

VTA Representative Council Meeting Minutes

Date 1/22/08

3:45 pm – 5:20 pm

Jepson Library

In attendance: Kent Puddy, Tim Yearnshaw, Joanne Baker, Todd Blanset, Michael Turrini, Daniel Rodriguez, Christine Williams, Chris Lindberg, Larry Baker, Mike Spezzi, Moira McSweeney, Sharon Riehl, Bill Jacks, Katherine Epstein, Diane Dahl, Linda Phelan, Sue Rosen, Gary Masterson, Nancy Madonna, Ginny Miller, Julie Timmerman, Tracy Moss, Nancy Hiestand, Margaret Sisson, Bob Blaine, John Namisnik, Tim Sisson, Tammy Parker, Dawn Kelly, Peggy Macaulay, Sylvia Aquino, Corey Penrose

Members Absent: Gary Ballard, Suvi Smith, Denise Williams, Steve Clark, Alison Epperson, Chris Minner, Gregg Gallagher, Debbie Hennis, Rodney Orosco, Scott Blassett.

1. Approval/Corrections to the agenda:

-Stan Turrini has some new business and the agenda is approved.

2. Approval/Corrections to the minutes:

-The previous minutes were approved, there were no corrections.

3. President's Report:

--***CLAD***-Our CTA staffer, Doug, is still working on the CLAD and upcoming arbitration, and, since he wasn't in attendance, there was no update on this topic.

--Layoffs and budget cuts --

--The district has until March 1st to let the VTA know if RIF (reduction in force) notices will be distributed. They don't know, as of the recent Budget Advisory Committee meeting, if there will be layoffs.

--May 15th is the official deadline.

--March 15th is the first official notification. If a member doesn't receive a notice by March 15th, they can't be laid off.

--Seniority lists will be sent to the various sites by February 15th – be sure to check them for accuracy.

--Be sure, also, to check the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, which can be found at:

<https://teachercred.ctc.ca.gov/teachers/PublicSearchProxy>

to ensure that your CLAD is listed and verifiable by all inquiring parties.

--**ADA incentive rewards**- Every school site has received, as a result of meeting various ADA incentives, monies for site administration to spend as they see fit. For specific amounts, see the president's report.

--**Grievances** – if you promise a member that you're going to grieve an issue, be sure to follow through and file the appropriate paperwork.

--**Vacaville Youth Roundtable** – Will we donate money? Yes, the same amount as last year.

--**Arbitration** – As per VTA staffer Doug's recommendation, the association will send two grievants to arbitration, instead of all of the people who were originally involved. For the remaining grievants, the negative evaluations will be pulled, training will be given to site administrators on how to properly evaluate, a letter of recommendation for each grievant will be prepared by the district, and all reference requests will be sent to Human Resources.

--**Budget issues** – put very simply, California schools have been overfunded, as defined by a strict reading of the funding requirements outlined by Prop 98. In a worst-case scenario, as proposed by the governor, the budget cuts for this year would consist of:

- Schools would lose .5% this year
- Schools would lose 4.4 billion dollars next year.
- Special Ed would lose 11% of their funding.

CTA is working with the legislature to get the .5% spending cut removed for this year by using the ending balances on categorical programs (at the state level) to solve the shortfall. We should know by Feb 23rd if their efforts were successful.

If the 4.4 billion dollar cut for 08-09 happens, this equates to:

- 110,000 laid off teachers, state-wide
- K-12 class size would increase by 37%
- School would, *perhaps*, close five weeks early.

All association members are urged to click this link:

<http://capwiz.com/nea/ca/state/main/?state=CA>

And begin flooding the legislature with their views on the matter.

--*State delegate* - If anyone is interested in becoming a State Delegate for the NEA this summer, information is available in the most recent issue of the CTA magazine.

Questions arising from this report included:

-Has the CTA made any endorsements in the primaries? – No

-What's the current status of the universal health care bill? – It's still on track.

4. Reports

a. Bargaining

After the last meeting didn't proceed as well as hoped, the bargaining team left when the district offered no specific proposals. All reps are urged to keep their sites informed as to the status of contract negotiations. The next bargaining sessions are scheduled for Jan 23rd and Jan 25th.

