends funds. She asked Reps. to please post on the VETA bulletin boards at each site.
- **Sunrise Rotary Santa** - Nancée explained a fundraiser that her Rotary club sponsors. She invited anyone who is interested in helping to see her after the meeting.

- **"A Better Way" Shelter Donations** - Nancée announced that members had collected 5 boxes of toiletries that were donated to this women's shelter and thanked members for their efforts.
- **CTA Competency Training Panel Opportunity** - Nancée shared that there was an opening to be trained for this panel. They work to represent members when someone has been released. If interested, see Nancée.
- **CTA Board Briefs** - Nancée informed members that she posts this monthly information on the bulletin board outside of this meeting room, as well as on the table downstairs in front of her office.
- **Negotiations** - Nancée asked Reps. to share that VETA is seeking members who would like to serve as alternates on the Negotiations Committee. If you would like to be considered, please contact her.
- **Monday E-Mails** - Nancée asked for ways to improve her weekly communication. Reps asked for discussion topics to be given a week before the Rep. Council meeting so they have enough lead time to gather information.
- **Ballots** - Nancée cautioned members about signing ballots without full knowledge. For example the "Recall Adams" campaign could seriously hurt an advocate for education, Anthony Adams.
- **Mohave Desert Air Quality Management** - A flyer was distributed with the web site www.mdaqmd.ca.gov The web site gives useful information about the day's weather quality.
- **Raffle** - \$10.00 gift certificates and/or prizes were won by Bob Thweatt, Trish Covarrubias, Joan Herdlein, Janine Schneider, Sally Kraemer, Beverly Thomas and Crystal Kerns.
- **5 / 10 Minute Meeting Items:**
 - Collections of Yoplait pink lids and toiletries at each site.
 - Political information - non VESD e-mail address needed
 - Budget Committee - forward any questions to committee members
 - Best Doctors
- **Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned at 5:57 PM.