

What Happens at State Council?

ALL THE THINGS WE DO

- a) Approve Policy: CTA's policy is a list of everything we believe. It is a blueprint for a perfect world. We can't take any action which violates our policy. Also, we need to have policy to support any position or action we take.
- b) Bylaws Amendments: Bylaws are the set of rules we use to run our organization. If we don't like our rules, we can change them.
- c) Positions on Legislation: Every year the CA legislature comes up with lots of new bills someone thinks should become a law. Many of these have a direct impact on what happens in our classrooms. If the bill would help get us closer to our perfect world described in our policy, we support it. That means we tell our lobbyists to go out and work to get it passed. If a bill is bad news for educators and students, we tell our lobbyists to try to kill it. Fortunately, we get to ignore a lot of the bills they write, as they don't have anything to do with our policy.
- d) Write Legislation: Rather than waiting for someone else to decide what laws are good for education, sometimes we write our own. Then we find a friendly legislator to sponsor the bill for us. Our lobbyists work very hard to get these to pass.
- e) Candidate Endorsements: After teachers interview the candidates, all the teachers in the local vote to determine who the recommended candidate is. All endorsement decisions are ratified by State Council before they become final. In state-wide elections, the interview team's recommendation goes directly to State Council to decide who is endorsed.
- f) Elections: Vote for CTA President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Board of Directors, ABC Committee members and NEA Board of Directors.
- g) Adopt CTA's Budget: Includes approving any dues increase.
- h) Awards: Providing positive reinforcement for all those people out there working hard to make our classrooms a better place to work.
- i) Other Stuff: Occasionally CTA takes other actions to promote our policy; for example, writing a letter of thanks or support to an individual or organization.

How We Do It

- a) Committees: Every State Council member is assigned to a committee. Each committee has a different area of interest. The name will tell you with what area they are concerned. They take positions on legislation and action on NBIs concerning their committee. They write or amend policy to keep it relevant and up-to-date. The committee then makes recommendations that go to the entire State Council and get voted on in general sessions. There are over 30 committees; examples include:
 - Budget
 - School Safety
 - Civil Rights in Education
 - Early Childhood
- b) New Business Items (NBIs): When someone wants CTA to take a specific action he writes an NBI. Any State Council member can write one of these. They tend to fit under one of the categories listed above under "All the Things We Do."
- c) Elections: One person, one vote. No hanging chads. We have paper ballots and an Elections Committee to make sure it all runs smoothly.
- d) General Session: Most of the decisions are made here. Any action items from committees, the CTA Board or an NBI get voted for on the floor. State Council Representatives speak passionately and authoritatively at any of the six microphones in favor of or opposed to the proposed action. *Roberts Rules* govern the discourse. It really is democracy in action—at its best.

OUTSIDE OF STATE COUNCIL

- a) Special Interest Caucuses: These groups meet at State Council but aren't part of the CTA organization. They exist to lobby CTA and State Council to take actions consistent with that organization's special interest. In order to be recognized by CTA, these groups must meet certain requirements; however, governance and funding are independent of CTA. Their names reflect the special issues they are promoting; examples include:
 - Ethnic Minority Caucuses (there are four)
 - Women's Caucus
 - Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Caucus
 - Special Education Caucus

State Council Representative Job Description

As a State Council Representative, your job is to be the voice of the teachers you represent to CTA. You need to make sure that the decisions CTA makes are in the best interests of your constituents. Here's how:

RESPONSIBILITIES

- ◆ Attend State Council meetings four times per year. Each meeting lasts from Friday night until Sunday afternoon. They occur in October, January, March and May.
 - Attend general sessions on Saturday morning and Sunday morning.
 - Attend Committee meeting to which you are assigned Saturday afternoon.
 - Attend breakfast meeting Sunday morning to share out what happened in your committee.
- ◆ Report back to the local leadership of your district and directly to the teachers whom you represent about what actions were taken at State Council.
- ◆ Seek input from local leadership and teachers on upcoming State Council decisions.
- ◆ Attend four Service Center Council meetings per year which occur before each State Council.

COMPENSATION

- Reimbursement for travel and food expenses and some really nice dinners.
- Hear influential and powerful people discuss educational issues as keynote speakers.
- Have direct input on the state laws which govern education.
- Determine the priorities and direction of CTA.
- Hear first-hand from our leaders and lobbyists on what is happening throughout the state.
- Acquire leadership skills and experience in a supportive environment.
- Experience first-hand what it is like to participate in a functioning democracy.