

# LVEA TODAY



## Having Site Issues and Concerns? Implement Your Site Roundtable!

LVEA has made a big push over the past few years to implement Roundtables at each site on a monthly basis. Most sites have some form of a regularly scheduled Roundtable while others implement it only when issues, concerns and tension rise between site staff and administration. The key is to regularly schedule Roundtable meetings to proactively address budding issues before they blow up! We have had situations this year where admin and staff seem to be on two different planets. The intent of Roundtables is to prevent these misunderstandings among staff and admin. While principals and assistant principals have varied levels of leadership skills, LVEA feels that teachers, counselors, school psychologists and other support staff all have an important role in guiding the site leadership, morale and working conditions. You have a voice and should professionally share your concerns with your administrator(s).

As a review, Roundtable meetings should be scheduled regularly at your site. These meetings can include the principal, an assistant principal at the secondary level or a teacher-in-charge at the elementary level, at least one LVEA site rep, and other interested certificated employees. The group's size can vary, but there should be no more than 5-6 certificated members. The LVEA rep and site admin should organize these meetings and an agenda should be created (typically in Google Docs) ahead of time that allows digital input access from all Roundtable members. The focus should be on a proactive and professional discussion of all concerns. It's important to emphasize the old adage "tough on issues and soft on personalities." While venting is allowed, this should be more of a problem solving meeting. The goal should be to resolve issues before they become big demoralizing problems.

Does your site need help implementing Roundtable? No problem – LVEA leadership has joined several Roundtables over the past year. At the elementary level we teamed up with LVUSD Elementary Curriculum Director, Jackie O'Sullivan, to visit and model a productive Roundtable. LVEA and LVUSD leadership have a lot of experience since we jointly run a Roundtable meeting every week to proactively address issues and concerns that are brewing across the district.

When we have contacted site administrators about a reported concern, some have asked that we redirect this issue to the site Roundtable – great suggestion!

### LVEA Executive Board

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A productive, reflective and proactive site handles issues locally in a more professional and meaningful manner, and that leads to increased site morale. A happy, positive and enthusiastic staff leads to an enhanced learning environment for students. It's a win-win for certificated employees, administration and our students!

If you have any questions about further implementing a Roundtable at your site, please contact your LVEA Site Rep.

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## LVEA SPRING PLANS

**Negotiations:** Your Negotiations Team began meeting with the district's team last Thursday and Friday, Feb 11-12, for the 2016-17 school year. Discussions regarding a salary increase won't take place until this summer once the state approves a budget for next school year. Each side has two contract re-openers. LVEA has already reached an agreement to include Buttercup preschool teachers in our bargaining unit. We will now push for improved working conditions for all of our members with an emphasis on SpEd teachers.

**SpEd Surveys:** We have written about SpEd issues and concerns in each of the past three LVEA newsletters and we have conducted two surveys. As mentioned above, your Negotiations Team will emphasize improved working conditions for our SpEd teachers. At a recent districtwide meeting with SpEd teachers and LVEA, it became clear that we needed to conduct one more survey to clearly understand the nuances of the concerns among our elementary, middle and high school SpEd teachers. This new digital survey will be conducted by LVEA the week of February 22.

**LVEA Site Visits:** LVEA leadership visits all sites at least twice a year. We're starting our Spring lunch visits next week and we're bringing pizza and salad for all members. This is your chance to share your questions/concerns/successes with LVEA leadership. We will then provide a summary of your comments to the district office at our weekly Roundtable meeting. See you soon!

**LVEA Executive Board Elections:** The positions of LVEA Vice President and Treasurer are up for election on even years. We will open the nomination window soon and interested candidates will have no less than 14 days to indicate his/her interest.

**Evaluations:** As reported in our January newsletter, teacher evaluations have changed from a three to four option scale effective this school year with a new rubric. Your site reps have been asked this month to collect information for you: How is the new system going? Is it valuable? Are your principals changing how to conduct evaluations? Please provide input to your site rep on any issues related to evaluations.

**LVEA Local Dues Increase:** The last installment of the previously approved (Rep Council Spring 2012) local dues increase will be reflected in your February paycheck. Your contribution to LVEA will increase \$1.50/month from \$19.50 to \$21.00 for full-time employees. This amount (along with your CTA dues) helped obtain the 11.5% salary increase that everyone received over the past three years!

**Early Retirement Incentive:** The deadline to sign-up for this Spring's Early Retirement Incentive Plan was February 16, and twenty-one certificated employees signed up – that's approximately twice the normal number of retirees. It's also after the first year of the incentive program that encouraged twenty-nine certificated employees to sign up – almost three times the normal number! This is a win-win for employees and the district! The district saves money and employees receive financial assistance that can be used to help pay for retirement medical insurance premiums!

**Membership Drive:** LVEA will continue to encourage ALL certificated employees to become full LVEA members – over 96% have already joined! This will strengthen our organization and help maintain the progress that we've achieved over the past years. Also, only full association members have access to free legal counsel and a \$1 Million dollar liability policy that is provided for your protection.