



# BEVERLY HILLS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

*Educational Employees Working Together*

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## CONSENSUS

A Newsletter for BHEA Members

May 4, 2009



### School Funding on the Line as May 19 Approaches

- **\$22.3 billion dollars for public education hang in the balance.**
- **CTA recommends “YES” on all six propositions to balance the state’s budget.**
- **BHEA urges its members to participate in CTA-sponsored phone banks to get out the vote.**

Here’s what will happen to California’s public education budget if Propositions 1A through 1F are defeated on May 19:

- \$6 billion of revenue will be lost in 2009-2010. Another \$1.3 billion will be lost in the years that follow.
- An additional \$16 billion of revenue will be lost in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.
- California will face financial insolvency unless additional emergency measures are approved. There is no guarantee that such emergency measures would help schools, and may do just the opposite.
- Long-term budget reform will remain elusive and Californians will continue to be subjected to emergency, stop-gap, band-aid fixes.

Our students’ education is at stake. Our profession’s long-term stability is at stake. Our state’s education system will be in uncharted waters if Propositions 1A through 1F fail. It’s a gamble that the California Teachers Association, after 2 hours of spirited debate at its Mar. 15 meeting, considered to be too risky to take. CTA supports all six propositions as the solution to the enormous, multi-billion budget deficit gripping our state, partly as a result of the national economic downturn.

California ranks 47th out of 50 states in per-pupil funding. If 1A through 1F are defeated, the prospect of further cuts to education become very real.

CTA needs your help to stand up for students and to stand up for our profession. CTA is urging BHEA members to attend at least one phone banking session in Culver City any Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday between now and May 19. The address is 6095 Bristol Parkway, Suite 100. Show up any time between 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. CTA will serve you dinner and there will also be tokens of appreciation such as gift cards. BHEA appreciates your support of our parent union as we, once again, lead the campaign for healthy and strong public schools. Thank you.

### Summary of Apr. 16 BHEA Representative Council Meeting

- Approved BHEA’s meeting dates for 2009-2010. Dates are posted online at: [BHEA.org/Governance.htm](http://BHEA.org/Governance.htm).
- Reported that BHEA’s instructional assistants unit continues to seek a meeting date with BHUSD to discuss grievances.
- Reported that the “Blue Ribbon” committee met on Mar. 18 and brainstormed pros and cons of different school configurations. Participants generally coalesced around options that did not close any one school site, but rather looked at different options for structuring middle school. Participants also discussed the uncertainty surrounding the state budget and projected BHUSD student enrollment. The committee did not make any decisions or recommendations.
- Reported that BHEA members elected Pres. Chris Bushée on Apr. 1 to be a delegate to the Jun. 30-July 5 NEA Representative Assembly in San Diego.
- Discussed proposed bylaws changes to the Facilities Advisory Committee.
- Reported that the HM Facilities Committee learned that the “annex” building is scheduled to be demolished as part of the Measure E construction project.
- Reported that BHEA’s Executive Board approved on Apr. 2 that our union seek binding arbitration to settle a grievance alleging a violation of Article VII, Transfers.
- Reported that BHEA will soon test an online survey service.
- Reported that BHUSD is updating its technology plan and that the district will soon issue a technology survey to staff.
- Reported that Board of Education member Brian Goldberg has compiled data on the 80-plus basic aid districts in California and that this information may be useful to BHEA’s Salary and Benefits Committee.
- Reported on the need to follow proper channels and protocols on matters such as student placement and touring of our facilities. Some RC members expressed concern, both historically and recently, with perceived improper influence by Board of Education members.
- Reviewed draft language for updated duties in the office of BHEA Treasurer, as well as a change to dates of term of office. RC suggested refining language more before moving forward with a first reading.
- Discussed the K-8 Wednesday morning meeting structure and desire by some teachers to be able to meet more frequently with their grade-level and department member colleagues at other K-8 sites (“team” meetings). Reported that K-8 music teachers already do this once a month.
- Reported concern with how a recent K-8 professional development survey was conducted. Reported that BV’s instructional leadership team was ignored when survey was developed. Reported that there was no option to fill out the survey anonymously. Reported that three

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## **BRIEFS & UPDATES:**

**Grievances:** BHEA and BHUSD recently settled a salaries grievance in Step 3 that will benefit 36 unit members, all of whom BHEA has already contacted. The affected members received Board approval for extra work at rates of pay that were too low. BHEA culled through a year's worth of personnel reports to identify members who were paid incorrectly. The settlement calls on the district to issue retroactive pay no later than July 1. BHEA commends the Human Resources office for working diligently with BHEA in achieving a settlement. BHEA and BHUSD settled a HM professional assessment grievance in Step 2. At issue was the proper placement of evaluator's comments on matters not directly observed in the classroom. BHEA commends the HM administration for its work on this settlement. Two HS parent complaints grievances are in Step 3, where BHEA is alleging that the administration did not require the parent to put the complaint in writing before discussing the complaint with the member. Three professional assessment grievances are in Step 3, two from the HS and one from BV. BHEA alleges timeline violations in all three. BHEA and BHUSD did not resolve a transfers grievance in Step 4 and are now headed to arbitration.

