



What Role Do Site Reps Play in the Livermore Education Association?

Each school site or support service group (Speech/Language & Psychologists, Special Education Teachers, Preparation Teachers) may elect one Rep plus an additional Rep for each “greater majority”* of ten teachers in their group or at their site. Representative Council meets each month and an active site will send all of their elected reps ensuring that their voice is heard and they have the number of votes needed to pass or defeat a motion. Site reps hold meetings as needed to keep their members informed, receive feedback and learn of new issues from their local members, and decide the course and direction for the association. Site reps also provide counsel and resources one-on-one to members at their sites.

At the Site Level:

Site reps hold a monthly meeting either at the end of their staff meetings, before-/after-school, or at lunch. At the meetings, there are a variety of things they can do. They can answer members’ questions, receive feedback from members, gather information on an issue the site is facing, etc. They also help to solve grievance(s) at the first stage or advance it to stage two and provide background information to the grievance committee. They represent members in meetings with principals and/or parents and also provide information to their members by placing newsletters and bulletins in mailboxes or sending out an informational e-mail.

At the Association Level:

Each month, reps come to meet at Rep Council. They've been informed about other issues going on in the district, have informed their local members and received feedback, and have provided information on site issues to a designated person in the union (usually on exec. board). At the Rep Council meeting, the reps discuss issues, ideas and solutions; make motions; debate those motions; and vote to pass or defeat those motions. Usually the motions are created to make policy (taking a stand on something or creating language that will allow the union to take a stand on something in the future). They may also direct the president, exec. board, or a committee to do something (say something at a meeting, represent the association at other meetings, research an issue, present information to

someone or a group, or create something (like an advertisement or letter to the editor). They may also vote to spend money, hire a consultant for training, send people to a conference, etc.

The Revolving Cycle:

The site reps continue to bring that information back to their sites and present the information (similar to my report for State Council). Debate may continue at the site and if warranted, they can send their reps back to the next meeting to re-visit an issue, pre-plan a motion that will be made at the next rep council meeting, bring up a new issue, etc. The cycle continues....

So What Happens When a Committee or the Executive Board is directed to Do Something?

Once Rep Council directs a committee or an Exec. Board members to do something, a date is set for completion and reporting back of status. The committee or person(s) are then expected to follow through on the commands or demands of the Rep Council and report on the status or results of those actions at the next meeting.

What Happens When a Committee or Executive Board Member doesn't follow through?

Obviously, people can lose track of time and sometimes things aren't followed through the way they should be. Depending on how tolerant the constituencies are, they may just ignore it, recognize it and ask for improvement, or recall the elected officer. With the threat of accountability, most elected officials follow the direction of their constituencies.

The dangers come when there is so much apathy in an association that the only representatives from a site are there "because their site *has* to send someone", "they rotate through reps" (causing information to be inconsistent and the same issues come up again and again because the last rep never told the next rep that it was taken care of), or "because that person has always done it". By not holding someone accountable for their actions (votes, reports, facilitating, etc.) you are leaving the association in a dangerous state. The same thing can happen at the Executive Board level; especially when there is only one candidate willing to run for office and/or being forced into office.

* A group or site with less than 15 active members would have 1 Representative. 16-25 active members would have 2 Representatives, 26-35 active members would have 3 Representatives, etc... Remember that Agency Fee Payers do not count as active members.