



# BEVERLY HILLS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

*Educational Employees Working Together*

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## CONSENSUS

A Newsletter for BHEA Members  
September 22, 2008



### District Seeks BHEA Input on Transition to Basic Aid Funding

- Several more BHEA members needed.
- District in preliminary stages of planning for a new revenue mechanism that may still be years away.

On Sep. 18, the Superintendent's Advisory Council met to discuss a district goal that reads: "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." (Revenue limit funding is what BHUSD currently receives from the state of California. It is an annual per-pupil allotment that generally grows each year and is equal to \$6,770 for 2008-2009. Basic aid funding would come directly from local Beverly Hills property taxes, not from Sacramento. The appeal of basic aid funding is twofold: 1. the local property tax base is regarded as a more stable revenue stream compared to the state's revenue stream for public education...which has been caught in the crosshairs of budget fights in Sacramento for many years and 2. per-pupil allotment would be larger with basic aid funding.)

BHEA members in attendance at the meeting were: Bill Bradbury (BV, Music), Chris Bushée (HS, Science), Bill Hiatt (HS, English), Jose Peixoto (HS, Foreign Language), and Susan Trachtenberg (HM, Title 1). BHEA would like to have additional representation, preferably from school sites, grade levels, and subject areas not already covered by the above group.

Other participants at the meeting were: district administrators Kari McVeigh, Cheryl Plotkin, and Ilene Straus; BH Education Foundation representatives Jean Rosenblatt and Dev Hankin; Board members Myra Demeter and Nooshin Meshkaty; site administrators Dawnalyn Murakawa-Leopard and Kelly Tabis; and parent representatives Franny Rennie and Marc Saleh. McVeigh's administrative assistant Allison Anderson recorded the minutes.

Discussion of basic aid is in the preliminary stage and no decisions have yet been made.

McVeigh facilitated a free-flowing, informal discussion where participants contributed the following opinions.

- Student enrollment district-wide would need to be kept relatively low to continue to qualify for basic aid. Both the BH resident student population, currently in decline, and the district's student permit policy affect total enrollment. It is possible that changes in the number of permit students will play a role in changing over to basic aid. The recently renegotiated Joint Power Agreement with the City of BH guarantees the issuance of student permits to the children of City employees over the next four years. No such guarantee exists for the children of BHUSD employees. It is important to start the conversations about permit policy now.
- District may increase its financial reserves as part of the transition to basic aid. This may result in diversion of funds away from other areas of the budget. Such a diversion may create tension within the affected budget areas.
- Contraction of the district may result in targeted layoffs of employees if resignations and retirements do not materialize in certain program areas.
- Contraction of the district may result in reconfiguration of the delivery of K-8 instruction. This could impact employment contracts with BHEA members.
- Contraction of the district may result in closure of a traditional school site for curricular reasons...if there are too few students spread out over four K-8s to be able to deliver programs. It is important to start the conversations about school closure now.
- It is important to maintain constant communication with everyone in the BH education community as basic aid discussions develop and to consolidate information from as many committees as possible. It is important to have periodic forums where all stakeholders can gather to share their opinions.
- The current poor economic health of the nation may impact the committee's conversations.
- A starting point for discussions may be envisioning what the community wants in terms of programs.
- Salaries tend to be higher in basic aid districts.

### Summary of BHEA Rep. Council Meeting on Sep. 11

Highlights from the Sep. 11 BHEA Representative Council meeting:

- BHEA budget for 08-09 adopted. Monthly dues set for 08-09 at \$97.40 for full-time unit members. This represents an increase from last year of \$2.65/month.
- Charged the Bylaws Committee to review language that stipulates how site representatives are apportioned at each school.
- BHEA has launched a Salary/Benefits Research Committee. The purpose of this committee is to research salaries and benefits in other districts for comparison purposes with BHUSD. The committee will also investigate other conditions of employment, such as class size, hours, duties, etc... At present, the committee consists of the following BHEA members: Stewart Horowitz (HS), Susie Pastor (BV), Mark Frenn (BV), Bill Ryan (HS), Joanie Garratt (HS). If you are interested in joining this committee, please contact BHEA.
- Discussed issues of large middle school P.E. class sizes, GATE certification, administration requiring OTBS members to supervise students in K-8 libraries, and the March 2009 City Council election.