Questions arising from this report included:

--Can special ed work longer days? – Considering the vagueness of the district's current offer, that question can't be answered – yet.

---What's the latest on cutting elementary school prep time? – As with special ed concerns, the district is speaking thematically about an issue requiring specifics, so that questions can't be answered yet, either.

--Will secondary schools "throw elementary schools under the bus" and approve a contract which cuts their prep time in order to secure a 4.5 percent raise? – No.

--What's the latest on the proposed discipline articles? – As with the district's other propositions, there isn't much clarification, but these general proposals will give site administrators a tremendous amount of power.

b. Treasurer

Our financial house is in order.

Motion to accept the budget is made, seconded and passed.

c. Grievance

--At one school, a teacher was to have a letter put into their file, but the process was very vague and contractual procedures weren't followed. The principal didn't seem to want to problem-solve, they just wanted to place the letter and be done with the process. If you know of a teacher in a similar situation, be sure to contact Sylvia so she can ensure that due process is being followed.

Question arising from this report:

--Is there a format for site administrator's letters in personnel files? – No, but he principal cannot behave in an “arbitrary and capricious” fashion.

--There have been some questions arising about the appropriateness of using school facilities for religious student clubs. Members are urged to use Faculty Senate's to resolve these issues in a productive fashion.

d. State Council

Will meet this Friday.

e. Action Team Report

These teams are coming along nicely and, in light of recent successful actions, everyone is encouraged by this progress.

-The main action committee team will meet in Room 74 at Vacaville High School on Feb 1st at 3:45

-A planning sub-committee team will meet in Room 2 at Orchard Elementary at 4:30 on Jan 31st. Treats will be provided.

Questions arising from this report included:

-Can teachers participate in labor actions or activities during the duty day? – Your lunch is duty free, but doing these sorts of things once the duty day is over would be prudent.

f. Communications Committee Report

This is also coming along nicely and should be ready by the end of January or early February, after the chairperson completes CTA-sponsored training.

5. New Business

Stan Turrini - is rep council willing to donate 200 dollars to WCW's drafting fest, as they have in years past?

Motion – donate 200 dollars to the drafting fest. The motion is seconded and passes.

6. Raffle

Prizes were won.

7. Site Concerns

Questions arising from this session included:

Should the VTA hold more general session meetings to better inform membership? – While general meetings might be a good way to accomplish this goal, the logistics of attempting to arrange regular, full-scale meeting with 700+ unit members are somewhat daunting. Questions about the effectiveness of repeated general meetings and were also raised during the discussion.

Should the bargaining team make more visits to individual school sites? – Again, the issues of effectiveness and attendance must be addressed. With many of Brenda’s visits to individual school sites, very few people would show up to ask questions or voice their concerns.

Would more general meetings facilitate the dissemination of vital information? – Perhaps, but there’s already a great deal of information already available, either through the VTA website (which can be found at www.vacateachers.org) or the CTA website (which can be found at www.cta.org.)

Do people feel disconnected, with their local association? – If that’s the case, you’re encouraged to get involved. The VTA, as of the typing of these minutes, has already prepared nine updates on the bargaining process, frequent “Did you know” newsletters, and a monthly newsletter is being readied – all in an effort to address the issues resulting from the insufficient communication in recent years.

If you have any sorts of questions or concerns, please contact your site rep and ask them to submit your concerns. If you have anything you’d like to say to association leadership, you’re always welcome to attend a rep council meeting and say what’s on your mind.

Should substitutes be hired to cover speech specialist’s absences? – Subs are, generally, not hired for speech therapists because they can miss 6-8 days – it’s in the contract.

Can three hours per month be used to cover benchmark tests? – Yes.

Can the three hours per month be used to correct benchmark tests? - Yes.

Will the proposed salary schedule restructuring be “me-tooable?” - No

Did we, at one time, have “me-too” clauses? – No

When did we get the last district calendar for voting? – Last year.

Is a “professional” district negotiating team necessary? – Each member of the negotiating team has completed extensive training in school district finances and negotiating tactics from the CTA. The negotiating team chair has also completed the advanced school finances course offered by the CTA on multiple occasions – a course which is taught by our own CTA staffer. The cost of hiring a “professional” negotiating team would also require an increase in monthly association fees.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjured at 5:15