



# VEA Voice

Educating Vallejo's Future!

Hello All,

I hope everyone was able to enjoy a great Labor Day week-end. Labor Day is a celebration of not only workers, but most importantly, the Labor Union movement. So in effect, this past week-end was about the work you do, not only as classroom teachers, but as members of the Vallejo Education Association and the approximately 300,000 members of the California Teachers Association.

### Class Size Overages

Members should have started reporting overages to their site managers today, Tuesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>. This is the day that members also start receiving pay for their overages. For elementary, this is \$15.00 per student, per day that you are over. For secondary, this is \$3.00 per student, per period. Site managers have an additional five days to correct the overages.

According to the Human Resources Department, they continue to hire additional teachers to adjust for overages. Therefore, it is critical to accurately report the number of additional students you have on your roster until they are officially dropped by your school site. Any overages that exist beyond the timelines set forth in the contract needs to be approved by VEA. Individual teachers cannot agree to overages.

### Two MOUs Signed

VEA signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with the District on Friday, August 30<sup>th</sup>. The District wanted to offer 0 and 7<sup>th</sup> period for credit recovery at the high school level. This MOU will allow them to do this, but also gives members specific rights. First, members need to volunteer to take on these additional periods. Second, members have flexibility as to whether or not they want to work five periods with a prep or work a 1.2. Third, if members agree to work the 0 or 7<sup>th</sup> period and discover that it's not for them, they can stop at the semester break. Finally, this MOU is a one year agreement. It will be important to send feedback on the effectiveness of this program should the District decide to pursue this again next year.

VEA also signed a MOU on the new 6<sup>th</sup> grade self-contained classrooms. We felt it was very important to specifically identify the protections that members have who are teaching at the middle schools in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. A couple of important high lights include the protection of prep time as well as being prohibited from teaching any overflow students during P.E..

Both MOUs can be found on the [myvea.org](http://myvea.org) website under the "Association Documents" link.

## **Meetings**

Every member in this District is contracted to work a 6.5 hour day. Per the contract, elementary and middle schools allow for 14 mandatory meetings and the high schools have four mandatory meetings each month. Any meeting that is deemed mandatory to attend within the duty day counts towards the number of required meetings. Any meetings that extend beyond the duty day cannot be mandatory and are to be considered optional.

Members also need to keep in mind that there are two rates of pay for optional meetings: \$19.23 per hour or \$40 per hour. Members cannot assume that they will be paid at the higher rate. It is essential to ask questions about the rate of pay prior to attending any meeting so that you have a clear understanding of what the pay will be. All members should ask their site administrator to put the rate of pay in writing.

## **LCFF**

As many of you know, school districts will receive their funding via the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). School districts with higher percentage of ELL, economically disadvantaged students and foster youth will be provided with additional funding through supplemental grants. We are unclear as to what this means specifically for our members as we move into negotiations. However, VEA's Bargaining Team is working very closely with CTA as we navigate these new waters and will keep everyone posted as negotiations continue in October.

The California Department of Finance offers a great brief on LCFF, which can be located by going to [http://www.dof.ca.gov/reports\\_and\\_periodicals/district\\_estimate/documents/LCFF\\_Policy\\_Brief.pdf](http://www.dof.ca.gov/reports_and_periodicals/district_estimate/documents/LCFF_Policy_Brief.pdf).

## **In closing**

I want to thank everyone who showed up to our Welcome Back VEA Breakfast. We hope to see everyone at our Chevy's Social on Monday, September 9<sup>th</sup> starting at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully,  
Christal Watts  
VEA President

## NEA Representative Assembly ~ June/July 2013

**The NEA Representative Assembly is the largest democratic deliberative assembly in the world. California sends more than 1,000 delegates to the NEA RA each summer. During this annual meeting, CTA members help set policy and chart the direction of NEA business through participation on various committees, constituencies caucuses, and leadership groups. This year, you (VEA) elected 5 members to attend and below are some of their experiences!**

