

VTA Representative Council Meeting Minutes

Date 10/16/07

3:45 pm – 5:45 pm

Jepson Library

In attendance: Scott Bassett, Margret K. Sisson, Tim Sisson, Suvi Smith, John Namisnik, Denise Williams, Gary Ballard, Stan Turrini, Daniel Rodriguez, Doug Appel, Bob Blaine, B Henry, Sharon Riehl, Katherine Epstien, Nancy Madonna, Moira McSweeney, Julie Immerman, Alison Epperson, Ginny Miller, Tracy Moss, Sylvia Aquino, Debbie Hennis, Linda Phelan, Chris Lindberg, Tammy Parker, Diane Dahl, Minner, Gregg Gallagher, JF Cacas, Mike Spezzi, Derenda Faias, Corey Penrose, Rodney Orosco, Gary Masterson, Joanne Baker, Peggy Macaulay, Bill Jacks, Dawn Kelly, Larry Baker, Brenda Hensley, Kent Puddy

Members Absent: none

1. Approval/Corrections to the agenda - none

2. Approval/Corrections to the minutes -none

3. President's Report-

Moving from Unum Provident to The Standard - Paul Brunetta, from The Standard, reviewed changes to life insurance policy holders as the CTA pulls it's polices away from Unum Provident to The Standard. He went on to encourage all unit members to sign for life insurance as soon as possible, because many benefits were available, specifically, to us as members of the CTA. Those benefits are:

-Any filed claims are vetted by the CTA and, if problems arise, we have the collective muscle of the association to address any and all issues.

-If you are injured outside of the duty day, and become unable to work, you will still be protected by the CTA/The Standard insurance.

The Standard also offers good maternity benefits; mothers are able to leave work four weeks before their expected delivery date. New members of the unit also have the first 120 days of their employment to enroll. The Standard rep is also willing to visit school sites, if there is sufficient interest. Costs for this program are also locked in place for the next three years.

Extra information is also available at www.cta.org/mycta. Registration might be required.

Polo Shirts – 26 shirts have been ordered, at a cost of \$16.70 apiece. They will, hopefully, arrive soon.

CTA Budget Survey – No surveys, as of now, have been returned and Brenda is seeking input on how best to address this issue.

NCLB ver. 2.0 – Repeating CTA’s message, Brenda urged VTA membership to contact George Miller to express their outrage at the proposed revisions of this legislation. As of now, the CTA’s tactic to force a revision of this legislation is to flood the phone lines of Miller and Pelosi because the frequency and message of these phone calls is tracked and recorded by their respective staffers.

VTA membership is encouraged to either follow the script provided in the rep packets, or simply share their personal stories about the negative effects NCLB. The proposed revision of NCLB is currently in committee before the revisions are finalized at the end of the month, so site reps are urged to do ANYTHING possible in order to ensure that membership registers their displeasure with this process with the relevant politician. For more information, visit www.cta.org.

Site list rep update and other issues - Brenda has been updating the rep list at www.vacateachers.org, but there are a few issues which need to be addressed, elections, complete lists, ect, so be sure to address these problems as soon as possible.

State council issues – Recently, there’s been a lawsuit settlement (stemming from a case filed by the American Diabetic Association) regarding teachers performing, or being directed to perform, medical procedures because of nursing shortages resulting from budget cuts.

Suffice to say, teachers should NOT perform these sorts of medical procedures and, if they’re asked or directed to do so, they should inform Brenda immediately, so proper action can be taken.

Grievance training – There is a grievance class available on October 24th and people are strongly encouraged to sign up. Additional information is available in the representative packets for this meeting. If you’re interested, contact Brenda.

Site visits – Brenda will be visiting each school site in the near future in order to encourage peaceful conflict resolution.

4. Reports

Bargaining update —At this point, there is no update. The bargaining team, however, will be meeting with the district negotiating team on Friday, Oct 19th to discuss how much of a raise unit members will receive this year. No other information is available since the last update.

Planning for the board action on Thursday is also proceeding well, but turnout could always be improved.

Treasurer - The report on VTA finances can be found at: <http://www.vacateachers.org/budgetgraphs.html>. If you have any questions, please direct them towards Daniel Rodriguez. The treasurers report was accepted by unanimous motion.

Political Action and School Board endorsements — Michael Kitzes and Larry Mazzuca, the two endorsed candidates for the school board endorsed by VTA-PAC, were seeking to receive the official endorsement from the Vacaville Teachers association.

