



BEVERLY HILLS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Educational Employees Working Together

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Speech on misguided curriculum/resource allocation delivered by BHEA El Rodeo Representative Amy Arebalo at the Feb. 26, 2008 Board of Education meeting:

In 1949, my grandparents moved to Beverly Hills to make sure that their children had a superior education. In 1974, my parents did the same. In 1999 I came to teach here to give back to a community that gave me so much. BHUSD had a lot to give. The finances were different, the demographics were different, but the value for education was the same.

Since I have been here, I have watched our walls come crumbling down. It is because the foundation has cracked. We have stopped believing in ourselves as a superior district that should be emulated. We have become an embarrassing California statistic. When did we, the leader, become a follower? I believe it started when the District Office administration began choosing programs to emulate that were inferior to what we already had. We chose to follow Rosemead for a time...when they were in the 30 percentile. We chose to have LACOE come train us...because they trained failing schools to rise from 5 to 25 percentile. We emulate these embarrassing California statistics.

We are immersed in a deep, dark, drastic movement. Jobs have to be cut...it is the nature of the beast. But where we cut them has to be decided by what we will need in the future, not what is easiest to pull today! I commend those of you on the board who are looking to the future that is rooted in our superior history. A community of schools where the entire community is educated.

When you cut 3+ million from our school sites, you cut the draw to the public school system...the lure of great programming, superior teachers, numbers above the average of California.

This meeting tonight, is exactly the PR that we don't need. Last month's board meeting had district office speaking out about what great PR we have. Where is it? I can walk up and down every street in this city where I'll run into someone I know who is living here but sending their children to private school. This shouldn't and doesn't have to be. But it is occurring because of bad press and a pamphlet that looks like I wrote and type-set it in third grade.

Your vote tonight to cut money from school sites rather than at the district office is really a vote to condone the misappropriation of funds. Once you vote, the allocation of funds goes into the hands of the people who have spent millions of dollars a year on waste. For five years I have attended workshops and watched hired administration assist the teachers in their request for a writing program. Are you, the board, aware that 100's of 1,000's of \$ later, the elementary schools still do not have one?

We can talk teacher centered, learning centered, student centered semantics, when in truth, it is just more millions spent on personnel and programming that is all for naught...we'll throw it away and move on to something different in a few years. Instead we should be remembering and

relying upon the value of education that was once the foundation of this district. It gave me, my mother, my friends a superior education.

I urge you to please not make rash decisions simply because they are the easiest. Do not start at the bottom of a place that has been exercising poor top down administration for too long of a time.