



BEVERLY HILLS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Educational Employees Working Together

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CONSENSUS

A Newsletter for BHEA Members

December 5, 2008



High School Staff Discusses Bell Schedule

- **Advisory period floated as way to teach Beverly Seminar curriculum. Dialog continues. Next meeting scheduled for Jan. 7.**

HS teachers and administrators have met twice recently to discuss the HS bell schedule. Highlights from the meetings:

October 22:

- The HS administration asked if the bell schedule supports student success, mentioned math and English interventions, team teaching, and shadow classes. Administration asked what the optimal “delivery system” would be for the Beverly Seminar course which focuses on character education. Administration mentioned “personalization” goals. Administration mentioned the “WASC mandate” on open access. Administration said that most teachers are not available on Thursday afternoons. Administration said that 30-35% of HS students are enrolled in a Period 1 class. Administration said other high schools have an “advisory” or “student support” period. Administration said that the Beverly Seminar curriculum would not be as successful if taught over the summer.
- HS teachers asked about the possibility of eliminating block scheduling. Teachers offered varied opinions on the success of Beverly Seminar as a summer course. Teachers asked about breaking up the Beverly Seminar curriculum into weekly segments over four years. Teachers asked about creating a community service requirement. Teachers shared ideas on how they already incorporate character education into their curriculum. Teachers offered varied opinions on the length of a possible advisory period. Teachers said that some staff members may feel more or less comfortable than others in leading conversations that deal with emotional or sensitive topics as part of character education. Teachers asked if special credentials would be required to teach the Beverly Seminar curriculum. Teachers shared how Wednesday morning block time is currently being utilized to support student learning. Teachers asked how expanded interventions will be financed.

December 3:

- The HS administration asked about the pros and cons of the current bell schedule. Administration said that staff should be mindful of the topics of intervention and character education if revisions to the bell schedule occur. Administration said that of the 572 freshmen, sophomores, and juniors currently enrolled in a Period 1 class, 229 are taking six courses while 272 are taking seven courses. Administration said that the Beverly Seminar is a graduation requirement. Administration said that by allowing the Beverly Seminar course to be taken at any point from 9th through 12th grade, students would have greater flexibility to fit it into their schedules. Administration offered ex-

amples of other high schools that have advisory time built into the school day.

- HS teachers asked if we should tweak the current bell schedule or start from scratch. Teachers said that implementation of a school-wide advisory period with teaching responsibilities would be negotiable as an added “prep.” Teachers shared an example of how to integrate a Beverly Seminar course into the existing student course load. Teachers shared that it would cost at least \$160,000 of additional staffing to implement a one-semester Beverly Seminar course as a graduation requirement. Teachers mentioned the obligations that parents also have in providing character education to their children. Teachers said that a one-semester Beverly Seminar course would negatively impact 9th graders’ ability to take electives. Teachers suggested finding ways to build upon “teachable moments” after assemblies that focus on character education. Teachers suggested increasing course offerings during Period 8. Teachers remarked that BHHS student athletes do well academically. Teachers shared a draft of a bell schedule that modifies the current schedule to include an advisory period ranging in length between 21 and 30 minutes. Teachers said that some staff members may feel uncomfortable teaching some of the character education content. Teachers said that, in addition to learning academics, learning life skills is also important.
- Committee members listed pros and cons of the current bell schedule. PROS: more flexibility for students to schedule classes; Period 1 starting at 7:20 a.m. as opposed to 7:01 a.m.; Period 6 before lunch reduces missed class time for athletics; more flexibility for teachers to meet with students. CONS: some students’ school days end at 1:00 p.m.; more students in Period 1 means less early morning time to meet with teachers; more teachers teaching Period 1 means fewer teachers available in morning.
- The committee discussed the concept of teachers working with the same group of students for four years (9th through 12th grade) in an advisory role. There was disagreement on whether the current bell schedule provides an “adequate” number of instructional minutes for students.

IMPORTANT

DATES:

- Dec. 9: Certificated bargaining.
- Dec. 9: Board of Ed. meeting.
- Dec. 11: BHEA Rep. Council meeting, Room 118,

BHHS, 3:45 p.m.

- Dec. 17: Board of Ed. study session on permits.
- Dec. 19: Last school day in 2008.
- Jan. 5: First school day in 2009.

Board Discusses Permit Policy

• BHEA members concerned about enrollment guarantees and “bumping” among K-8 sites.

