



# BEVERLY HILLS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

*Educational Employees Working Together*

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## CONSENSUS

A Newsletter for BHEA Members  
September 10, 2008



### BHEA To Hold Special Election to Fill Vacancies

There are several vacancies on the BHEA Representative Council, our union's policy-making body. BHEA will therefore schedule a special election during this month of September to try to fill as many of the vacancies as possible. Newly elected representatives will be installed in October. A list of filled and unfilled positions is available for viewing at: [bhea.org/Reps.htm](http://bhea.org/Reps.htm) | BHEA will soon distribute declaration of candidacy forms to all members with instructions on how to proceed.

BHEA encourages active participation by all of our members. Joining the Representative Council is one way to participate. You may also contact BHEA to help out in other ways...as we are always looking for ways to engage our members and to give you the satisfaction of giving back to your union.

### PAR Panel Position Needs to Be Filled

There is currently a vacancy on the joint BHEA-BHUSD Peer Assistance and Review Joint Committee. BHEA contributes three members to this committee. BHEA wishes to fill this position as soon as possible. The position includes a \$1,000 annual stipend. Details of this position can be obtained by reading the first three pages of Article XXII in the certificated contract online at [BHEA.org](http://BHEA.org).

One of the main responsibilities of the PAR panel is to oversee the assistance provided to our own unit member colleagues. It is likely that a major focus for this school year will be to assist those teachers whose job assignments changed from last year due to the last year's layoffs and the subsequent transfers of teachers.

If you are interested in filling this vacancy, please contact BHEA no later than Friday, Sep. 19.

### BHEF Classics for Charity Car Show on Sunday, Sep. 14 Needs Volunteers

The Beverly Hills Education Foundation, our community's major school fundraising organization, is once again organizing the perennial Classics for Charity Car Show on Sunday, Sep. 14. It will take place at the BH Mercedes-Benz dealership 9250 Beverly Blvd. in BH from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

BHEF has asked BHEA members to help out by volunteering to work at the event this year. If you are interested, then please call BHEF at 310-557-0651 or Mercedes-Benz at 310-659-2980. The more that BHEA members can support organizations like BHEF, the more goodwill we can cultivate in the BH community. All money raised at the car show will be donated to help our schools. Even if you cannot volunteer but would rather attend the event as a participant, then please come this Sunday to show your support for BHEF. Your presence will be noticed!

For more information about the car show and suggested donation amounts for participants, please go online to: [BHEF.org](http://BHEF.org).

### 9th Grade Social on Thursday, Sep. 18

BHEA encourages teachers of high school freshmen to attend an adults-only social at the Gagosian Gallery on Thursday, Sep. 18 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. The gallery is located at 456 N. Camden Dr. in BH. The event represents an opportunity for the parents of 9th graders to come together to meet not only each other but also 9th grade teachers at the high school. The event is intended to facilitate communication among parents and between parents and teachers and also to provide a relaxing atmosphere for meeting and greeting.

If you have any questions about the event, please call 310-286-3133 or e-mail [bhhspts@aol.com](mailto:bhhspts@aol.com). BHEA hopes to see you there!

### Join Your School's PTA!

Strengthening bonds between teachers and parents starts with joining the PTA at your school site. Our district's PTAs host monthly meetings at each school site. These meetings represent an opportunity to have conversations with parents about the direction of our schools—what's working and what needs improvement. Many PTA meetings occur during school hours, but others occur in the evening.

The fee for teachers to join the PTA for one year may vary from site to site but is usually nominal. For instance, the fee to join the high school's PTSA is only \$10. Our PTAs raise funds for our schools every year. Teachers can support our PTA fundraising efforts by attending PTA meetings and getting involved in the organization.

Remember, PTA stands for "Parent Teacher Association." Through our active participation in PTA, we can build long-lasting bonds with parents and enjoy the support we deserve in the classroom. Join the PTA!

### Summary of Board of Education Meeting on July 8

Highlights from the July 8 Board of Education meeting:

- Three parents spoke in favor of continuing Dance Company at BHHS. Another parent spoke in favor of continuing the high school's architecture program.
- Supt. Kari McVeigh said that last June's high school graduates made "varied choices" for college with lots of "breadth." She said that she's grateful to "teachers and parents."
- An large discussion unfolded when it came time to approve the high school's newest assistant principal,

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## Board Approves District Goals for 2008-2009

On July 8, our Board of Education approved a list of six goals for our school district for this school year. The complete list of these goals with all sub-goals and details can be accessed online at: [BHEA.org/GoalsBHUSD.htm](http://BHEA.org/GoalsBHUSD.htm) | The main headings for the six adopted goals are:

1. Grow and strengthen instructional practices to ensure high levels of student achievement.
2. Hire and retain quality staff.
3. Create efficient business, financial, and operational systems.
4. Improve information technology infrastructure, applications, usage, and professional development.
5. Enhance district-wide communication and public relations.
6. Study and prepare a plan for all financial, staffing, programmatic, and facilities considerations required to successfully transition from revenue limit funding to basic aid funding.

