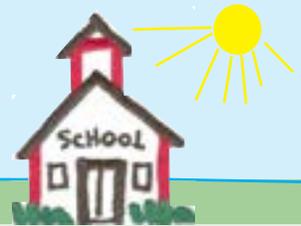


PERSPECTIVE



Central Valley Education Association

January 2013

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Half Time

The year is almost half over and with the probable exception of new teachers, most of us will be asking where does the time go. At least part of the answer to that question is that we are being asked to do so much more in the same time. I wish that I could tell you that will change, but I cannot.

Teachers are caregivers, and as such we will continue to find a way to do what needs to be done. Rest assured there are many folks who understand the challenges we face, and are trying to find ways to help us to continue to do our jobs as we educate for the future.

We must also advocate for ourselves, and that is what your Association is working on daily. Many of your fellow CVEA members, are serving on committees charged with finding solutions to the challenges we face. We are making headway, but there's always room for more members who wish to be involved. If you have a particular issue that you would like to address, feel free to contact the CVEA office to volunteer to serve on one of these committees.

We will continue to keep your Building Representatives informed on issues and progress being made.

I hope you are all off to a good start in the new year, and once again I thank you for all that you do.

Steve

Building Meetings

So far this year we have held a number of building meetings, and we will be holding many more. These meetings are intended to last 10 minutes and will serve to brief you on issues that concern you and your profession. The meetings serve as a way to mobilize our members to respond to the challenges that we face. This next legislative session is slated to address educator compensation among other things. I'm sure that many of you will want to be involved in the discussion. These building meetings are generally political in nature and certainly no one is required to be there.

On the grander scale, the WEA Board of Directors is very interested in supporting members who may be willing to step into the political arena. Our "Grow our own" concept is to find educators who are willing to run for office in order to provide a professional point of view in the politics surrounding education issues.

Is this all "self-serving?" I don't believe so since our work environment is our students learning environment. As has been said so many times before; As long as politicians are legislating and regulating education, educators need to be involved in politics.

To their credit, hundreds of CVEA's members have stepped up to be involved in email and phone campaigns to our legislators.

CVEA

YOUR Association

The mission of the Central Valley Education Association is to contribute to excellence in education in the Central Valley School District through professional training and support of its members. This Mission Statement was approved by the Executive Board on Feb. 1, 2011.

Sometimes members become confused about the purpose of this Education Association. Educators, as individuals, appropriately focus their energies on educating students. Collectively as members of the Education Association we are charged with representing and supporting our members, and thus indirectly contribute to quality education through supporting the providers of that education.

Because our membership is made up of educators, we also look for opportunities to contribute directly to the quality education our students deserve. Even after they leave our system some receive scholarships provided by the Association.

One of the serendipitous results of providing this quality education is the fact that we have many educators in this district who were past students in this district. To whatever degree they benefited from the efforts of the Association as students, they are now contributing members of our Association.

Education Reform, Student Assessment, Teacher Evaluation and Professional Code of Conduct

First the disclaimer; this article deals with issues that are taking on a new and serious nature driven by the emphasis on accountability in public education. It is not meant to address specific individuals or situations.

We are all becoming critically aware of the educational reform pressures being exerted by legislators and numerous special-interest groups. Some of these are positive and welcome considerations focused on improving the practice of teaching. Some are intentionally or unintentionally misguided, ill-informed and reactionary proposals that we know, as education professionals, will adversely affect genuine education.

Our local efforts to implement new teacher evaluation regulations have been a good-faith effort on the part of the Association and the District. Both entities have worked diligently to maintain the basic agreements we reached in the very beginning of this process. We have been repeatedly derailed by state level decisions and actions that force us to implement some elements that are contrary to our original agreements in the process.

One prime and significant example is that we wanted to avoid tying student scores to teacher evaluations. The reasons are obvious to us as classroom instructors who deal from year-to-year with very differ-

ent student demographic groups in our classes. As well as the fact that much of what we teach, in our effort to provide a well-rounded education, cannot be assessed by a test. Yet there can be little doubt about the value of such things as respect, punctuality, responsibility and work ethic. No bubble sheet accounts for these values.

But the state requirement now includes that student scores must be reflected in 3 of the 8 criteria in the new evaluation process. These evaluations are being promoted as an element to be considered in Human Resources decisions. The obvious result is a sense of competition among employees in order to maintain employment. How will this affect collaboration among peers? Furthermore, though it doesn't seem to have viable traction at this point, there are some in positions of power in this state, who endorse merit pay. Evaluations then would affect not only if you have a job but how much you make in that position. For the sake of survival, educators will be forced to consider the test scoring ability of the students they teach. How many educators will be willing to work with at-risk students when the consequence may be lower pay and a less secure position of employment.

