RPCEA History

RPCEA's History

     The Rohnert Park Cotati Educators Association (RPCEA) came into existence in 1963 and has been the exclusive bargaining representative for Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified District (CRPUSD) teachers, counselors, school psychologists, and nurses since the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified District became a unified school district in1963.  As the exclusive bargaining representative, RPCEA negotiates wages, benefits, and working conditions that are reflected in the Agreement Between Rohnert Park Educators Association and Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District.   RPCEA is affiliated with the California Teachers Association and the National Education Association that allows for RPCEA members to access various benefits offered to CTA/NEA members as well as providing the necessary representation if a member’s rights have been violated or the member’s job status may be in jeopardy.

     To ensure that RPCEA is a truly representative body and will carry out its duties in a responsible manner,  RCPEA has written bylaws and standing rules that identify district-wide and site level positions, procedures for electing officers, election of site representatives, the appointment of individuals to serve on various committees such as bargaining, and other procedures to ensure that the interests of all members are properly represented.  When our district was experiencing declining enrollment it was decided to reduce the size of the RPCEA Executive Board from five members to three members.  This was done by having one person serve as Vice President rather than having separate positions for First and Second Vice President, and the creation of the Secretary-Treasurer position rather than having separate positions for Secretary and Treasurer.  When student enrollment stabilized and the district began hiring more teachers, it was decided to again have a First and Second Vice President and separate positions for Secretary and Treasurer ensure greater member involvement and to nurture a new generation of leaders.  The bylaws and the standing rules as well as the collective bargaining agreement is available for review to all RPCEA members.

     RPCEA has had many excellent leaders over the years and as a result of their leadership our members are the beneficiaries of one of Sonoma County’s strongest contracts that protects the rights of its members, ensures fair and safe working conditions, and also provides its members with one of the better health care plans in Sonoma County. Two former RPCEA presidents, Susan MacLean, and Andy Witthohn later became CTA staff members and in these positions Susan and Andy provided their expertise and assistance not only to RPCEA but to other CTA chapters in Sonoma County and throughout California.  More recent RPCEA presidents were Michael Schroeder (The Skipper), Mary Denson, Mark Galipeau, Stacie Allen, and Richard Neffson.  Both Mary and Richard retired at the end of the 2013-2014 school year after many years of serving both students and RPCEA members.  Our past presidents have also served as First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Lumen Editor, and Bargaining Chair.  With respect to our bargaining team, Lanny Lowery who is our current bargaining chairperson also held this position back in the mid-1980s when we came within hours of going on strike, but fortunately a settlement was reached that provided our members with a very respectable raise.  Other notable bargaining chairpersons included Jan Story who retired a few years ago, and Marianne DeLaMontanya who just retired at the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

     Over the years RPCEA has been able to successfully represent its members not just because of the many fine leaders in our association’s history, but because of the unity and support demonstrated by the membership.  Both school district administrators and school board trustees have witnessed this unity and support for RPCEA by the attendance of RPCEA members at school board meetings and various rallies in support of RPCEA’s bargaining team when it was engaged in important negotiations with the district.  This unity and support has not only been demonstrated by participation of members at critical moments but also by participation at various events such as new teacher orientations, bowling tournaments, and end-of-the-year parties.

     RPCEA has had a rich history over the years as a result of the fine leadership, past and present, and will continue to make history with younger teachers stepping up and assuming important leadership positions.  It is important to for all of us to remember that if RPCEA is going to continue to be an effective voice for the membership and secure the best possible working conditions, wages, and benefits, and create the best possible learning conditions for our students not only will RPCEA require excellent leadership but also the active participation of all of its members in the weeks, months, and years ahead.