Six amendments were also adopted. They are:

- Attract and retain more resident students.
- Increase the number of students who apply to 4-year colleges.
- Pursue creation of Mandarin Chinese and also explore other “heritage” languages.
- Centralize student registration process.
- Develop Elm St. parking lot.
- Expand use of cable channel KBEV.

Some noteworthy sub-goals and details in the adopted plan are:

- Emphasize common assessments, both summative and formative in nature, and continuation of the “math initiative.”
- Refine “intervention support systems.”
- Support and provide assistance to certificated staff displaced as a result of the 07-08 layoff process.
- Enhance communication between and amongst district staff.
- Identify facility needs based on conversion to basic aid funding to include the possibility of 1) conversion of current K-8 schools to a new organizational structure and 2) partial or full school closure.

BHEA Pres. Chris Bushée attended the July 1 study session on goal-setting. He offered some input to our district at this meeting. He noted that two sub-goals that were contained in the 07-08 goals were not included in the 08-09 goals. The two missing goals are:

- Negotiate salary/benefits that will set the standard in Los Angeles County.
- Identify and implement incentives to attract and retain quality staff.

At this July 1 meeting, Asst. Supt. of Human Resources Sal Gumina replied that, even though these two sub-goals do not appear in the 08-09 goals, that the district remains committed to achieving them.

At the July 8 Board meeting, Bushée gave additional input on the 08-09 goals. He said that student achievement (Goal #1) was dependent on more than just instructional practices and that this first goal was too narrow in scope, focusing only on teachers’ responsibilities. He said that factors such as student attendance, tardiness, and following school rules impact achievement. He said that completion of homework and parent involvement are additional factors. He said that having an administration that supports teachers in their day-to-day decision-making also affects student achievement. Regarding Goal #4, Bushée said that while technology must be continually maintained and upgraded, our district must strike an appropriate balance by also investing in its *human* resources. Bushée said that BHEA supports Goal #5. He called communication “very important” and said that BHEA stands ready to join the district on this goal. Finally, Bushée said that conversion to a basic aid district is a huge topic and urged the district to keep everyone in the loop as discussions unfold. He said that reconfiguration of BHUSD schools touches everyone—students, parents, employees, and community members. He asked the Board to continually seek input on the pros and cons.

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Kelly Tabis. Under questioning from Board member Steve Fenton, the administration revealed that there were 89 applicants who applied for the assistant principal position, of whom 3 were current BHUSD employees. McVeigh said that of the 14 interviews granted, none were granted to these 3 employees. Fenton said that 14 other applicants had experience as either a principal or assistant principal but none were granted interviews. Fenton said that he has a problem with the “process,” saying that it affects employee “morale.” He said that a “perfect opportunity” was missed when none of the 3 internal applicants was given an interview. Fenton also said that, before being hired by BHUSD, Tabis was a teacher from Santa Monica “where [Asst. Supt. of Ed. Services] Ilene Straus came from.” Board member Brian Goldberg said that he is concerned that the hiring process was not “fair and open.” He said that he expects “internal candidates” to be able to get an interview. He said that there is an image of “cronyism” and asked, “Is the process rigged?” Board member Myra Lurie disagreed with Fenton and Goldberg, saying that Board members should not “override” the process. She said that she wants to attract the best possible candidates. She said that the district should not drag candidates “through the mud.” Lurie said that she’s open to reviewing “the process.” Board Vice-Pres. Nooshin Meshkaty said that she wants to see “our own” rise up through ranks in BHUSD. She said that we need to “pick the best.” She also said that our current administrators should “recruit” applicants from their prior districts. Board Pres. Myra Demeter said that we need candidates who are the “best fit.” She said that our interview panels are represented by a broad array of different stakeholders and that she “believes in the process.” She criticized Goldberg and Fenton for broaching personnel subjects in open session. After the discussion, the Board voted 3-2 to approve Tabis, with Fenton and Goldberg dissenting.

- Approved the BHUSD goals for 2008-2009 (see separate article in this *Consensus*).
- Approved renewal of the Joint Power Agreement with the City of Beverly Hills.
- Goldberg and Fenton both spoke in support of exploring a “branding” business opportunity for our district. Fenton said that selling rights to use the Beverly Hills name would be a “passive revenue” activity that would bring in new money for BHUSD. Goldberg said that the “timing is right” to explore such an opportunity. Meshkaty was also supportive but was concerned about the ceding of district rights. Lurie said that she would like to look at a variety of possible vendors and ways to target revenues for specific causes.
- Meshkaty said that she would like to explore offering incentives to attract out-of-state applicants to fill math and science teaching vacancies in BHUSD, perhaps by paying for “relocation” expenses, because she said that our pay is not competitive.