

THE LAMPLIGHTER

Volume 2, Issue 2
January / February 2008

2008 WELCOMES NEW GRIEVANCE CHAIRPERSON FOR IMPACT.

We hope all our members had a restful holiday break and are ready to meet the challenges of 2008.

In order to better meet the needs of all our members the Executive Committee decided to establish a Grievance Contact person for our Pre-School based members. The leadership recommended Mrs. Pauletta Berger for the position and she has accepted. Pauletta will receive training through NJEA and CCCEA sponsored workshops.

The roll of the Elementary, Intermediate, High School, Impact, and Clerical Grievance Contact is to assist the VEA Grievance Chairperson, Angela Calakos. These

individuals will try to handle level specific issues and attempt to resolve them without having to file a grievance. However if it can't be resolved and it becomes necessary, a grievance will be filed by Angela Calakos.

In this issue we will explain what is a grievance and what is not. It has been the Executive Committee's experience that many of the issues that are presented to us could have been easily resolved if the individuals talked with the administrator/supervisor in question. It is possible that an administrator is not aware of the problem or why it is a problem. We have found that a friendly discussion is all that is necessary. However, we

are aware that not everyone is comfortable or able to have a non-confrontational conversation with their administrator or supervisor and for those instances we have our Grievance Contact Team.



Inside this issue:

New Grievance Contact	1
What is a Grievance?	1-2
Contract Highlight	2
Member Questions:: Pension Buy Back	2
Who's retiring?	3
Be an NEA RA Delegate	3
CCCEA Workshops	4

Points of Interest:

- Visit www.njea.org and update your membership information.
- If interested in getting more involved in the Association, see your building Rep.
- To have your membership questions answered contact :
Yolanda Gutierrez at ygutierrez@prodigy.net.
Put "VEA" as the subject.

WHAT IS A GRIEVANCE?

(The following information can be found on our website at www.vinelandea.org)

What is a Grievance?

A grievance is a process that is used when an article of the bargaining agreement is violated and the issue is not resolved.

Who should I contact if I want to file a grievance?

Your Senior Building Rep. is the first person you should contact. They will then determine if they can solve the problem themselves or refer it to the team.

Then what happens?

You will be asked to write

or email the details of the problem to your level grievance contact person. The level grievance contact is the individual who will file a level one grievance on behalf of the member if and when it is determined that the member does have a

“WHAT IS A GRIEVANCE?” (continued from page 1)

grievable issue.

What do you mean, "a grievable issue"?

Remember that there is a distinct difference between a grievance and a building problem. A building problem is usually handled by that building's reps. Sometimes a building problem can lead to a grievance, but that is not always the case. Don't assume that because an issue was discussed that a grievance has been filed. Filing a grievance is the final step, not the first.

What happens when a grievance is filed?

Most grievances start at level one and we attempt to resolve the problem with the individual who can grant the remedy. If the remedy is not granted it goes to level two and the Superinten-

dent of Schools will then review it and either agree that there has been a violation of the contract or not. If there's no remedy, then it goes to a Board Level hearing. This is the forum in which the Association will present its case to the Board. The Board will then render its decision, if it is not in our favor and we feel that we have a strong case we will then take it to an arbitrator to decide, and this is the final forum. All this is spelled out in our contract in ARTICLE 3, pages 2 to 7.

How do I contact one of the Grievance team members?

We can be reached at:

Elementary

Daisy Mercado

Sabater Elementary School

dmercado@vineland.org

Middle School

Angela Calakos

Landis Middle School

acalagos@vineland.org

High School

Lou Russo

VHS 11-12

lrusso@vineland.org

Secretaries

Marion Ostrowski

Main Office

mostrowski@vineland.org

Pre-School

Pauletta Berger

Center City Impact

pberger@vineland.org

WHAT'S NEW IN OUR CONTRACT?

Question: When are we going to get our new contract books?

Answer: When both sides have dotted every "i" and crossed every "t".

It may not be the answer you wanted, however it is what is happening. One misplaced comma can change the meaning and intent of contract language. In short, it is a long and laborious process. You will receive the books as soon as we are sure that the language and integrity of our bargaining

agreement is what it must be.

One of the biggest changes in our contract is in our observation process. Now your administrator/supervisor can walk into your room at anytime, and without advance notice, and formally observe you.

Non-tenured teachers have additional language that insure that they are observed by at least two different individuals and with enough time in-between observations to show improvement in an area that an

administrator/supervisor noted in a previous observation.

It is necessary to remind our members that signing an observation does not mean that you are in agreement with what was written, but only that you are aware of what it says. A member's only recourse to a poor observation is a written rebuttal. The **Cumberland County Council of Educational Associations** is offering a workshop on rebuttal writing on March 5, 2008. You can sign-up at www.ccea.net.

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT? (real questions asked by members)

Question: Is it true that I don't get any credit towards my pension while I'm on an unpaid leave of absence due to birth of my child/child rearing and that it can affect when I can retire?