Vallejo teachers!! I want to say thank you for electing me as a delegate to 2013 RA Assembly in Atlanta. I am sitting here in the lobby of the Marriott reflecting on this great event as I wait for my flight and hope it will not be furthered delayed due to the challenges that SFO is facing. The NEA Representative assembly is a great demonstration on how the democratic process works. We complain about the problems we face in Vallejo; it is shocking to hear what other teachers are facing across the nation. The expression of views at RA gives you a true feeling and picture of what education is across the nation. One big impression made on me was the seriousness of how we take education in California in comparison to other states in the country. California was the largest and most active delegation at the assembly and it showed. After attending RA, I now have much better idea of what the CTA and NEA leadership is doing and trying to accomplish and what my dues pay for. If you want a great educational experience about our profession then run for 2014 Representative Assembly Delegate. (The 2014 RA will be in Denver!)  
--Scott Heinecke, Jesse Bethel High School

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AYE! This past July I had the great honor of representing you, VEA, at the National Education Association's Representative Assembly. To say I had no idea what I had gotten myself into is an understatement. What is the RA? For those who don't know, (like me before I went) it's THE national assembly on education. It is the largest sitting democratic body in the world, which is pretty amazing. Union members from every state meet and debate issues and policy, which become the direction for the NEA in the coming year. What I can't convey to you in words is the overwhelmingly powerful experience of being on the RA floor is. Being part of a century old process, there really aren't words. The process of Robert's Rules is fascinating to see in action. 10,000 voices ringing out in support or opposition to a motion it's powerful. The first time you add your own voice with a loud AYE! it's empowering. All those teachers in one room, it touches a part of your soul. Teaching isn't what we do, it's who we are...it's emotional. I wish I could say everyone should do it once because there is really no other way to truly understand the experience however, but it isn't for everybody. It's a lot of long days with endless noise and chaos. But there is literally nothing like it in the world. -Danalyn Drane, Glen Cove Elementary

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"Dave, do you mind writing an article for VEA concerning the NEA's Representative Assembly?" was asked. It sounded simple, so of course, I said yes. Then came the hard part, how can I possibly describe what the RA is like? The amount of energy that 10,000 teachers from across the nation in the same room could be a good starting point, or I could talk about how many business items were voted on and discussed (over 100 I might add). Or maybe I should concentrate on what it was like representing Vallejo on national issues. I could even write about what it was like talking in front of the 1,000 or so California teachers during the morning caucus. There was so many different possibilities that I could write about.

The delegates that represent California are very passionate, and this translates to the assembly. It's the same passion that drives us as teachers, the drive to make the world a better place. With this passion of course comes some great ideas, and some would argue some not so great ones. To watch the process of how these items become a stance that NEA will take is mind blowing. While we're all teachers, many of us have different ideas of what should happen. To watch the largest body of democracy in the world in action is indeed something to watch. To watch so many people debating, opinions and thoughts being brought up and finally to vote on the issues. I'm impressed that so much was covered in the week that RA happened.

## NEA Representative Assembly ~ June/July 2013 cont.

Some of the issues that were adopted or defeated were controversial. That is what I think I enjoyed the most about the RA. Many times, we end up not talking about certain topics because we don't want to offend others. Yet, as delegates representing teachers, we had to discuss where NEA stood on issues. I'm happy that most of the votes went in a direction that I felt was very positive, and a bit saddened by how others went. I love the fact that as educators, we take these positions. And that is a very powerful choice that we make. We show what we believe in, what we stand for, and what should be done. I will always feel that it was an honor to represent Vallejo teachers at this important event.

--Dave Henderson, Loma Vista Elementary

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*If attending RA in 2014 is something you are interested in, please feel free to contact your director to learn more about it! The 2014 RA will take place in Denver, Colorado.*

### High School – Wall to Wall Academies

A major change is happening at Jesse Bethel and Vallejo High School. All sophomores are being assigned to one of five academies which are being led by a team of teachers. These new programs will create new demands on high school teachers. What has not changed is our contract. High School teachers need to remember the following: The teacher work day at the high school level is from 7:50 to 2:50.

- Teachers are not required to meet on their prep period, during break or lunch. These time period's during the work day are duty free.
- Site administration can only require teachers to attend one meeting a week and no more than 4 meetings a month. This meeting is on Wednesday. If a month has a fifth Wednesday then no required meetings can be scheduled.
- If a teacher is required to work outside his or her workday then he or she must be compensated at \$40.00 an hour.

