

# VEA Voice

## President's Message

The school year is well under way. If you have been reading the VEA Facebook page, you are well aware of the recent attacks on public education and most specifically on teachers. In August, the L.A. Times ran a series of articles that linked the test scores of 6,000 students to individual teachers in grades 3rd through 5th. There has been the release of the movie “Waiting for Superman” which highlights the success of charter schools such as KIPP and the Harlem Children’s Zone while disparaging public educators and their unions. When will this assault end? Well, I hope that those who seek to destroy public education and our unions will take note of Mr. Rigoberto Ruelas. He was by all accounts a good and dedicated teacher at Miramonte Elementary. He was also

one of the teachers who was recently named in the L.A. Times as an “ineffective” teacher. He went missing last week and his body was discovered over the week-end. Suicide is expected. His family specifically mentioned the L.A. Times article in their conversation with reporters.

The pressure that teachers feel under the new regime of testing and accountability is very similar to what our students face. This focus on testing is causing a great amount of stress in our kids and was documented in “Race to Nowhere,” a film that will be shown at Vallejo High School on October 26th. We encourage you to attend the movie and then **GET INVOLVED!**

By this time, teachers who are up for evaluation this year should have received notification from their site administrator. The next big date for evaluations is *October 15th*. The unit member and the evaluator are to meet together to jointly determine objectives. This should NOT be driven by the District or by your site administrator. You are an important part of this process and it is your evaluation. The evaluation article in our contract makes it very clear that evaluations are “to improve the instructional process and/or the education services provided to students.” It further states that teach-

ers should be valued for their contributions and that evaluations should be used to “enhance rather than inhibit.” (Article 11.1, pg. 74) With this in mind, evaluations should be individualized. Its intent is to enhance your teaching. No one should dictate to you the terms of your evaluation.

Tuesday, September 21st, I met with the District to discuss some of the issues that have come to surface at the start of this school year. One of the ongoing issues that has been discussed since at least 2008 are walkthroughs at the elementary level. This cropped up again this year when I started to hear reports from various teachers around the district that their site administrator was coming into classrooms with a checklist. Many people were concerned that this checklist would be used as an evaluation tool and/or that it was being misused by their site administrator.

The previous week, Daly Jordan-Koch VEA’s 1st VP, Marie McPherson, Elementary Director and I met with Cheri Summers. The primary purpose of this meeting was

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# Helping Hands Event

## 2nd Annual Hand-in-Hand Give Away Event

VEA will provide much needed school supplies and gently used books to almost 2000 of its students. Supplies will be distributed at the following locations:

- JFK Library, Monday, October 4th
- Springstowne Library, Tuesday, October 5th
- Vallejo Community Center, Wednesday, October 6th
- Omega Boys & Girls Club, Thursday, October 7th.

TIMES: 3 to 6 p.m.

VEA needs your help to make this event more successful than last year. Contact Dave Henderson at [pac4vea@gmail.com](mailto:pac4vea@gmail.com) for more information. Fliers for students will be delivered to school sites by Friday, October 1st for distribution to students on Monday, October 4th.

## Race to Nowhere

A concerned mother turned filmmaker aims her camera at the culture of hollow achievement and pressure to perform that has invaded America's schools. It is destroying our children's love of learning and feeding an epidemic of unprepared, disengaged, and unhealthy students.

This remarkable new film shines a light on the price our kids pay for this "race to nowhere." Cheating is commonplace, stress-related illness, depression and burnout are rampant, and ironically, young people arrive at college and the workplace unprepared and uninspired.

Featuring the heartbreaking stories of young people who have been pushed to the brink and educators who are burned out and worried that students aren't developing the skills needed for the global economy, *RACE TO NOWHERE* points to the silent epidemic running rampant in our schools.

*RACE TO NOWHERE* is a call to families, educators, experts and policy makers to examine current assumptions on how to best prepare the youth of America to become the healthy, bright, contributing and leading citizens in the 21st century.

Among many others, *RACE TO NOWHERE* features Dr. Madeline Levine, author of the bestseller, *The Price*

*of Privilege*, Dr. Deborah Stipek, Dean of the Stanford School of Education, Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg, an adolescent medicine specialist at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Dr. Wendy Mogel, author of *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee*, Denise Pope, author of *Doing School*, and Sara Bennett, author of *The Case Against Homework*.

Tuesday, October 26th at 7pm

**Venue: Vallejo High School**

**Address: 840 Nebraska Street, Vallejo, CA**

**Tickets: \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door**

Go to <http://www.myvea.org> to purchase tickets.

