



VEA Voice

Educating Vallejo's Future!

June, 2015

Greetings!

Well, here it is, the end of another school year. It's time to say goodbye to this year's students and to our colleagues who are retiring or moving on. It's also time to reflect on what happened during this year.

In addition to the regular challenges common to teaching, this year has been full of bumps in the road. We've had to juggle the implementation of Common Core Standards, new curriculum, STEAM, Aries Gradebook, new State testing, teacher shortages, WASC, Full Service Community Schools, school safety issues, PBIS, and Restorative Justice, while providing a quality education to the students of Vallejo.

While we've tackled many challenges, there were some positive changes this year as well. With California's economic recovery underway, there is more money for education and we were able to successfully negotiate a two-year contract. We reduced the steps on our salary schedule and bargained a significant pay restoration which will make our compensation package more competitive with the surrounding districts.

This year the School District, VEA, and the Napa Teacher Resource Center worked closely together to bring free supplies to our teachers. Not all of our members were able to benefit from the Napa Teacher Resource Center this year but, starting in July, there will be a satellite location of the Resource Center at Vallejo High School, 9th Grade Campus. All VCUSD teachers will have the opportunity to participate in this program. Visits to the Resource Center will be by appointment only. Check VEA's website, myvea.org, for information on how to reserve your time.

I wish everyone a relaxing summer. You deserve it!

Sheila Gradwohl
VEA President

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The purpose of the membership committee is to encourage, support, and thank our colleagues for their work. We do all the FUN things – awards, scholarships, parties (Welcome Back, Day of the Teacher, and all the events in-between), and the Retirement Event. If you are interested in serving on one of these committees or chairing an event for the 2015-2016 school year, contact Suzanne Dubois at 707-649-8516 or sduboisvallejo@comcast.net.



BARGAINING UPDATE

Our bargaining team will continue to work hard for you (VEA) over summer vacation. We will have some new members of our bargaining team as some of our bargaining members are retiring. We wish them the best of luck! Please remember that specific details about the bargaining process and bargaining updates need to be sent to a personal email address and not a VCUSD email. If you are not getting email updates, please contact your Director. The information can be found at www.myvea.org.

TRANSFERS

Schools have been updated with staff lists for the 2015-2016 school year. This year was done differently with the transfers listed on the document. Remember ... if you were not granted your transfer at this time, your information will stay on file in HR until September 30th. That means that HR can approve your transfer at any time until September 30th. Keep your eye on your mail (and District email) for your transfer approval

For those who want to transfer but did not get the paperwork in, or your circumstances have changed, there is a separate process. As the transfer window has closed, you cannot apply for a transfer. You must apply for the position as if you were a new hire. If this is something you are wanting to do, check Article 8.2 of the contract which is available on the VEA website (www.myvea.org).

RELAY FOR LIFE

Every year, the American Cancer Society holds a Relay for Life event at St. Patrick, St. Vincent High School in Vallejo. This year, the event will be held on August 2nd – August 3rd and VEA will be hosting our own team! Come out and share in the fun. You can walk as much or as little as you want. Or just come out and support Team VEA. For more information, check out the American Cancer Society's website, relayforlife.org or contact Loree Tackmier @ loreeT22@hotmail.com.

CTA SUMMER INSTITUTE

Summer Institute is held at UCLA, August 2-6. The premiere workshop of its kind, the Summer Institute offers sessions in areas that assist local associations in the day-to-day representation and support of members. Sessions include: Communications, Instruction and Professional Development, Emerging Leaders, Bargaining, School Finance, Healthcare Benefits and Issues, Legal, Member Benefits and Community Outreach. VEA is able to sponsor several members to attend this workshop. For more information, check out the CTA website, CTA.org. If you are interested in attending, contact Sheila Gradwohl, myvea4you@gmail.com.

