



BEVERLY HILLS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Educational Employees Working Together

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CONSENSUS

A Newsletter for BHEA Members

January 17, 2008



Facts and Quotes on the State Budget Shortfall

The state is running short on money. What impact will this have on public education in California? It's too early to know just yet, but our members can rest assured that the California Teachers Association will vigorously defend public schools' fair share of the budget pie in light of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposal to suspend Proposition 98 and take away \$4.4 billion from education in 08-09. Here's what BHEA can report to you at this time:

- CTA President David Sanchez issued the following statement on Jan. 10: "The governor's proposed budget is a giant step backwards for our students. It's disappointing and ironic that in the proclaimed 'year of education' the governor is talking about cutting billions from our public schools and decimating our minimum school funding law. Our students didn't create this budget crisis and their education shouldn't be ransomed to solve it."
- Voters approved Proposition 98—California's minimum funding guarantee for public education—in 1988. In 2005, voters defeated Proposition 76, a Schwarzenegger-backed initiative that would have weakened Prop 98's funding guarantees.
- It requires a two-thirds vote of the California Legislature to suspend Prop 98. According to a Jan. 10 Sacramento Bee newspaper article, lawmakers have suspended Prop 98 only once since it was adopted—during the state's 2004 fiscal crisis.
- California faces a \$14 billion deficit.
- Schwarzenegger has proposed eliminating \$400 million from the current year education budget and \$4.4 billion from the 08-09 budget. This represents an approximate 10% cut to the 08-09 general fund monies guaranteed by Prop 98, or a decrease of \$309 per pupil compared to the 07-08 level.
- If Schwarzenegger is successful in achieving a 10% cut to education in 08-09, CTA says that would be equivalent to laying off 110,000 teachers statewide, shutting down every school in California a month early, or increasing the number of students in every classroom by 37%.
- According to CTA: California currently spends close to \$2,000 less per student than the national average. New York spends 75% more per capita on public education than does California. The typical American school has 30% more teachers than does the average school in California. California ranks dead last nationwide in the number of counselors, school nurses, and librarians per student.
- CTA reports that state reading scores are up 25% and math scores are up 17% in the last four years. CTA says: "If we want this progress to continue, now is certainly not the time to be cutting funding for our public schools."
- CTA says that if mid-year cuts prove to be necessary, such cuts "should be made with students in mind and kept far away from our classrooms."
- Brian Lewis, the executive director of the California Association of School Business Officials is quoted in a Jan. 10 Associated Press article: "This is going to be one of the most painful, vocal, public, and fierce debates about education funding that we have ever seen. We are going to come out of the woodwork opposing any suspension of Prop 98 and any further undermining of this minimal guarantee to kids."
- State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell says in the same article: "The governor's budget takes a giant step backward. This budget will not help us close the achievement gap that threatens the futures of our students and our state."

How Does the State Budget Crisis Affect Our Contract Talks?

Commentary by BHEA President Chris Busbée

With a \$14 billion budget hole that needs to be closed in Sacramento, how will contract negotiations on salary and benefits be affected here in BHUSD? The short answer is that it's too early to tell.

On Jan. 18, our joint BHEA-BHUSD budget subcommittee will meet to share information in preparation for the certificated unit's Jan. 22 bargaining session. After Jan. 22, BHEA will have more information to share with its members.

As reported in the Dec. 18 BHEA *Consensus*, bargainers were successful at narrowing options and came closer to agreement on a compensation package. This progress was made after Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger sounded the initial alarm on the state budget deficit but before he provided details of his proposed cuts to the education budget.

BHEA continues to advocate for responsible staffing. For three years, BHEA has prodded our district to identify personnel areas that may be overstaffed. Due to the large turnover of certificated staff in recent years, there has been ample opportunity to close positions through attrition, both in the unit member and administrative ranks. BHEA would never advocate for layoffs, but closing a position that does not make economic sense after an employee resigns or retires from that position may be warranted in some cases. Of course, the curricular impact of any position closure would rightly need to be part of the discussion, too.

Finally, BHEA most certainly wants to be able to deliver to its members a fair, competitive compensation package for 07-08. I know that our district administration wants the same because Supt. Kari McVeigh has told me so and Asst. Supt. of Human Resources Sal Gumina told all of us so on opening day last August. Supt. McVeigh's credibility on this issue will be measured by our district's ability to increase all employees' compensation this year—a task that our Board of Education has so far accomplished for only one employee, namely our superintendent.

More News on the Back...