Highlights from the Oct. 14 Board of Education study session on student permit policy:

- BHEA Pres. Chris Bushée said that BHEA members do not play a role in determining the make-up of the Beverly Hills student population and that teachers will teach any and all students in our charge. He then addressed the issue of BHUSD potentially reducing in the number of permits issued and how that might affect our unit members and their children who attend BHUSD schools. He said that reduction of permits might result in targeted layoffs and urged a measured approach to avoid this. He said that it is a long-standing perk that BHUSD employees have been able to enroll their own children in BHUSD schools. He said that either layoffs or loss of this perk through reducing permits would have a negative effect on morale. He also said that reconfiguring the delivery of instruction at the K-8 level due to reduced enrollment could have contractual implications depending on how BHEA members’ workdays are impacted.
- Administration said that our Board policy allows BHUSD to revoke existing inter-district permits on an annual basis but that this policy is not supported by the L.A. County Office of Education. Administration said that Board policy on “home schools” is unclear when it comes to decisions on “bumping.” When a grade level fills up, do resident students take precedence over students on permit when it comes to involuntary transfers to a K-8 site with more room?
- Board Pres. Myra Demeter said that bumping is difficult because students are “children” who have “developed relationships” at their home schools. Board Vice-Pres. Nooshin Meshkaty said that “overflow” issues need to be addressed and asked to explore enrollment deadlines for home schools. Board member Steve Fenton said he supports a home school enrollment deadline and gave July 15 as an example. Board member Myra Lurie said she supports a home school enrollment deadline that is “widely” announced. She said she also supports a deadline to inform parents of children on permit about decisions to involuntarily transfer their children to other K-8 sites.
- Board members agreed to establish a July 15 deadline to guarantee admittance to resident children to their home schools even if it means bumping a student on permit to another K-8 site.
- HM Prin. Dawnalyn Murakawa-Leopard said she supports a “centralized” registration process as long as communication between school sites and the district office is strong. HAW Prin. Alex Cherniss said he supports a centralized registration process during the summer.
- Board members agreed to establish “continuous enrollment” (registration) throughout the summer and to establish Feb. 1 as the first day to be able to register as a BHUSD student for the upcoming school year. Asst. Supt. of Business Services Cheryl Plotkin said that our district is pursuing an online registration option.
- Fenton said that voluntary intra-district permit requests are too numerous and lead to “class warfare” based on differing “perceptions” of the various K-8 sites. He said that these requests should not be granted without a “compelling reason” and that “parameters” are needed. Demeter said that having “consistent” district-wide standards helps to reduce the desire

to voluntarily move to a non-home school. Lurie said that the issue needs further exploration. She said she does not “want to place people in a vice” if there’s not really a problem and said that the reason such requests are made is important to know. She said that we may need to look at a “point system” to process these requests. She said that our district must be responsive to the community and have flexibility. Fenton said we need a “happy medium.” Board members agreed to encourage enrollment at home schools.

- Asst. Supt. of Educational Services Ilene Straus asked if a limit should be placed on the number of times a student can be involuntarily transferred among K-8 sites. Demeter said that no limits currently exist in Board policy.
- Supt. Kari McVeigh gave Mar. 1 as an example of a deadline to make an intra-district permit request for the upcoming school year. Board members agreed to use the window between July 15 and Aug. 1 to determine how many home school students registered at each K-8 to leave one month to notify families in the event of an involuntary transfer.
- McVeigh said that guaranteeing enrollment at a particular school could increase financial obligations for BHUSD. Demeter that our district has a history of committing money in order to grant educational opportunities.
- Meshkaty said that BHUSD should be more proactive in rooting out residency fraud. Fenton suggested setting up an “anonymous hotline” to report fraud.
- Meshkaty asked to “treat employees’ kids as residents.” Fenton agreed and said he would also like children attending on legacy permits treated as residents. Demeter called permits for the children of BHUSD employees “sacred” and said she is not considering removal of this “perk.” Board member Brian Goldberg said that he does not support a cap on permits for BHUSD employees’ children. He said that permits are a privilege and that it is OK to prioritize. He said that our district needs to have the flexibility to adapt. He said that 85% of our permits are classified as “opportunity” permits.
- McVeigh said that Board policy and the Joint Powers Agreement between BHUSD and the City of BH are not aligned in terms of capping the number of permits for City employees’ children. McVeigh said that permits for BHUSD and City employees’ children should be prioritized.
- Lurie said she has a hard time “assigning higher values” to certain classes of students or permits and asked to look more at the “tenure” status concept.

BRIEFS

- The tentative dates for 2009 summer school are: June 29 to July 15 for Session 1. July 16 to July 31 for Session 2. July 3 is the observed holiday for Independence Day. BHUSD will make an official announcement soon.
- *Join the PTA at your school site!* Form strong ties with parents as a way to increase communication.
- Our Board of Education will continue discussions on student permit and enrollment issues at a study session on Wed., Dec. 17 on the first floor of the Science & Technology building at BHHS from 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. Attend and stay informed.
- Quick retro pay verification for certificated members: Based on the salary agreement approved in September, here are some rough amounts of *gross* pay for your retro check based on your old base salary: \$50,000...\$1,205; \$60,000...\$1,445; \$70,000...\$1,686; \$80,000...\$1,927.