Answer: Yes. An unpaid leave of absence interrupts your pension contribution, hence you do not receive any pension credit for that time. However, you can buy back the time. It is recommended that you buy back the time as

some as you come back from your leave. Remember that it's always cheaper to buy back your pension credit while you're young because it is based on your age and income. The longer you wait the more expensive it will be. For more information and forms go to: www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions

Question: Why must my leave be approved by the board?

Answer: If you need to be out longer than five days, you need to send a letter along with a doctor's note stating how long you will be out for and a diagnosis of some sort to Mrs. Greenfield. The reason for this is to protect your family in the event something should happen and you pass. If you were not on an approved leave your heir may not be able to collect your school life insurance. For the sake of your loved one always play it safe.

V.E.A. RETIREMENT GALA

MAY 31, 2008

You spoke and we listened. After tallying the Social Committee's survey it has been determined that our members want to keep going to Buena Vista to honor our retirees. Members prefer a buffet instead of a sit down dinner. Last year we eliminated the **long** individual speeches and we got done before 9:00 pm. This year we will stick to that same format and hopefully be able to add a DJ for dancing after the presentation of gifts to the retirees.

If you want to be honored at this year's Retirement Gala your name has to be submitted to the board for the April Board meeting and your retirement date is to be effective September 1, 2008.

Tickets will go on sale in March.

This year's menu will be:

Spring Mix with Balsamic Vinaigrette
Breaded Chicken Cutlet with Supreme Sauce—Buena Vista's Specialty
Seafood Newburg with Rice
Filet Mignon Tips with Burgundy Sauce
Bow Tie Pasta with Sundried Tomato Cream
Italian Vegetable Medley
String Beans with Mushrooms
Oven Roasted Redskin Potatoes
Assorted Dessert Table

\$40.00 per person

All retirees receive a free ticket for themselves.

The following is the current list of retirees:

Kathryn Abrams - Durand
 Joyce Agostini - VHS 11-12
 Anita Amundson - D'Ippolito
 Marilyn Austin - Rossi
 Kathleen Barber
 Elaine Creamer - Winslow
 Linda DeFrancisco - Rossi
 Sandra D'Ippolito - Barse
 Linda Gallina - Mennies
 Joanne Gittone - VHS 11-12

MORE LUCKY RETIREES

Ann Glassman - Landis
 Sherry Graham - Durand
 Charles Griffiths - VHS 11-12
 Robert Hanula - VHS 11-12
 Stephanie Hawkins - Durand
 Vivian Johnson - VHS 9-10
 Pamela Kipers - Landis
 Joanne Ladd - Durand
 BarbaraMartini - Wallace

John Milyo - VHS 9-10
 Claire Milyo - Wallace
 Janice Olivio - VHS 11-12
 Cheryl Perry - Memorial
 Marjorie Pfrommer - VHS 9-10
 Gene Rieti - Adult Ed
 CarmenRuiz-Mesa - Mennies
 Patricia Shoop - Wallace
 Stephen Slavoff - Wallace

Deborah Smith - Administration
 Doreen Spinelli - Adult Ed
 Nancy Tomasso - Johnstone
 Dora Vale - VHS 9-10
 Joanne Vinick - Landis
 Bruce Vittorini - VHS 11-12
 Judith Vivarelli - Durand
 Laura Zanni - VHS 9-10

LOCAL ASSOCIATION R.A. DELEGATES ELECTIONS

Have you been thinking about getting more involved in Association activities, but do not deal with advocacy issues, aka grievances? Well now is your chance! The Vine-land Education Association is accepting self-nominations for the National Education Association **Representative Delegate Assembly**, the decision making body of the **NEA**. **VEA** is entitled to 8 delegates, 7 elected seats

and the local president's seat, the president can give to his designee of his choice.

Every year the Representative Assembly is held in a different state or commonwealth. This year the **RA** will be held in **Washington D.C.** From July 1 to July 6, 2008. Being an election year, it is a guaranteed memorable gathering. Your local, county and state associations pay for your travel and accommodations in the form of a stipend.

If you are interested please submitted a letter of intent to the VEA office by

Wednesday, February 20, 2008.

Please be aware that it is not a vacation. Your day will start at 7:00 am with a state caucus meeting and end at approximately 6:00pm. Signed attendance is taken several times throughout the day.

VINELAND EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

727 E. Elmer St.
Vineland, NJ 08360

Phone: 856-696-9200

www.vinelandea.org

*"It's all about the members!"
Joyce Powell, NJEA president*

Workshops you can't afford to miss!!!

Evaluations and Rebuttals

Learn how to tell your side of the story.

Wednesday, March 5, 2008

SLC and the Abbott Promise

Find out if your School Leadership Committee is being run correctly and what to do if it's not.

Thursday, March 13, 2008

The Cumberland County Council of Educational Associations (CCCEA)

They are held at the

Ramada

Landis Ave

Registration 4:00-4:30

Workshop 4:30-6:30

Dinner 6:30

Contact the CCCEA at **856-794-1221**

for more information on how to register for these workshops.