\*Sponsored by Vallejo Education Association

## President's Message (continued)

to get a better understanding of walkthroughs as well as how principals were being directed on the use of District created walkthrough forms. As a result of this meeting, it became clear to us that the next step should be a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on walkthroughs. It seems obvious to me that in order to alleviate some of the concerns that teachers have regarding walkthroughs, then something needs to be in writing so that everyone has a better understanding of what it is or is not supposed to be. The MOU was presented to the District on September 21st. It was not signed, but the District has expressed a willingness for further discussions. I will continue to push for the MOU on walkthroughs.

## Union Academy

We are proud to present *VEA's Union Academy*. The Academy is open to all of our new and veteran teachers. We strongly encourage anyone who is interested in learning more about unionism, due process rights, the grievance process, and more to attend this valuable and informative training.

*Special Guest—Dean Vogel, CTA Vice President*

October 27, 2010

4pm to 8 pm

Cordelia RRC

Come attend the workshops and meet new friends. Free to all members, but seating is limited. You must RSVP to Marie McPherson by **October 20th**. Contact Marie at x58320 or [McPherson\\_Marie@yahoo.com](mailto:McPherson_Marie@yahoo.com).

Raffle Prizes!

Dinner Provided!!

In November, we elect the next governor of our state. CTA is endorsing Jerry Brown and for very good reasons. Meg Whitman recently stated before the *Sacramento Bee's* editorial board that she would have no problem putting up for vote cuts to public employee pension plans. She even stated that she would be willing to put her own money behind such a ballot measure. We have seen the millions that she has been willing to spend on her own campaign, just imagine how much more she would be willing to spend to cut or eliminate our pension plans!

We need you to volunteer to phone bank in order to speak to other educators across the state about the importance of getting

Jerry Brown elected. Contact Dave Henderson at [pac4vea@gmail.org](mailto:pac4vea@gmail.org) to volunteer.

Continue to keep up the good fight and know that YOU and YOUR work matters!

**TEACHER MERIT PAY**  
HOW WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR SALARY AND JOB SECURITY TO DEPEND ON THIS PERSON?



# VEA Leadership Profiles

## Suzanne DuBois—2nd VP

I have served you as: State Council Alternate, Bargaining team, Bargaining Chair, Membership Chair, Site Representative, Human Rights contact, Representative to the NEA Representative Assembly, and at the site level; Department Chair, Team Leader, AVID Coordinator, Language Arts Committee, Shared Decision-Making Committee, PQR Committee and Leadership Team.

My passion is to provide a quality education to all children. One important way to provide quality education is to take care of teachers. In my 23 years as an educator I have served as classroom teacher; grades 7 through 12, teacher-trainer, and I was a director of non profits, gaining skills in finances, personnel, negotiating and marketing. I will work proactively as 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president to ensure your rights and represent your interests.

Contact me at x52662 or sdubois-vallejo@comcast.net.

## Deanna Dunne-Special Ed. Director

For the past 5 years, I've served as VEA's Special Education Director. I worked at Springstowne Middle as a SDC teacher for 8 years. Last year, I moved to Cave Elementary where I worked as a RSP teacher. Currently, I am serving students at two school sites, Cave and Loma Vista as a RSP teacher.

I graduated from Napa Junior College with four A.A.'s in General Education, History, Arts & Humanities, and Child Development. I also graduated from Sonoma State with my B.A., Mild to Moderate Special Education Credential, Tier I, Tier II, and Clear.

I'm interested in Special Education law whether it is the education code or our union contracts.

This Thursday, I'm meeting with the District to discuss the Special Education credentialing requirements and their impact on our contract. Later in the day, I'm hosting a meeting for all Special Education teachers at Cave Elementary from 4 to 5:30 in Room 20.

Contact me dspecial@live.com.

## Calendar of Events ...

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
9/30	Special Education Meeting @ 4	Cave Elementary, Room 20
10/4-7	Hand-in-Hand Event, 3 to 6	Various Locations
10/6	VCUSD School Board Meeting	District Office
10/7	Hand-in-Hand Event, 3 to 6	Omega Boys & Girls Club
10/7	Phone Banking 5 to 8	TBA
10/14	Rep Council @ 4	FMS Library
10/15	Deadline for Agreement on Evaluations	
10/20	VCUSD School Board Meeting	District Office
10/21	Phone Banking 5 to 8	TBA
10/21	Grievance Meeting	Federal Terrace
10/26	Race to Nowhere @ 7	VHS Theater
10/26	Phone Banking 5 to 8	TBA
10/27	Union Academy @ 4	Cordelia RRC
10/28	Executive Board @ 4	Farragut