Larry Mazzuca spoke first and emphasized his committed to openness and transparency in the dealings of the school board. He also emphasized how he's very interested in affecting change in the board by building a consensus of like-minded individuals – starting with Michael Kitzes and himself returning to the school board with this election. If you have any questions about his ideas for the school board, he can be reached at lmazzuk@cityofnapa.org or 707-365-9969.

Michael Kitzes spoke next, repeating how both Larry and he are committed to building a culture of openness and honesty on the school board – a process which begins with their re-election. He can be reached through his election website: www.votekitzes.com or 707-330-9969.

Ernest Kimme then went on to explain how he's interested in taking two thousand of the four thousand dollars in PAC funds to purchase an official endorsement advertisement in the reporter advertising these endorsements with the community of Vacaville.

The motion to for VTA endorsement of Larry Mazzuca and Michael Kitzes was put the floor, seconded, then opened for discussion.

Questions addressed during discussion included:

-Is there any sort of official source for their precise political positions? – No and, according to Ernest Kimme, overriding political philosophies are largely irrelevant for serving on a school board because of the specificity of educational issues really don't lend themselves to any sort of ideological agenda.

-Should we endorse anyone, considering how previous endorsements have turned against Vacaville Teachers, and the CTA, in past years? Indeed, while prior endorsements have backfired in recent years, the overriding importance of building a consensus of school board members committed to having an open decision making process trumps these concerns for some rep council members.

-Why aren't we endorsing Steve Baker? Because of the reactionary nature of his campaign statement, lack of experience with educational issues, and seeming aversion to consensus building.

Grievances –

School Loop—A level two grievance has been filed with the district because of the violation of section 21.10 of the 2006-2007 contract.

Prior to the establishment or implementation of program(s)/position(s) involving any unit members, the District and Association shall confer on the salaries, benefits, work days/hours, working conditions, leave hours, etc. of said unit members.

Burton Crinklaw, Brenda and Kent met to discuss this grievance and work towards a mutually agreeable solution. This solution will consist of a letter sent to site administration across the district, reminding them to support teachers in whatever communication medium they decide to use when communicating with students and teachers regarding student achievement.

Mark Frazer will also meet the VTA to work out the logistics of implementing school loop in a fair and equitable fashion. Specifically, this meeting will look to show teachers how to block parents who send abusive emails and other problems arising from the use of this service.

Ultimately, teachers cannot be forced to use school loop until the specifics are bargained and addressed in the contract. Implementation issues, infrastructure needs, and public perceptions of the VTA must also be considered while a plan of action is determined.

Jobs created outside of the contract – After repeated examples of jobs being created outside of the contract, Brenda has filed a level two grievance about this practice. After meeting with Burton Crinklaw, a process has been put in place where new positions will first be sent to Brenda for this year then, for following school years, principals will send a list of created temporary positions to VTA leadership in order to ensure sufficient oversight.

Elementary Prep – At one school site, grades 4-6 teachers are required, in order to have a prep period, to supervise two classes – instead of having coverage provided by the district. While a grievance hasn't yet been filed, this practice is being investigated and a plan to address this issue is being determined.

Sexual harassment – There have been 2-3 sexual harassment incidents in the district. These issues, however, are beyond the oversight of the union, unless, when notified of the problem, site administration or district administration fails to address the decisively address this problem

Other issues-

State Council information – Brenda recently distributed information from the CTA regarding budgetary information, political issues, upcoming advertising, and other CTA state-level issues.

Medical issues – The governor has recently vetoed AB 8 (Nunez-Perata), CTA-endorsed legislation intended to address this issue, so immediate changes aren't coming soon, regrettably.

Social Security Offset – If a bill addressing this problem makes its way out of congress, the White House has promised a veto, so the NEA is planning to pursue this issue anew, once the current administration has left office.

10 minute meetings – To promote staff interest and facilitate the exchange of information, a quick presentation was given on how to give a quick meeting of relevant issues to unit members. Specifics are available in the rep packets.

5. New Business

Draft of Communication Plan - On August 15th, the executive board met to discuss and draft a communications plan for the association addressing the problems of internal communication, external communication and community outreach. This plan was shared with the rep council.

A motion was then made to for the reps to adapt this plan by taking it to their school sites. The motion was seconded, and put up for a vote, but it failed to pass. The communication plan will now be returned to exec board, revised and returned to rep council for another vote at a future date.

Union action at 10/18 school board meeting – the logistics of this action were reviewed and agreed upon by rep council vote.

6. Raffle - was won by Stan Turrini.

7. Site Concerns – none.

8. Adjournment - at 6:07.

Respectfully submitted, Corey Penrose