Smooth Start to First Business Meeting of the New Board of Education

After making it through an intense school board race last fall, newly elected, elected, and returning Board of Education members held their first business meeting together on Jan. 15. The meeting went smoothly under the direction of the Board's new president, Myra Demeter. All Board members spoke, asked questions, and contributed to the discussions. All were cordial with one another and appeared to have left behind much of the tension that had built up during and after the Nov. 6 election last year. Our administrative staff answered many Board members' questions and also presented material. Here are some highlights from the meeting:

- Accepted a PERB agreement between BHEA and BHUSD that settles an unfair labor practice charge filed by BHEA alleging retaliation against one of our members.
- Expelled a student.
- Accepted a stipulated agreement for another student.
- High school administrative assistant Pam Kraushaar was recognized for her achievements. HS Prin. J. Guidetti read an "ode" to Ms. Kraushaar in her honor.
- Supt. Kari McVeigh said that our district's school site plans are based on 'research,' that we have great teacher

leaders and great principals, and that our staff 'practices professional inquiry.'

- The Citizen's Oversight Committee reported that BHUSD has provided them timely information on our district's construction projects.
- Asst. Supt. of Ed. Services Ilene Straus said that the computer program Data Director is useful, that school site plans must show how progress is measured through data, and that benchmark assessments will become more widespread in our district.
- Board member Nooshin Meshkaty said that student access to our libraries needs to be expanded. HS Prin. J. Guidetti said that the library can be a good place for Period 7 athletes to study while waiting for their practices to begin.
- Straus said that the high school is looking at literacy workshops/interventions to occur during the school day, not just before or after school.
- McVeigh said that there is no 'direct link' between achievement of site plan goals and personnel evaluations.
- Demeter said that site plans help teachers grow.
- Meshkaty said that a 'code of ethics' should be part of the site plans.
- Conducted a first reading of a student dress code policy aimed at promoting a productive, safe learning environment. Student school board member Zach Kahn said that high school students support the proposed policy. Individual school sites have had dress code guide-

lines for years but there has never been a Board policy. Board member Brian Goldberg was concerned that teachers might feel awkward about the possibility of having to engage in 'inappropriate' conversations with students if asked to enforce a new dress code.

- Board member Myra Lurie said that our district has a policy that protects arts programs from budget cutbacks to the same degree as core programs. She also said that HS Athletic Director Carter Paysinger recently won the 'CIF Model Coach' award.
- Goldberg asked that our community focus on permit policy and not race as the subject of student enrollment is discussed at the Jan. 23 Board study session.
- Board member Steve Fenton asked to explore ways to put BHUSD's real estate holding to maximum use and to explore creation of a district-run pre-school program to generate revenue.
- Demeter commended HM teacher Allison Leggett for earning her Ph.D. and thanked teachers and counselors for writing recommendation letters for seniors. She also said that the Joint Power Agreement with the City of BH will expire on Jun. 30 and must be renegotiated this spring. Finally, she said that the district will have to make 'difficult choices' with the budget after first 'understanding' the impact of the crisis on BHUSD.

CTA Recommendations for the Feb. 5 Election

CTA has analyzed the initiatives on the Feb. 5 ballot and has issued some recommendations to its members:

- **NO on Prop 91** - Changes to Transportation Funding.
- **NO on Prop 92** - Community College Funding: poor fiscal accountability, would cost \$1 billion over 3 years with no new revenue sources to pay for it.
- **YES on Prop 93** - Altering Legislators' Term Limits: Would reduce total tenure in Legislature from 14 to 12 years but allow all 12 years to be spent in one house.
- Also, CTA recommends that members do **not** sign a petition being circulated that deals with pensions for new teachers. This initiative would gut teachers' pensions and retiree health care.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Jan. 21: MLK Day (no school)
- Jan. 22: Certificated bargaining
- Jan. 23: BHEA election
- Jan. 23: Board study session on enrollment
- Feb. 1: Pupil-free day
- Feb. 5: Board of Ed. mtg.
- Feb. 7: Exec. Board mtg.
- Feb. 11: Local holiday (no school)
- Feb. 12: Board of Ed. mtg.
- Feb. 14: Rep. Council mtg.
- Feb. 18: Presidents' Day (no school)
- Feb. 19: Certificated bargaining
- Feb. 25: Board study session on the budget

BRIEFS AND UPDATES

- BHEA general election will occur on Wed., Jan. 23. Exercise your right to vote!
- Remember that several CTA conferences are available. Check them out at: BHEA.org/Conferences.htm. If interested, contact BHEA.
- Asst. Supt. of Human Resources Sal Gumina told BHEA that our district is in the initial stages of looking at an employee dress code. One concern is that some teachers dress 'too casually.'
- BHEA continues its effort to find agreement with our district to correct an inadvertent increase to instructional minutes for teachers of grades 1-5.

*** THE TICKER ***

ADDITIONAL EARNINGS ALREADY RECEIVED AS A RESULT OF SALARY & BENEFITS NEGOTIATIONS FOR 2007-2008

	Superintendent Kari McVeigh	The Other 500 Employees
As of Today, Jan. 17	\$3,583.56	\$0.00