

# 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 blue print 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 is the recommended candidate. 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 what area they are concerned with. 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:     Budget  
                  School Safety  
                  Civil Rights in Education  
                  Early Childhood

b) New Business Items (NBIs): When someone wants CTA to take a specific action they write an NBI. Any state council member can write one of these. They tend to fit under one of the categories listed above under 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 6 microphones in favor 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 organizations 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:     Ethnic Minority Caucuses (there are 4)  
                  Women's Caucus  
                  Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Caucus  
                  Special Education Caucus