## Important Reminders

- **Bargaining Survey:** Certificated staff members should have received by now in their mailboxes a BHEA bargaining survey printed on goldenrod paper. Please complete and return this survey to BHEA Pres. Chris Bushée at BHHS by Friday, Sep. 26.
- **BHEA Special Election:** Members have until Tuesday, Sep. 23 to submit their declaration of candidacy forms for the upcoming BHEA special election to fill vacancies on the Representative Council. Both classified and certificated members are eligible to run for the vacant position of BHEA Treasurer. Only certificated members may run for the other vacant Director positions. There are vacant Branch Representative positions available for both certificated and classified members. Candidacy forms are available online at [BHEA.org/Elections.htm](http://BHEA.org/Elections.htm)
- **Facilities Advisory Committee:** Ten BHEA members have already expressed interest in joining this district committee. Let BHEA know if you'd like to join. The first committee meeting will occur soon.
- **Catastrophic Sick Leave Program:** If you would like to donate a sick day to the catastrophic sick leave program, remember that the deadline to do so is Oct. 1. The CSLP is a way for BHEA members to help fellow members who find themselves battling a catastrophic illness and have exhausted their sick days. Those with a catastrophic illness may request that the CSLP committee grant them days from the CSLP sick leave bank. The bank is built up each year from 1-day donations made during September of each year. In the unfortunate circumstance that you find yourself battling a catastrophic illness this school year, you must have donated a day into the bank by Oct. 1, 2008 in order to be able to make a request to use days from the CSLP bank. The full details of the CSLP are found in Article VI and Appendix H of the certificated contract, online at [BHEA.org](http://BHEA.org). Classified members also have similar language in their contracts.
- **Basic Aid Committee:** BHEA needs several more of its members to join the Basic Aid Committee that will study the implications of transitioning BHUSD from revenue limit funding to basic aid funding. This committee will have BHEA, parent, administrator, and community representation. Please contact BHEA if interested. Also, see separate article in this *Consensus* for more detail on this committee.
- **New BHEA Members:** If you joined BHEA during New Teacher Orientation on Aug. 22, thank you for becoming one of our newest members. If you missed the orientation, then please contact BHEA to get an enrollment form. BHEA membership offers many advantages, including: 1) \$1,000,000 of liability coverage, free of charge, 2) opportunity to purchase discounted life insurance (new members can purchase up to \$200,000 of coverage regardless of health status...but only within the first 120 of employment...so don't delay!), 3) the right to vote in BHEA elections and on contract ratifications, 4) enrollment in the CTA Disaster Relief Fund, free of charge, 5) a range of other discounts on things like disability insurance, auto and home loans, general financial services, travel, entertainment, school supplies, and academic scholarships for members and their children. Be part of a united team of educators who work to continually advance the cause of public education and to create the best working conditions for the students we serve!
- **Parent Teacher Association:** Join your school's PTA if you haven't already. Just as parents appreciate our work as educators...we, too, can help support parents through our active participation in PTA.
- **Apple Harvest Faire:** This year, the BH Education Foundation will sponsor the Apple Harvest Faire on the front lawn of BHHS on Sunday, Oct. 26. This is a fund-raising opportunity for our schools. Both volunteers and participants are needed from the BHEA membership. The Faire offers a wide selection of food and drink, arts and crafts, and many games and rides. It is a historically well-attended event. Volunteers are needed to help run booths during the event, set up in the morning, and take down in the afternoon. All money raised at this event will be donated to our district. Please contact BHEA if interested or you may also contact BHEF directly at 310-557-0651.

## Class Size Issues Enter New Phase As Deadline Approaches

- **Starting on Sep. 23, HS members gain right to seek resolution to class size violations through grievance process.**
- **All members, K-8 and HS, should ensure that Article VIII (Class Size) is followed.**

Retirements, resignations, and layoffs from last school year have shrunk the size of the certificated staff for 08-09. Also, actual enrollment for this school year exceeded projections. This has created a "tight" situation when it comes to class size. All BHEA members are covered by Article VIII, the class size article of the certificated contract.

At the HS, a full-time teacher should have no more than 145 total students and these students should, ideally, be spaced out at 29 students per class. This contract provision goes into effect on Sep. 23. If you are a HS teacher and you have more than 145 students and/or your students are not spread evenly over your sections, then please contact BHEA for assistance. BHEA members have a limited amount of time to initiate grievance proceedings to alleviate class size violations. BHEA can advise you based on your specific situation.

The HS administration has been working throughout September to level classes. It is BHEA's sincere hope that our administration has been successful in this endeavor. At the same time, BHEA members have a right to have the articles of contract followed...and we have procedures in place to deal with violations.

At the K-8 level, average class size should be no greater than 20 for grades K-3 and no greater than 29 for grades 4-8. If it is not, then please contact BHEA for advice.

Finally, all members should be aware of the class size contract language that reads: "The Principal shall make every effort to apportion class sizes, class assignments, and students equitably." If you believe that this part of the contract is not being followed, then please contact BHEA for advice.

## Information on GATE Program

Dir. of Curriculum Brian Tash recently relayed the following information to BHEA about GATE:

- No teacher in BHUSD needs to hold a special credential or certificate to be eligible to teach GATE students.
- Voluntary, optional GATE certification run by UC San Diego is available this year to MS teachers. The district will pay the expense. The district would like to offer this certification to all teachers district-wide this year...but lacks the funds to do so. The district will offer certification to more teachers in the future.
- Teachers of grades 4 and 5 will receive in-house professional development this school year by consultant Donna Bennett on the subject of GATE.
- Individual school sites determine whether GATE students in grades 4 and 5 remain clustered or are spread out over multiple classrooms.