



BEVERLY HILLS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Educational Employees Working Together

Web: BHEA.org

241 Moreno Drive, Beverly Hills CA 90212

Phone: (310) 277-9364



CONSENSUS

A Newsletter for BHEA Members

June 4, 2009



Budget Concerns Grow With Defeat of Propositions

BHUSD will have to plan for more budget cuts in the wake of the May 19 election results, where Californians refused to appropriate revenue to K-12 public schools. Sacramento lawmakers must now grapple with a multi-billion dollar shortfall of revenue. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has proposed billions in cuts to education.

Further cuts to per-pupil funding in Sacramento could land BHUSD into "basic aid" funding sooner rather than later. Over the next few years, BHUSD could sway between basic aid and per-pupil funding. In basic aid funding, BHUSD would get to retain all of its local property tax revenue, resulting in marginally to significantly more total revenue than what we would get from the state. It also means that our funding would no longer be tied to the number of students enrolled or their rate of attendance.

If the legislature makes "mid-year" cuts to the current 2008-2009 education budget, then districts have the right to initiate certificated layoffs in the month of August. BHUSD has no immediate plans to do August layoffs. Supt. Jerry Gross has told BHEA that the district is currently focusing on other non-personnel areas of the budget to make cuts. Gross said at the May 26 Board of Education meeting that the district administration will solicit Board input before recommending specific cuts, that the budget picture is not yet clearly in focus, that cuts may be "severe" on statewide basis, that BHUSD will look at not filling vacant positions as one option, and that BHUSD will work to keep cuts as "far away from the classroom as possible."

BHEA will be in continual contact with the district administration and will advise our members of any and all news related to the possibility of August layoffs.

CTA has issued an advisory to its members on the possibility and process for August layoffs. Go to CTA.org and log on the members-only site for details. The timeframe for August layoffs is very short and the process must conclude by Aug. 15. All members should make sure that their summer contact information is current and correct. Even though BHUSD is not planning for August layoffs at this time, no assurances can be made until our district's revenue picture becomes clear. The following items are still unknown: 1) whether Sacramento will make cuts to our current 08-09 budget and if so, to what extent; 2) whether Sacramento will make cuts to next year's 09-10 budget and if so, to what extent, and 3) whether or not BHUSD will achieve basic aid status in 09-10, which would provide us more money than revenue-limit funding by allowing our district to keep all of its local property tax revenue. It will likely take several more weeks before all three of these variables gel.

Budget Study Session Opens Curtain to Tough Choices

On June 1, the Board of Education had the unenviable task of considering how to shrink the budget in the face of declining revenue. The first of several Board meetings in June will give the community and our members an opportunity to give input into potential budget cuts.

Asst. Supt. of Business Services Cheryl Plotkin presented a grim budget picture of declining revenue as Sacramento gears up for cuts to public education because of the financial turmoil gripping California's budget. Plotkin laid out a timeline for the Board to act on any budget cuts our district ends up enacting, which includes an important June 16 study session dedicated to identifying specific cuts.

One bit of good news that Plotkin announced was that our district received \$1.5 million of unrestricted federal stimulus money as well as \$1.2 million of additional federal stimulus money restricted to special education use. We will also receive \$200,000 of additional Title 1 money from the federal government. These infusions of cash are on a one-time basis and, according to BHUSD, are insufficient to completely close our district's budget gap. BHUSD's preliminary estimates show a \$1.1 million shortfall in 09-10, a \$5.0 million deficit in 10-11, and a \$7.6 million deficit in 11-12. Out-year deficits tend to increase sharply due to the cumulative effect of deficit spending but also tend to evaporate once a balanced budget is achieved.

(Continued on page 2)

President's Message on Budget Cuts

As your president, I want to assure all members that BHEA will be following the unpleasant budget situation in both Sacramento and here in BHUSD throughout the summer. BHEA is committed to sharing with you accurate and timely information. BHEA is committed to safeguarding your rights and advocating on your behalf. BHEA is in daily contact with CTA so that we may provide you the highest level of service during these tough economic times. BHEA is also communicating daily with our district administration, sharing our perspective with the administration, and working to maintain a healthy, strong relationship with the administration. BHEA is also present at all Board of Education meetings, and we will continue to speak to Board members throughout the summer about the critical services that our members provide as cuts are being considered.

Thank you for your participation in our union. I may call on you for support over the coming weeks as this bad budget situation unfolds. Please check your e-mail accounts frequently.

