



CONSENSUS

A Newsletter for BHEA Members

February 5, 2008



Contact BHEA Immediately If You Receive a Layoff Notice

In the current uncertain economic climate, BHEA members must be prepared to receive involuntary layoff notices from our district. The timeline to contest a layoff is seven days from receipt of the notice. It is very important that you notify BHEA immediately so that we can arrange legal counsel for your case. Do not delay. If you have any questions, please contact BHEA.

Rep. Council Meeting Highlights

Here are some highlights from the Jan. 17 BHEA Representative Council meeting:

- Discussed at length the current status of the K-8 flexible schedule time. Many concerns were raised: administration rejecting team-designed agendas because the agendas did not “align” with district goals; principals rejecting middle school teachers’ requests to meet by department or grade level; administrators, instead of unit members, deciding on the composition of teams; administrators rejecting elementary teachers’ requests to meet with colleagues across grade levels. Several representatives said that the Wednesday morning K-8 meetings felt overly “micromanaged” and “regulated.”
- Approved an online survey/election contract with VoteNet Solutions that will soon allow BHEA members to participate in surveys and internal elections over the Internet.
- Raised concerns that our district is heading toward “open access” policies before appropriate and needed interventions are put into place. Page 23 of BHHS’ single school site plan was cited as an example.
- Agreed to discuss the possible creation of a stipend for the office of BHEA Secretary.
- Reported that BHEA and BHUSD continue to negotiate salary-related settlements for our independent study instructor and three resource specialists.
- Reported that BHEA would play a more inclusive role in site-developed staff surveys at HM.

Non-Reelection of Probationary Certificated Staff

Virtually every year, the district administration recommends that our Board of Education fire a handful of certificated probationary BHEA members. The official term for this to “non-reelect” an employee. It is the past practice in our district that BHEA is contacted ahead of time, prior to notifying affected staff members. Nonetheless, BHEA needs to inform probationary teachers of two important points:

1. Although school districts have wide leeway in their ability to let go of probationary teachers, it is not an absolute right. Our district must follow the proper process, or else it risks having the non-reelection overturned by a higher authority.
2. Because this is a time where layoff notices may be issued for economic reasons, BHEA wants to make sure that our district does not blend the non-reelection process with the layoff process. BHEA will work on your behalf to ensure that a bright line is kept between the two processes.

If you have any questions, please contact BHEA.

Boardsmanship Study Session

Here are some highlights from the Jan. 8 Board of Education study session on “boardsmanship,” or how to function as a governing board:

- Employees have the right to a 24-hour notice if an individual employee will be discussed in closed session.
- The meeting’s hired facilitator said that Board members should vote their conscience.
- Supt. Kari McVeigh said that Board meetings are conducted in public and are *for* Board members, as opposed to

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Flexible Schedule Committee Continues Talking

On Jan. 8, the joint BHEA-BHUSD flexible schedule committee met. During this meeting, it was shared that a more consistent rotation of meetings will be implemented for the rest of the school year, with all four K-8 sites following the same rotation. Also, there will be only one type of meeting each month, not multiples of the same kind of meeting. This news was received well by the BHEA members on the committee.

Other concerns were raised. For instance, some committee members reported meeting agendas that were too “top-down” from the administration. Others reported that with fewer options for specialist scheduling due to the late-start Wednesdays, this has chopped up the time segments left for delivery of core instruction, presenting challenges to providing quality instruction. It was shared that while there was a hope that other kinds of meetings such as site leadership meetings, could be scheduled on Wednesday mornings, this has not happened. It was reported that no additional playground aides have been hired to deal with student supervision on Wednesday mornings, although no problems were reported either.

Also, the committee members agreed that 15 minutes of recess time had been inadvertently converted to instructional time when the K-8 flexible schedule was created. This error is actively being addressed to find a resolution.

Asst. Supt. of Ed. Services Ilene Straus briefly addressed the committee and said that “team” meeting agendas must align with district and site goals.

The committee meets again on Feb. 6.

Board Study Session on Enrollment

Permit issue, demographic projections widely discussed during the three-hour meeting.

