



CONSENSUS

A Newsletter for BHEA Members

October 22, 2008



Summary of Rep. Council Meeting

Highlights from the Oct. 16 BHEA Representative Council meeting:

- Received the Sep. 29 BHEA special election results which filled several vacancies on the RC. A complete list of representative, directors, and officers are available at BHEA.org/Reps.htm.
- Approved several committee appointments.
- Reported that BHEA will glean more detailed feedback from our certificated members to help define our interests as we bargain the class size and hours articles this year.
- Reported that BHUSD has hired privately contracted instructional assistants and has paid them more than our IA unit members. The BHEA IA leadership is discussing this matter with our district.
- Reported progress on draft language that would update the manner in which representatives and directors on the RC are apportioned based on the make-up of the BHEA membership.
- Reported that one certificated grievance has recently been initiated.
- Scheduled a BHEA member social event at Pink Taco for Friday, Nov. 7 after school.
- Held a robust discussion on BHEA goals. Talked about district's current approach to curriculum in the areas of interventions and open access.

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Oct. 26: Apple Harvest Faire...Join the Fun!

On Sunday, Oct. 26, the Beverly Hills Education Foundation will host its perennial Apple Harvest Faire on the front lawn of BHHS. This is a major fundraising event for our schools. Money raised by BHEF at the Faire comes back to our district in the form of a donation.

BHEF needs BHEA unit member volunteers to help make this a successful Faire. Typically, one can sign up for a block of volunteer time. Volunteer activities include things like setting up and taking down booths, staffing booths, providing guidance to fair-goers, selling tickets, etc... Please call 310-557-0651 to get more information.

If you can't volunteer, then BHEA encourages you to show up to the event and partake in the fun. There will be an assortment of children's rides and games, food, drink, arts, and crafts. It is a fun-filled, joyous atmosphere.

Finally, BHEA unit member presence at BHEF events is a way to build up goodwill and strengthen connections with parents and community members. Plus, our presence serves to support BHEF and helps our education foundation meet its fundraising goals to provide needed money for our classrooms.

Support BHEF and our schools at this year's Apple Harvest Faire!

The Faire opens to the public at 12 noon and closes at 5:00 p.m.

BHEA Advisory to Members Regarding 'Intervention' Models

BHEA advises its members to cautiously approach voluntary participation on district committees that are looking at any of the following: intervention models, open access, tiered intervention, response to intervention, "push-in" versus "pull-out" support models, etc... If you are asked to join such a committee or if you are already on such a committee, BHEA advises you to keep the contents of this advisory at the forefront of your mind as you engage in discussion.

In a nutshell, student intervention programs can be as simple as a teacher helping students with material after class to as complex as creating individual education plans for each and every student in the general education environment. BHUSD has not specified all of the details of its vision on intervention models. As such, BHEA has acted in recent months to protect our members from the potential of significant increases on our time demands as it relates to this issue.

Here is the rationale behind BHEA's advice. First, BHEA encourages all members to read the lead story in the Feb. 13, 2008 BHEA *Consensus* newsletter, online at BHEA.org/News.htm. It goes into detail as to the potential implications of intervention programs on our members' wages, hours, and working conditions. BHEA has already filed an unfair labor practice charge against BHUSD for refusal to bargain intervention-related issues. A summary of our rationale advising caution when voluntarily participating in intervention discussions is:

- By refusing to negotiate the impact and effects that this new intervention education model may have on our wages, hours, and working conditions, BHEA believes that BHUSD is violating state law with respect to the Educational Employment Relations Act.
- Implementation of an intervention program without first negotiating the impacts and effects with BHEA could result in our members experiencing: more work for the same pay, encroachment on teacher planning time, increased administrative duties, new evaluation criteria, and involuntary transfers and reassignments.

BHEA members seek to work in a positive, productive, collaborative manner with our district on the subject of intervention models. However, BHUSD's refusal to join BHEA at the bargaining table to negotiate impacts and effects of intervention-related changes to workplace conditions leaves BHEA with no choice but to act in defense of our members' rights and well-being. BHUSD's refusal to negotiate impacts and effects is unfortunate and is out of step with the interest-based model of bargaining that we practice. BHUSD's stance will negatively affect meetings that relate to intervention and will restrict the free flow of ideas.