If you have any questions, please contact Carol Bishop at Vallejo High School or Scott Heinecke at Jesse Bethel High School for details.



# Tech Talk

Teacher Friendly Apps for iPhone and Android...check out your app store on your smart phone or tablet! These are 6 FREE apps/websites that you can use to help better yourself as a teacher. For those that do not have a smart phone, you can access these from your computer as well!

\***Remind101** - A FREE safe way for teachers to text messages students and stay in touch with parents. This is super easy to use and is a great way to be in contact with parents. Also a website!

\***Book Scanner** - Scan your library for AR levels and quiz numbers! A great way to level your classroom library! This app allows you to scan the barcode of the book and the information pops up. However, it does not always scan every book so you might want to also use the AR website where you type in the name of the book. It also stores your scans into a history that you can refer back to at a later date.

\***Pinterest** - This an app/website that will allow you to search for any and everything. This has been very handy for ideas to implement and teach common core. You can spend endless hours searching this website for exciting ideas! (Any many people will tell you they have...)

\***Teachers Pay Teachers** - This website/app allows you to search through specific grade level and/or subject that are teacher created and common core based. There are lots of free materials as well as great resources to be purchased.

\***Groovy Grader** - a handy app that can help teachers find percentages for grades. And it's free!

\***Teacher Notes** - a FREE app that you can take some notes, take pictures, jot information and then file it by student! You can also put your notes/information into DropBox!



YOU ARE VEA!



Thank you to everyone who came out to our  
First Annual VEA Breakfast!

It was amazing to see so many new and  
familiar faces getting ready  
to start up the school year!

## Want some VEA gear?

Then check out [www.cafepress.com/weareeducators](http://www.cafepress.com/weareeducators)

There is a huge selection of shirts, bags, stickers and a  
lot more! Check it out and customize your gear!

## **New to the District? Don't Miss This Deadline!**

If you're a newly hired employee and an eligible CTA member, now's the time to get CTA-endorsed Disability and Life Insurance from Standard Insurance Company (The Standard). You have a special opportunity to apply for Disability Insurance and up to \$200,000 of Life Insurance within 120 days of starting work.

You can apply online at [www.standard.com/cta/newhire](http://www.standard.com/cta/newhire).

These plans were created specifically for California education professionals and offer a number of great features, including:

- Coverage for disabilities occurring on or off the job
- Access to the CTA Advisory Panel on Endorsed Services
- Option to add Life Insurance coverage for your spouse/domestic partner and children with your Life Insurance

The Standard is the only Disability and Life Insurance provider endorsed by CTA. They were selected by CTA for their financial stability, integrity and commitment to serving CTA members. Just ask Joann Hardy of Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association, who used her Disability Insurance with The Standard after she was diagnosed with cancer:

"Each time I interacted with The Standard," Joann said, "I felt like they were truly concerned and focused on helping me. ... I've told many of my peers, especially new teachers, about this important coverage. You never know what can happen and being prepared is important." Don't miss this opportunity – apply online at [www.standard.com/cta/newhire](http://www.standard.com/cta/newhire).

*For costs and further details of the coverage and this enrollment opportunity, including the exclusions, benefit waiting periods, and reductions or limitations and the terms under which the policy may be continued in force, please contact Standard Insurance Company at 800.522.0406. GP 190-LTD/S399/CTA.1; GP 190-LIFE/S399/CTA.3*

**[Note to Chapter Newsletter Editors:** If you choose to use the article above for your newsletter or website, please use the article in its entirety and do not alter the text in any way other than to change the capitalization, typeface or point size to meet your publication's style guidelines.]

## **CTA Disaster Relief Fund**

Are you aware that the [CTA Disaster Relief Fund](#) provides financial assistance to CTA members who have experienced significant losses due to disasters like the fires in California?

The Disaster Relief Fund is a separate special fund for the members of CTA. Money for the fund comes directly from members' contributions. Thanks to this tradition of good will and generosity, members can turn to their professional organization for assistance with dignity.