On Jan. 23, our Board of Education held a study session on the topic of student enrollment. Here are the highlights:

- Board Pres. Myra Demeter said that the Board will act on staffing recommendations on Feb. 5.
- Board Vice-Pres. Nooshin Meshkaty asked to look at converting one of the K-8 sites into a middle school and referred to the Las Virgenes Unified School District by comparison.
- Board member Myra Lurie said that to reduce inter-district permits at this time combined with the state budget crisis would be unwise. She said that our district needs to maintain a “critical mass” of students to enhance our programs and stay competitive. She said that students flee our district when we cut programs. She said that new sources of revenue are possible in the future but are not here now, such as a new parcel tax.
- Board member Steve Fenton said that our district uses permits like a “band-aid” and that we need to “reverse course.” He advocated for pursuing new revenue streams to replace money that would be lost due to reducing the number of permits issued.
- Board member Brian Goldberg said that, even if the district began to reign in permits next year, there would be enough time to deal with the revenue loss because California allows school districts to use the previous year’s enrollment figures for funding purposes if enrollment were to decline in 08-09.
- Meshkaty said that she would like to change the way that “opportunity” permits are issued, perhaps by turning them into “legacy” permits.
- Demeter said that any change in the current permit policy would be “devastating” to our programs.
- Pupil and Special Services Dir. Amy

Lambert reported the following: Actual 07-08 district enrollment is 5,260. The target was 5,297. It was missed due to fewer than projected Kindergarten enrollments. District also has trouble filling 4th grade classrooms. Classrooms need to be filled in a way that allows “room for growth” and “new resident enrollment.” Parents can enroll their kids in any K-8 school. Enrollment process is uniform at all school sites. BHUSD strives to “welcome” new enrollees. There is a priority system in place to handle *intra*-district K-8 transfers. Our district does “more” than other districts to investigate residency violations. BHUSD is “aggressive” in enforcement of residency requirements. There are many different kinds of permits, including ones especially for employees of BHUSD and the City of BH. Many more families apply for permits than actually accept them from our district. Diversity permits are limited to 12 select LAUSD schools and are awarded by lottery. There are currently 167 students with diversity permits. All permits are subject to annual review. By internal policy, continuing K-8 students on permit may only be involuntarily transferred once during their tenure in BHUSD. Since special education is an “impacted” program, it is more difficult for families with kids who require special education to obtain permits. LAUSD has begun to clamp down on releasing its students to neighboring districts because LAUSD is experiencing declining enrollment and, thus, lost revenue. BHUSD revoked 20 permits last year. Currently, 950, or 18%, of BHUSD’s students are on permit. BHUSD experienced a 5% decline in resident enrollment from 2003 to 2006, but then a 2% increase in 2007. A plethora of slides showed the breakdown of permits by grade level and by school site.

- Lurie defended BHUSD against accusations that our district does not investigate tips on residency violations.
- Supt. Kari McVeigh said that our dis-

trict must make “staffing decisions” according to state timelines. She asked for “direction” from the community.

- A district-hired demographics consultant reported the following: California live birth projections indicate that resident enrollment will pick up again around 2011. Neighboring districts have an average of 16% of their students on permit. A computer model predicts that 91% of school-age children in BH attend BHUSD (4,314 of the estimated 4,761 5- to 17-year olds in BH).
- Demeter pointed out that our district’s total enrollment has increased in recent years because the increase in number of permits issued has more than offset the decline in resident enrollment.
- Both Goldberg and Fenton challenged the consultant’s estimate that 91% of school-age children in BH attend BHUSD, with both suggesting that this percentage is too high. Goldberg asked how the estimate was determined. Fenton said he could not believe that 9 out of every 10 kids in BH attend BHUSD schools after engaging in thousands of conversations with BH residents during last year’s school board campaign.
- At the end of the meeting, Demeter, Meshkaty, and Lurie voted to cap permits for subsequent years at 17%, but not seek an immediate decrease. Both Fenton and Goldberg voted to gradually begin reducing the percentage of permits starting next year. This 3-2 split means that the decision of the Board as a whole at this time is to keep BHUSD’s permit percentage capped at 17%.

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being *for* the public.

- Board Pres. Myra Demeter said that once a vote is taken, Board members should not speak out against the Board’s decision.
- Board Vice-Pres. Nooshin Meshkaty said that Board members’ use of the media should not harm the district.
- McVeigh said that it’s OK to discuss “serious educational issues” in public.

*** 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, Feb. 5	\$4,196.72	\$0.00

IMPORTANT DATES

- Feb. 5: Board of Ed. mtg.
- Feb. 6: K-8 Flex. Schedule Committee 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
- Feb. 26: Board of Ed. mtg.
- Feb. 28: Exec. Board mtg.
- Mar. 6: Rep. Council mtg.