BHEA Encourages Participation on Committees

BHEA members participate on many committees. Our voices on these committees are vital. Some committees are internal BHEA committees comprised only of our members. Others are joint BHEA-BHUSD committees comprised of our members, administrators, and sometimes parents and students. Below is a list of committees known to BHEA and an indication as to whether additional member participation is needed:

- Bargaining; Basic Aid/Declining Enrollment; Bell Schedule, HS; Bylaws; Coaching Unit Allotment; Elections.
- Evaluations. *Counselor needed.*
- Facilities Advisory.
- Facilities, BV. *Member(s) needed.*
- Facilities, ER. *Member(s) needed.*
- Facilities, HAW. *Members(s) needed.*
- Facilities, HM. *Member(s) needed.*
- Facilities, HS. *Member(s) needed.*
- GATE Advisory. *Member(s) needed.*
- Grievance; Membership; Online Surveys; Organizing; Open Access, HS; PAR Joint Committee; Salary/Benefits; Social.
- Study Hall, MS. *Member(s) needed.*

A complete list of BHEA unit members who are already part of these committees can be accessed at: BHEA.org/Committees.htm. BHEA encourages you to talk with committee members so that your voice is heard at the meetings.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- Oct. 28: Board of Ed. meeting.
- Nov. 3: Certificated paychecks reflective of new 08-09 salary rates.
- Nov. 4: Election Day.
- Nov. 13: BHEA Rep. Council meeting, Room 118, BHHS, 3:45 p.m.
- Nov. 13: Board of Ed. study session, topic to be announced, Board Room.
- Nov. 18: Board of Ed. meeting.
- Nov. 20: Board of Ed. study session, topic to be announced, Board Room.
- Dec 5: Certificated retroactive pay will be issued on or before this date.

Board of Education Meeting Summary

Highlights from the Aug. 26 Board of Education meeting:

- Parent Myra Gabbay said that the Joint Power Agreement between BHUSD and the City of BH allows many programs to flourish and also provides money that can be used to support teachers.
- Parent Cindy Dubin asked to look at possible position restructuring with the departure over the summer of some teachers.
- BHEA Pres. Chris Bushée delivered a speech on the state of negotiations that appears online at BHEA.org/News.htm. (BHEA and BHUSD have since settled negotiations from last year.)
- Three community members spoke in opposition to the possibility of the annexation by the City of BH of part of the HM playground for commercial use. Later in the meeting, facilities contractor Karen Christiansen said that BHUSD's master facilities plan does not include commercial property on HM.
- A community member expressed concern about degradation of air quality as a result of demolition of Robinsons May building on Wilshire.
- BHEF donated \$600,000 to BHUSD for use toward technology.
- Supt. Kari McVeigh said that teachers worked hard over the summer in professional development.
- Board member Myra Lurie raised concerns about overly restrictive student requirements by Point Loma Nazarene University, a college with which BHUSD has a student teaching agreement.
- Board Vice-Pres. Nooshin Meshkaty said that because our district has identified \$600 million of facilities needs in our master plan, she believes that our district will have to again go out to the community for another bond at a future date even if the current \$334 million bond passes on Nov. 4.
- Board member Steve Fenton questioned whether certain approvals that came before the Board at this meeting related to the facilities master plan put the "cart before the horse" since the school bond hasn't even been passed by BH voters yet. Lurie said that BHUSD needs to get architects' opinions to help "define our choices." Fenton said that he is concerned with the lack of "transparency" of the architectural selection process, citing the \$132,000 price tag for one of the contracts. He asked our district to show "humility" and to do "business in public," saying that the "schools belong to the community."

Board Pres. Myra Demeter said that these selections help "define the project." Board member Brian Goldberg said that the process seems rushed, involving BHUSD with architectural firms before fully developing a plan.

- Meshkaty said that BHUSD needs to work on communication with the community and needs to partner better with the local press.
- Fenton said that BHUSD needs to market our schools better and make touring our schools easier.
- Lurie said that BHUSD is "transparent" in its decision-making. She said that new revenue could be generated by renting our facilities to either West L.A. College or UCLA.
- Goldberg acknowledged Lurie's advocacy of Measure E. He suggested town-hall meetings as a way to improve communication. He asked to look at improving the registration process for classes.
- Demeter said that step/column means that teachers get automatic raises each year that are not based on performance in contrast, she said, to administrator evaluations. She said that BHUSD may want to look at performance-based evaluations for teachers.

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Concern expressed that unit members' views, opinions, and suggestions are not being sufficiently incorporated into decision-making. Concern expressed that district portrays major curricular decisions as having buy-in by unit members without acknowledgement of dissent. Concern expressed that some members may be loathe to voice opinions contrary to those of the district for fear of retribution, particularly those members who have probationary status. Concern expressed over our district's intent to address "compliance" issues where the law being violated is not clearly communicated to our members. Concern expressed that unit member job performance is being targeted by our district administration to both explain and address perceived shortcomings in student academic achievement. Suggestions offered on how BHEA and its members can become more vocal with our concerns over the direction of our district, including informing our members of the issues; writing letters to and purchasing advertising space in local newspapers; giving speeches at Board of Education meetings; contacting Board members directly; and offering alternative, positive solutions.