The [CTA Disaster Relief Fund](#) provides four different grants summarized below:

- **Standard:** Up to \$1,500 for significant economic hardship related to damage to the member's primary residence, displacement, or disruption in required utilities;
- **Catastrophic:** Recipients of the Standard Grant may be eligible for up to another \$1,500 if damages exceed \$50,000;
- **Temporary Displacement:** Up to \$500 for members who are displaced from their primary residence as the result of a disaster, but do not meet all the requirements for a Standard Grant; and
- **School Site:** Up to \$500 for damage to classrooms.

For more information, go to [www.CTAMemberBenefits.org/df](http://www.CTAMemberBenefits.org/df), or contact the CTA Member Benefits Department at [650-552-5200](tel:650-552-5200).

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**CTA Member Benefits Department**

1705 Murchison Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010 • Phone: [\(650\) 552-5200](tel:650-552-5200) • E-Mail: [mbarticles@cta.org](mailto:mbarticles@cta.org)  
[www.CTAMemberBenefits.org](http://www.CTAMemberBenefits.org)

## Here's what's coming up next...



Monday, September 9<sup>th</sup>: **Chevy's Social 4-6pm.** Come and enjoy some tasty fajitas and good company after a long Monday! (Chevy's in Vallejo)



Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup>: **Vallejo Unity Day!** This year, VEA will have a booth that will include face painting, coloring pages and helpful tips for parents. We are looking for volunteers to help man the station or just stop by and say hello!

October 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>: **Helping Hands Event!** This annual event takes places over three days we as give out FREE school supplies to the students of Vallejo. Students from all ages are welcome to come and pick up their goodies and a free book that is being donated by Friends of the Library. Contact your site rep or director for more information.

If you go to [www.myvea.org](http://www.myvea.org), and you have a smart phone, you can directly link VEA's calendar to your calendar. Just click the subscribe button and connect it with your calendar. It will update automatically as new dates are added in. If you do not have a smart phone, please check the calendar on [www.myvea.org](http://www.myvea.org) for upcoming events.

### **Introducing your Executive Board for VEA...**

**President:** Christal Watts, Wardlaw, [vjoedassn@comcast.net](mailto:vjoedassn@comcast.net)

**Vice President:** Sheila Gradwohl, Pennycook, [s.gradwohl@sbcglobal.net](mailto:s.gradwohl@sbcglobal.net)

**Secretary:** Sue Levy, Independent Study, [mssuelevy1@aol.com](mailto:mssuelevy1@aol.com)

**Treasurer:** Leanne Duden, Vallejo Charter School, [leanne.duden@gmail.com](mailto:leanne.duden@gmail.com)

**Transitional Kinder/Childcare:** Loree Tackmier, Glen Cove, [loreeT22@hotmail.com](mailto:loreeT22@hotmail.com)

**Elementary Directors ... please check [www.myvea.org](http://www.myvea.org) for specific sites:**

Dave Henderson, Loma Vista, [pac4vea@gmail.com](mailto:pac4vea@gmail.com)

Kevin Steele, Highland, [kmerles@msn.com](mailto:kmerles@msn.com)

Katie Vevoda, Federal Terrace, [veaelemdirector@gmail.com](mailto:veaelemdirector@gmail.com)

**Middle School Director:** Katherine Catanzarite, Everest, [rete45r@yahoo.com](mailto:rete45r@yahoo.com)

**High School Directors ... please check [www.myvea.org](http://www.myvea.org) for specific sites:**

Scott Heinecke, Jesse Bethel High School, [scottheinecke@sbcglobal.net](mailto:scottheinecke@sbcglobal.net)

Carol Bishop, Vallejo High School, [caiolouise@comcast.net](mailto:caiolouise@comcast.net)

**K - 8 Academies Director:** Charla Yakabe, Vallejo Charter School, [cyakabe@hotmail.com](mailto:cyakabe@hotmail.com)

**Adult School Director:** Effie Dudley, Vallejo Adult School, [effie\\_dudley@sbcglobal.net](mailto:effie_dudley@sbcglobal.net)

**Special Education Director:** Deanna Dunn, Cooper/Widenmann, [dspecial@live.com](mailto:dspecial@live.com)

Next issue will cover where your dues go, professional growth and the grievance process among other discussions and updates!