The intent of this article is not to cause panic among our members, but to establish the pressure put upon us to produce test results. The purpose of this article then, because of the intense focus on student and teacher accountability, is to call you to an increased awareness of your responsibilities to your professional code of conduct. We must be very careful, as we respond to the mandates for testing, not to succumb to the pressure to go be-

yond what is appropriate in preparing students to take these tests. Be sure that you clearly understand the protocols associated with the testing processes, and carefully implement them. When in doubt, always consult with a building administrator for clarification, as these are the individuals who will be required to cite you for violations. It is always best to seek to get these protocols and clarification in writing. In the arena of assessments, both summative and formative, that may be used to provide student data associated with teacher performance, it is better to be proactive and not to assume anything.

Stress Reduction Kit



**BANG
HEAD
HERE**

INCENTIVE FOR ANNOUNCING RETIREMENT

Are you thinking of retiring this year? The CVSD is offering a financial incentive to announce your retirement early again this year. If you officially notify the District before February 15 of your intent to retire, the District will put \$1000 directly into your VEBA account. If you announce after February 15 but before March 1, it will go down to \$500. Remember that this benefit is tax-free and will be available to help cover medical costs immediately and premiums when you retire.

The CVEA would encourage you to consider this option if retirement is in your immediate future.



Retirement Seminars UPDATE

Your Building Representatives have the information and forms for the Retirement Seminars put on by WEA Retired. Here is the current status of the seminars being offered so far:

February 1&2 - Full
March 1&2 - still open

The January 11&12 seminar was full.

Dr. Seuss - Read Across America

Starbelly students and so many more,
sitting in chairs or upon the floor,
will read or listen with grand intent,
just as the Doctor had clearly meant.

Grand things they'll hear of places and persons and ideas to share,
and this will be happening most everywhere.

The children will listen, and take in the sounds,
as words come forth in mouthfulls and mounds.

The Teacherly people and so many others,
will read to the children both sisters and brothers.

Reading and hearing will the focus be,
in towns and cities just wait and see.

Cats and hats and turtles and more,
will seemingly dance right through the door.

And children will see that reading is right,
Something they will do, be it day or be it night.



March 1 is NEA's Read
Across America Day

Charter Schools may be challenged

WEA's Board of Directors has voted to support a potential lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of I-1240, the new charter school law. WEA staff and attorneys are talking with possible allies and researching potential legal strategies.

The charter school law went into effect December 6 but a lawsuit would delay implementation.

WEA and a large coalition of parents, administrators, unions, and community groups opposed I-1240. The measure was backed by a small number of billionaires who pumped \$11 million into the initiative, which passed by less than 1%.



More on the McCleary Decision

The Network for Excellence in Washington Schools (NEWS), which spearheaded the lawsuit against the state for inadequate funding of public education has grown since the February 2010 trial court ruling. Membership in NEWS has more than quadrupled. The 412 members include 194 school districts, representing nine out of every ten Washington public school students.

IMPORTANT!

CVSD EMAIL IS PUBLIC

This is just another reminder that ALL of your cvsd.org email is public record and NOTHING is private. Please consider this when writing emails.

Section 504

by Marci Haynes and Susie Giesa

Section 504 requires school staff to provide eligible students with disabilities with a free appropriate public education in which the benefits and opportunities are comparable to those provided to non-disabled students.

Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education. Section 504 provides: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States. . . shall solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. . ."

How a student qualifies under Section 504

Section 504 covers qualified students with disabilities who attend schools receiving federal financial assistance. To be protected under Section 504, a student must be determined to:

1. have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;

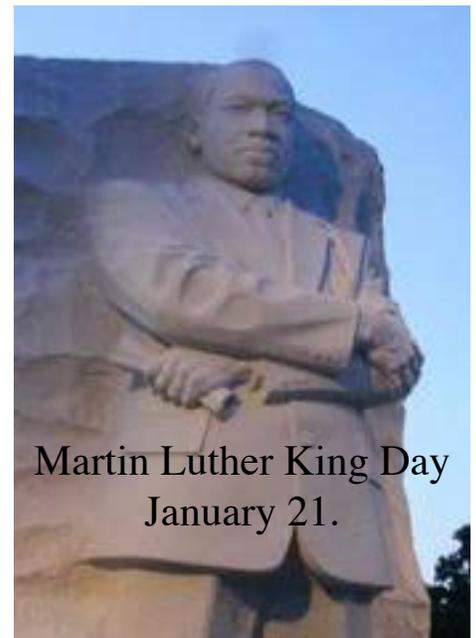
2. have a record of such an impairment, or
3. be regarded as having such impairment. Section 504 requires that school districts provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Other considerations:

1. Decisions regarding appropriate accommodations must be made by a team of persons, including persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, and the diagnosed disability. CVSD board policy (2162) recommends parents are invited to all 504 meetings.
2. In CVSD we expect that parents be invited and participate in the 504 meetings, and be given a copy of their rights.
3. Each building in CVSD has a 504 contact person to help with questions or concerns regarding Section 504. (Check with your building Administrator for contact name)

Additional Support is available by calling:

- Marci Haynes
Curriculum and Behavior Interventionist 228-5515 (Elementary)
- Susie Giesa
Curriculum and Behavior Interventionist 228-5514 (Secondary)
- Jacque Johnson
Special Services Director/504 District Coordinator 228-5502



Martin Luther King Day
January 21.

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