ESA PAY DATE CHANGE

As most of you are aware, getting paid on time for an Extra Service Agreement has not been an easy task. While our contract says that any services performed in a calendar month, will be paid on the 10th of the following month, this has NOT been the practice. In order to avoid a Level 3 Grievance Panel or arbitration, The District has been trying to find ways to improve their ability to pay its employees in a more timely manner but has been unable to meet the contractual deadlines. VEA has agreed to temporarily allow the District to change the pay date for ESAs to the 15th of the month to see if this will allow the payments to be made on time.

RETIRING OR VOLUNTARILY LEAVING THE DISTRICT?

Ed. Code has a date of informing the District of your plans to resign for the following school year of JUNE 30th. While we realize that other districts are in the habit of hiring positions in the summer or after the June 30th date, VCUSD has used this date and not accepted resignations after this deadline. If you plan on leaving VCUSD, remember...**June 30th!**

AND, IF YOU ARE RETIRING. . .

Stay Connected, Be Protected and Enjoy the Benefits of CTA/NEA-Retired (www.cta.org/retired). Aside from the benefits available (insurance, discounts [see below], financial services, and travel opportunities) CTA/NEA-Retired members have been active this past year in addressing the issue of low substitute pay in the North Bay, as well as redundant fingerprinting fees for substitutes. (Many retirees substitute in the district from which they retired.) They are hoping to move this issue forward to CTA for possible legislative action. Retirees support CTA and NEA on key public education issues, including a "Twitter Storm" to U.S. Senators asking them to support improvements in the reauthorization of ESEA.



NEA MEMBER BENEFITS

When you're short on time to order flowers or a gift, NEA member benefits can help you out! The Everyday Discounts program allows members and retired members to connect to 1800Flowers.com and 1800Baskets.com to make quick gift purchases with 20% off applied at checkout. You may place orders online 24/7 at www.neamb.com. Click on "Discounts" and then go to "Everyday Discounts". Look for 1800flowers.com and click in. Or order by phone at 1-800-755-7474, and use promotion code "NEAMB."

SAVE TIME & MONEY: EXPLORE "EVERYDAY DISCOUNTS"

Save the Date!

VEA Back-to-School Breakfast

Tuesday, August 18th

Location will be announced at a later date



Look for more information this summer!

As the school year comes to a close and our newer teachers finish their beginning years in the education field, there are few important pieces of information to remember.

YOU CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL WITH TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

No one anticipates becoming the target of a major news story. Yet the media pursues every story about a teacher engaged in an inappropriate relationship with a student. In some cases, the story is true. In most, it's not. But by the time the investigation is completed, it could be too late to save your reputation and your job even though you are falsely accused.

We know that you're saying, "This will never happen to me." Let's hope that's true. But just in case, follow these strategies to protect yourself:

1. Maintain your "personal space" and don't let any student invade it by touching you, hanging on to you, stroking your hair, playing with your tie.
2. Avoid the "double entendre." Choose your words carefully and avoid cute or suggestive remarks. Students may not understand you and distort the context in which you said them.
3. Don't discuss sexually explicit topics with students -- nor song lyrics, jokes, or movies. Discourage and try to stop student conversations in your presence.
4. Do not be alone with a student in an enclosed space -- even a classroom -- where you cannot be seen by another adult. Keep this in mind when you ask students to stay after class, come in for help or homework, take a make-up test, or when you are disciplining or detaining students. Make sure another adult is nearby and can see you.
5. Maintain a clear line between being "teacher" and being "friend." If the line is blurred, students think that it's okay to be as comfortable with you as they are with siblings and friends. Refrain from socializing with your students outside of school.
6. If you are going to do something special for one student (i.e., providing them with special snacks, foods, other special treats)...be prepared to do it for ALL of your students. Otherwise it might imply something that is not really there.

If you are accused of potential wrongdoing, **immediately** contact your CTA representative and ask for a referral to an attorney. Do not agree to speak with any administrator or police without representation.

It can happen to anyone ... even those with the best of intentions.



Have a wonderful
summer, VEA!

Staff Buyback Days: August 13-14
First Official Day Back: Monday, August 17
First Student Day Wednesday, August 19