Sincerely,

Chris Bushée

BHEA Certificated President

Summary of May 14 BHEA Representative Council Meeting

- Received several reports on facilities work from various committees: 3-story district office building will be “skinned”; Moreno HS will be moved to this renovated 3-story building; HM annex and rotunda will be demolished and replaced with structures that have more square footage than currently exists. Also reported that our members supported “Option 2” with regard to the use of a proposed Building M at the HS. Reported that Option 2 would house the administration closer to the center of campus in an existing building, rather than in Building M, which is more remote. Reported that some criticism was leveled at our members that our support for Option 2 was to avoid having to walk a longer distance to get to the mailboxes. Reported that the Board of Education voted 3-2 for Option 1, which would house the administration in Building M. BV reported that the current Measure E construction will address fixing errors made during the Measure K construction. HAW reported that our members are very involved in their site facilities committee and that the committee is in close communication with the architects.
- Reported that the April 23 GATE meeting was positive and that over 50 of our members signed up for the next round of voluntary GATE certification training. (The district has since informed our members that, due to loss of funding, this training has been postponed.)
- Reviewed draft language for updating of internal controls for BHEA finances, as recommended by CTA.
- Reviewed various BHEA budget scenarios that could potentially include cuts to our organization’s food expenses and/or a \$1 to \$2 per month increase to local dues. Reported that recent attrition has reduced the number of members in the certificated unit, reducing our dues revenue. The RC will take up approval of the BHEA budget at the June 11 meeting.
- Site representatives tabulated member surveys on the topics of K-8 meetings and K-8 professional development. BHEA will share and discuss results at the June 11 RC meeting. BHEA will then provide feedback to the district administration.
- Discussed the possible use of a new logo in light of a proposal by the PTA for joint use of the same logo by PTA, BHEF, and BHUSD. Some RC members expressed concern about the cost to BHUSD of adopting a new logo so soon after the last adoption of the “sunshine” logo. Some RC members did not like the 5-star design. Some RC members suggested BHEA’s joint use of the logo with PTA, BHEF, and BHUSD on some occasions, while retaining our current “handshake” logo for other occasions.
- Reported frustration at the K-8 sites for scheduling STAR testing over 8 days, contending that it was too long of a time period. Reported that El Rodeo STAR testing took place over 6 days. Reported that the HS STAR testing took place over 4 days.
- Next RC meeting: June 11, 3:45 p.m., Room 118, BHHS. All members are welcome to attend!

(Continued from page 1)

Here are some options that the district administration put forth to the Board to begin considering to save money over the next three years:

- Eliminate class size reduction in 9th and 10th grade.
- Increase K-3 class sizes to 22:1.
- Combine elementary grade levels.
- Move students among the K-8 sites.
- Reduce summer school offerings.
- Reduce art and/or music programs.
- Reduce the technology program.
- Reduce the HS and/or K-8 counseling programs.
- Reduce discretionary school site budgets and/or pull back unspent funds from the current 08-09 school year.
- Reduce the library program.
- Lay off classified staff in one or more of the following areas: district office clerical, school site clerical, maintenance, grounds-keeping, custodial.
- Not fill currently open positions.
- Postpone textbook adoptions.
- Reduce the school year to 175 days.
- Reduce the professional development budget.
- Lay off certificated staff.

During the study session, Board members, administrators, and audience members made comments. Board Vice-Pres. Myra Lurie said she was concerned that Sacramento may try to eliminate basic aid. Plotkin disagreed with Lurie but added that Sacramento may try to eliminate categorical revenue that basic aid districts currently receive. Board member Steve Fenton proposed soliciting BHHS alumni for contributions to increase revenue. Asst. Supt. of Educational Services Ilene Straus said that keeping 9th and 10th grade class size reduction for English is important because of the volume of essays teachers need to evaluate. Straus also advocated keeping 20:1 ratios in math and English classes designed for students who are struggling academically. Lurie suggested replacing small HS English classes with computer “writing programs” to save

money. Straus said that teachers would need training if the district were to pursue combination classes (mixing grade levels) at the K-5 level. She said the impact would be large and that smaller class sizes may be necessary for successful implementation. Fenton said that combination classes may make our district less attractive, but is open to studying the idea. Board member Myra Demeter and Lurie both advocated for keeping cuts away from arts and music programs. Plotkin said that the funding source for three counselor positions (1 HS and 2 K-8) has dried up and asked the Board if they were committed to keeping these positions. Board Pres. Nooshin Meshkaty advocated for keeping HS counselor caseloads low. Demeter praised the work performed by the HS intervention counselor. Meshkaty and Fenton said they were open to considering counselor reductions at the K-8 level. HM Prin. Dawnalyn Murakawa-Leopard said that K-8 counselors perform many important and varied tasks and also play valuable roles during crises. ER Prin. Pat Escalante said that having one dedicated counselor per K-8 site has allowed there to be a middle school focus. Straus added that middle school counseling is important. Meshkaty suggested looking at converting assistant principal positions to “deans” of students. Board member Brian Goldberg said that “human resources” are the most important asset in our district and urged cuts to land elsewhere. Supt. Jerry Gross said that BHUSD is not currently at a point where our district must cut days out of the school year in order to save jobs. Plotkin said that the district is not recommending August layoffs of certificated staff at this time. Lurie supported looking at reductions to the HS library program. Demeter suggested looking at cuts to the psychology program. New special education Dir. Harriet Maglin warned against eliminating psychologist positions, saying it would become a “tight” situation. Lurie asked if some out-sourced special education services could be provided “in-house” as a way to save money.