**WHO Award:** Congratulations to Linda Omansky for receiving the 2009 BHEA WHO Award. WHO stands for "We Honor Ours." Omansky is the President of the instructional assistants unit.

**PTA Council Summit:** BHEA Pres. Chris Bushée attended a summit on Apr. 29 hosted by the PTA to discuss improving communication throughout the district in an attempt to find better resolution to issues. Also in attendance were representatives from BHUSD and BHEF.

**Swine Flu, CTA Advisory:** BHUSD has informed BHEA that in the event of a school closure due to an infectious disease outbreak like the swine flu, we would not have to make up the lost days of schools. Also, school employees would continue to receive their salary and benefits without interruption. CTA has issued a detailed advisory on this subject in the members-only section of *CTA.org*. Log on, then click on "Member Services," then "Legal Services."

**Resolution on 1A, 1B, 1C:** The Board of Education passed a resolution on May 4 in support of Propositions 1A, 1B, and 1C. BHEA Pres. Chris Bushée attended the meeting to underscore CTA's support of these three measures.

## **Summary of Apr. 21 Board of Education Meeting**

- HAW science teacher Lori Schwartz received warm praise from Board members and community members for her dedication to the Science Olympiad. Schwartz said "problem-solving" approaches and "hands-on" experiences are important in developing both the skills and interest for HS science.
- The PTA Council presented an idea for a new logo to be shared by BHUSD, PTA, and BHEF. It is a five-star theme meant to unify the five BHUSD schools with the message "world class education."
- Supt. Jerry Gross announced the creation of a financial advisory committee to steer the district through "rough waters." He also said that BHUSD has focused on campus cleanliness in recent weeks.
- Board member Brian Goldberg asked for an update from the HS bell schedule committee.
- Board member Myra Demeter talked about the Milken organization's four points of "teacher quality:" multiple career paths, professional development, accountability, performance-based compensation. Demeter also said she'd like to find ways to better support the HS drumline.
- Board Pres. Nooshin Meshkaty proposed moving Board elections to even years.
- Board Vice-Pres. Myra Lurie said the Board needs appropriate advance notice of all out-of-county field trips. She also expressed concern with students missing class time to attend field trips and asked if students have flexibility to attend only a portion of some trips. At the Board meeting, HS teacher Joel Pressman addressed Lurie's concerns.

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teachers were called to meet with their principal to discuss their responses to the survey.

- Reported concern over the continuing vacancy in the office of Director of Special Education and a desire for the Educational Services Department to pick up the slack.

## **High School Ethics Seminar Curriculum Approved**

On Apr. 21, the Board of Education signed off on the curriculum for a new one-semester ethics course at the HS. This is a new graduation requirement starting with the class of 2013.

HS Prin. J Guidetti said the new course is a "response to a need." A group of HS teachers worked during this school year in a committee and developed the curriculum for the ethics course, formerly referred to as the Beverly seminar. Board Vice-Pres. Myra Lurie said this is a good course for "introspection." She said she was concerned about how the course would be graded so as not to add "pressure" to students. In response, TOSA Steve Taylor spoke for the committee and said that grades would be the "least" important aspect of the course, adding that it's the learning that matters most. The committee said that a service-learning project and presentation will be the final exam for the course. Demeter said that this course represents the "missing link" to provide students with an "ethical" component.

HS health teacher Colleen Lynch showed the Board a side-by-side comparison of the curriculum for the one-semester HS health class and the proposed ethics seminar curriculum. She noted several areas of overlap. Taylor said the committee did not want to encroach on health. Asst. Supt. of Ed. Services Ilene Straus said that the ethics course "matches up" with health. (Straus has since told BHEA that the district has no intention of getting rid of the HS health course.)

BHEA Pres. Chris Bushée talked about the history of the development of the ethics course. He also said a teacher's right to issue grades is a professional responsibility and warned against micromanagement by individual Board members of grading practices for the ethics seminar.

Lurie asked if there is a provision for a waiver for the ethics course. Meshkaty asked to expand the course to include an advisory component so that students may have "coaches."

HS bell schedule questions and concerns popped up repeatedly during the ethics seminar discussion.

## **IMPORTANT DATES:**

- May 12: Board of Education meeting.
- May 14: BHEA Rep. Council meeting.
- May 19: Certificated bargaining session.
- May 19: California special election day. VOTE!