

LVEA TODAY



Site Communications: The Round Table Model

Every Thursday, Craig, Andrew, and Jake meet with District Cabinet to discuss issues affecting our members. This is our opportunity to share with staff concerns that we have regarding items such as the lack of substitutes in the district (see article on reverse), facility conditions, staff development concerns, and other site-specific and/or district-wide matters. This is an invaluable time that both sides look forward to in order to make our district a better place for our members and our students.

The District is encouraging site administrators to participate in Round Tables at their respective schools and we are encouraging our site reps to make sure these meetings are taking place, minimally, twice per month. Round Table meetings are a time to close the door and have an honest, professional discussion about what everyone can do to make the site a better environment for staff and students.

Your site reps will be discussing your concerns with your site administrators and they may be asking for some of you to participate. If you would like to participate on the Round Table at your site, please contact your site rep (typically, no more than 2-3 of our members sit on a site Round Table committee). Additionally, if you have concerns that you would like your Round Table committee to address with your site administrator, please let them know. Most concerns can be addressed in way that can protect your anonymity if that is a concern.

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**OUR WORKING CONDITIONS ARE
OUR STUDENTS' LEARNING
CONDITIONS**

Your Weingarten Rights

You have a right to union representation during an investigatory interview. An investigatory interview occurs if: 1) management questions you to obtain information; and 2) you have a reasonable belief that your answers could be used as a basis for discipline or other adverse action.

You must ask for union representation either at the beginning of, or during, the interview. Management does not have to remind you of this right. If your request is refused and management continues asking questions, you may refuse to answer, but you must remain until management terminates the interview. Your employer may be guilty of an unfair labor practice and charges may be filed.

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Where Have All the Subs Gone?

There have been many days recently where there were not enough substitutes to cover teachers who called in absent. If a teacher wakes up ill and requests a sub for that day, it may be understandable that one may not be found in the short amount of time before school starts. However, it is less understandable that there are not substitutes available when a teacher requests one days prior to needing one. This has been *especially* exasperating because many of these substitutes have been requested, with ample notice, for the purposes of teachers participating in school business (attending workshops, working on school/district projects, etc). Many of these teachers have not been able to participate in workshops because there was no substitute available.

We have informed the district of our concerns, and they have assured us they are currently hiring more substitutes to meet the needs of our teachers. In the meantime, many of you have been asked to cover other teachers' classes. This is to remind you that there is specific language in our contract that deals with these situations:

“6.4.4 Except for emergency situations, the District will make every reasonable effort to secure substitute teachers to replace teachers who are absent from their assignments before requiring other teachers to substitute during a scheduled preparation period.

If substitutes cannot be secured by the District to meet the demand of any school site, principals will address the situation under the following guidelines:

6.4.4.1 Secondary Schools

Teachers who volunteer or are required to cover a class during their prep periods shall be compensated at a rate of \$22.22 or substitute pay rate (whichever is greater) per hour.

Each school shall maintain a list by prep period of all certificated employees who are available to substitute during a given period.

Volunteers from those lists shall be considered first for coverage. If no volunteers are available, principals shall assign coverage on an equitable rotation from the period list provided that no substitute teacher wishes to take the class.

6.4.4.2 Elementary Schools

The following resources shall be considered by the principal when a substitute is not available. Principals will exercise discretion in terms of which alternative provides the most efficient and fair substitute coverage under each given circumstance.

Options:

- Administrative coverage
- Cancellation of staff development activities
- Coverage by a specialist or other certificated support staff
- Division of students into other classrooms at the same grade level (this option should be exercised only when the others are not feasible)

If a teacher is required to supervise an excess caseload due to the inability of the District to acquire a substitute, the teacher shall be compensated for one additional hour of service for that day to be paid at his/her daily rate.”

Additionally, **6.4.3** states “Full time bargaining unit members who cover a class when requested by site administration... during their preparation period shall receive one period of compensatory time or substitute pay. The full-time unit member shall make a choice of compensatory time or substitute pay at the beginning of each school year.”

If you have covered a class for another teacher, be sure to complete a time sheet or a comp-time sheet (available from your Office Manager)

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR SITE REP.

