

LVEA TODAY



Election is a Success for LVEA!

Measure E is renewed! We needed 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ % in favor and we got 78.87%!! This is a huge success for our students and the whole LVUSD family. This means that LVUSD will continue to receive \$2.3 Million in local funding every year for the next twelve years. This funding is essential to providing a strong financial foundation for our district. It will assist in providing the best education possible for our students, continued low class-size levels in the primary grades, updated learning materials and competitive salaries and benefits for all employees. These funds stay local and will help LVUSD continue as one of the best school districts in California.

LVEA wants to thank EVERYONE who helped make this a reality. Thanks to our employees, community volunteers and students all for their help. Phone banking is not fun, but the rooms were full on most evenings! Special thanks to Rachel Werner and Deborah Lopez who co-managed the campaign. Thanks to past School Board member Pat Schultz for her efforts as well. Finally, LVEA wants to thank Roger Ewing who donated his Agoura and Calabasas Sotheby's real estate offices for ALL evenings of phone banking. Roger is a big fan of Las Virgenes education and we're extremely grateful for his contribution.

LVEA also endorsed Mathy Wasserman and Linda Menges to become our new School Board members, and both won by huge margins! Mathy and Linda have invested years of effort in our district and LVEA looks forward to working with both of them for years to come. Once again, we want to thank Jill Gaines and Cindy Iser for all of their dedication to our students. They are retiring this month and have set a great example for Mathy and Linda!

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Special Education Concerns

In our last newsletter, we reported that Special Education (SpEd) teachers had begun implementing a new testing program (KTEA-3) along with its SLD battery of subtests for all of their students. While more legally defensible, this testing process was far more time consuming. Fortunately, the district has recognized this concern and recently announced a plan to scale back this requirement when appropriate.

The job requirements for our SpEd colleagues have become more taxing in past years. They really have *two* full-time jobs: teaching their classes AND managing a separate caseload of students. While this is not new, their class sizes have increased, Instructional Aide assistance has decreased, testing and paperwork requirements have increased, and the increased pressure to provide gen ed level common core lessons have all combined to make the job of SpEd teachers very difficult. It's no wonder that SpEd positions are the toughest teaching positions to fill in our district! Yes, this issue is common in all districts but it seems to be more acute in LVUSD.

LVEA recently collected input from our SpEd teachers and will follow this up with an online survey to rank concerns that were identified from this input. We will then approach the district with suggestions on how to improve the working conditions of our SpEd colleagues.

Elementary Report Card Concerns

LVEA Elementary Site Reps expressed concern at our last Rep Council meeting regarding the lack of progress towards updating our elementary report cards. The current format is outdated, difficult to understand and not consistent with our new curricular standards. The district says that a complete report card revision for elementary is very complex. Along with teacher committees, it is still researching and selecting new curricula, like ELA, and needs more time to create a new comprehensive report card that effectively implements these changes. The district is committed to implementing a complete report card revision in 2017-18 with an entirely new format. However, the district understands the level of frustration with the current report cards and has agreed to make TEXT changes (e.g. additions, deletions and minor grammatical changes) within the existing Aeries format for 2016-17. All elementary teachers will be asked to submit suggestions through their Grade Level Leads who will then collaborate districtwide with all Leads in March 2016 to come up with suggested TEXT changes within the existing report card format to be implemented for next school year.

New Substitute Teacher Recruitment Plan

With the current shortage of substitute teachers in our district, our Personnel office has launched a creative plan to recruit substitute teachers from our parent population. We have a very educated community and it should come as no surprise that many of our parents meet the application prerequisites for substitute teaching. The district was pleasantly surprised when they received 135 potential applicants at its December 3 orientation! They are now in the process of screening and potentially hiring many new substitute teachers. This round of hiring could also have a positive impact on our shortage of Special Education and Instructional Assistant subs! The District will provide all needed staff development to get them ready for their initial assignments. This new approach will hopefully improve the quality of substitute education in our district and decrease the stress on our employees who constantly have to fill in when subs can't be found. Stay tuned for future updates.