

# LVEA TODAY



## LVEA Contract Negotiations

Thanks to everyone who responded to our Negotiations survey last month. This was your chance to provide input to your LVEA Negotiations Team. You provided written, ranked and multiple choice responses which totaled eighteen pages of summarized results. Your Negotiations Team met last week and read through ALL of your input. One question had you prioritize between the following goals: increasing autonomy, improving staff development, increasing the number of substitutes, increasing salaries, reducing class sizes, decreasing out-of-pocket expenses for health benefits and limiting workloads. While all options received focus, **increasing salaries is clearly to most important priority for our members**, followed by reducing class size and decreasing out-of-pocket expenses for health benefits. While we received a modest raise of 2% in 2013-14 and 4% for this current school year, it appears that you haven't forgotten about the seven prior years (during the financial crisis) of furlough days and NO salary increases!

The financial outlook from the State looks good for 2015-16, and we'll learn more specifics in the traditional "May Revise" report that will be issued next month. Currently, the state is projected to receive an additional \$1.3 Billion over the originally projected amount. While the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) shifts more funding to districts with different demographics and districts' contributions to STRS will increase from 8.88% this year to 10.73% for 2015-16, your Negotiating Team will work diligently to address the priorities that have been identified in the survey results.

As mentioned in our last newsletter, this is the beginning of a new three year contract, so all contract articles can be addressed in this round of negotiations.

## LVEA Elections

In our newsletter last month, we announced that the following three Executive Board positions were up for election for another two year term: President, Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary. We also had an ongoing vacancy with the Executive Board position of Elementary Liaison, and Brittany Stone from Willow Elementary agreed to run for this position. There were no challenges for any position and per LVEA By-Laws, uncontested elections can be decided by your Representative Council. This took place at our April 20 Rep Council meeting, and the following officers were reelected to

## LVEA Executive Board

**Craig Hochhaus, President**  
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**Jeremy Janton, WES, Vice-President**

**Pat Brooks, AHS, Treasurer**

**Carrie McClellan, AHS, Corresponding Secretary**

**Diane McEvoy, CHS, Recording Secretary**

**Kathy Heukrodt, CHS, High School Liaison**  
LVEAhsvoice@gmail.com

**Mike, LaFrenz, LCMS, Middle School Liaison**  
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**Brittany Stone, WES, Elementary Liaison**  
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**Joanne Kress, WOES, Bargaining Chair**

**Jake Anderson, CTA Staff**  
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another two year term: Craig Hochhaus - President, Diane McEvoy - Recording Secretary and Carrie McClellan - Corresponding Secretary. Brittany Stone was elected to her first term as the new Elementary Liaison. Congratulations to each of them and thanks for their continued service.

## Class Size Issue

Your negotiations survey results indicate that class size is a real concern; furthermore, we hear this issue raised at all of our site visits. Around 20 years ago, the state of California set up class size reduction for grades K-3. In order to maintain district funding for this initiative, no class size could exceed 20:1 – this was referred to as a hard cap. This program revolutionized the learning process and really improved the quality of education for our students. The financial crisis ended most incentives to maintain the low ratio, and many school districts around the state abandoned any attempt to keep it. With improved funding over the past few years, the state has challenged school districts to lower their class sizes to an average of 24:1 for the K-3 grade levels. The use of an “average” is referred to as a soft cap. Per our contract, the average ratio at each site cannot exceed 10% beyond 24:1 (i.e. 26.4); however, our contract calls for a “wholesale effort to maintain class size ratios at 24:1” for the K-3 grade levels. While some teachers have asked for the return of a hard cap, many appreciate the flexibility of a soft cap. This flexibility allows a site to keep kids in their neighborhood schools which avoids further decreasing enrollment and splits (combo classes). Essentially, a hard cap creates more splits, while a soft cap allows for flexibility and teacher input in decisions on how students are placed. As is often the case in life, there are trade-offs with the different options. When enrollment increases at the start of a school year at a particular site, do you increase class sizes, add a combo class, add a teacher which could drastically decrease class size at one grade level while creating frustration/resentment at the other levels, or decline the enrollment (resulting in less money to the district)? LVEA leadership will continue to press administration to make our members part of these decisions so the best outcomes can occur.

## Thanks J5 Task Force!

At the elementary level, LVEA and the District created a new task force that helped to plan Staff Development for the elementary teachers in late 2013. This task force (co-chaired by Enid Stagg of Yerba Buena and Jessica Kiernan, Principal of Willow) filled a huge void when little direction was coming from the state regarding Common Core. This dynamic group planned the successful June 2014 Staff Development Days, All-Come Day for K-5 and the writing and math Staff Development sessions over the past few months. This group stepped up and developed a plan that helped our teachers become more prepared to implement Common Core. With a more defined direction from the state and district, the members of this group will be absorbed into the one or more of the following district curricular groups for the remainder of this school year and beyond: Instructional Professional Development (IPD), Rigor, ELA, Math, Social Studies, Science, and Visual Performing Arts. We are all extremely proud of the work they did and appreciate all of the support they gave our members!

## LVEA School Site Visits

LVEA leadership visits each site twice a year and brings lunch to all certificated members. We just wrapped up our spring visits, and we're really impressed with how hard everyone is working to implement the new State Standards and Common Core. This will continue to be a huge challenge for everyone as we restructure our curricula and pedagogy in preparation for the new state testing. **Many concerns and frustrations have been documented and shared with District Management at our weekly Roundtable meetings.** Responses from district management have been relayed back to your site reps. Your dedication to your students is astounding, and we sincerely hope that everyone will experience less stress and frustration next school year as we all get more comfortable with the CCSS. **We have asked that the District take steps to minimize this stress and frustration.** For example, the District has agreed to review and simplify the rubric that is required for the Writing Assessments. If you have any input on how the implementation of CCSS could go more smoothly, please let us know.

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