“Pension Reform” Petitions – DO NOT SIGN

There have been numerous, exaggerated claims of pension abuse over the past few years in California and several groups have over-reacted to these claims with various pension reform proposals. Currently, one petition in particular is circulating throughout Ventura County. This “pension reform initiative” would establish a 401(k) plan for all new Ventura County hires including firefighters, police officers, nurses, and others. The majority of Ventura County Board of Supervisors opposes this proposition – the only member in support is Peter Foy. Peter Foy’s day job? President & CEO of Peter C Foy & Associates Insurance Services Incorporation. The measure has been endorsed and is being promoted by the Ventura County wing of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association which has a 35-year legacy of attacks on labor and public education. PLEASE encourage your family and friends in Ventura County to support our friends in labor by REFUSING TO SIGN this petition. CTA has already worked to defeat similar statewide initiatives including one proposed by Mayor Reed of San Jose who successfully enacted a similar plan in his city.

The CA state legislature has taken steps to address concerns with our own pension system. Last year, CalSTRS was directed to implement a two-tiered pension system (essentially reducing future benefits for our new employees) and employee individual contributions are likely to increase in the future as well. CalSTRS is already discussing funding modifications in order to address concerns over future funding – we don’t need anti-education groups forcing additional changes that will be detrimental to all of us. Let CalSTRS and the legislature continue to work on this issue; PLEASE do not sign petitions that could lead to radical, adverse changes to your retirement system!

Here are some talking points regarding public employee pensions:

- Public employee contributions to retirement pensions amount to 7-13% of all earned income. By contrast, the Social Security tax rate is set at 6.2% on earnings up to \$117,000. Teachers contribute 8% of their earnings to STRS.
- Retiree spending from CalPERS and CalSTRS create an estimated \$30-35 billion in economic activity and thousands of jobs for California each year.
- Every \$1 in taxpayer contributions to CA’s state and local pension plans creates approximately \$8 in economic output for the state.
- Despite some popular myths, teachers’ retirement benefits, earned over 25-30 years of service, only replace about 60% their working income.
- Even with the recent recession and decline in membership, CalSTRS is over 70% funded and has sufficient assets and projected contributions to pay benefits until 2044.

In the debate over pension reform, one has to ask who stands the most to gain and who stands the most to lose if hard-won defined benefit pension plans are eliminated in favor of risky 401(k)-type plans?



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Class of 2014 LVEA Scholarships

Each year LVEA awards scholarships to graduating Agoura and Calabasas High School seniors with strong academic backgrounds and an interest in becoming a professional educator. Each of the two high schools will award up to \$1,050, which can go to one promising student or be divided among two or three. LVEA has a long tradition of promoting our students to become professional educators. While not a requirement, most of these students have gone through our entire educational system - starting with Kindergarten – so all of us can be truly proud of these promising students.

June 12-13 OPTIONAL Staff Development Days

Lots of planning is underway for the June 12-13 Staff Development Days (SDD). The J-5 Common Core Task Force (J5CCTF) is leading the way for elementary SD, and secondary administrative curriculum leaders are coordinating with Department Chairs and Lead Teachers to plan sessions for secondary employees. LVEA encourages everyone to attend these optional SDDs. It's a great opportunity to get needed Common Core training and an extra two days of compensation at your full daily rate. Remember – you only get paid if you attend these optional days. LVEA appreciates the excitement that many of our curricular leaders have expressed to all employees; however, we want to remind you that these days are optional. No one should feel pressured to attend! If you have any concerns regarding this, please contact your site rep or LVEA directly.

CTA/NEA Grants available

The National Education Foundation (www.neafoundation.org) awards close to 200 grants to support educators' efforts to close achievement gaps, develop creative learning opportunities for students, and enhance their own professional development. LVEA encourages you to investigate and apply for these grant opportunities.

Learning & Leadership grants provide opportunities for teachers, education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff to engage in high-quality professional development and lead their colleagues in professional growth. The grant amount is \$2,000 for individuals and \$5,000 for groups engaged in collegial study. **Deadline:** ongoing

Student Achievement grants provide \$5,000 to improve the academic achievement of students by engaging in critical thinking and problem solving that deepen knowledge of standards-based subject matter. The work should also improve students' habits of inquiry, self-directed learning, and critical reflection. **Deadline:** ongoing

In addition, the NEA website lists dozens of grants and awards from NEA and other organizations that are available to teachers and students.

More can be found at www.nea.org/grants/grantsawardsandmore.html

