



BEVERLY HILLS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Educational Employees Working Together

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CONSENSUS

A Newsletter for BHEA Members
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SALARIES

Board to Vote on June 23 on Resolution Authorizing District to Negotiate Salary Reductions

BHEA can confirm to its members that the June 23 Board of Education agenda will include an item that would reserve the district's right to authorize reductions of salaries for our unit members. If passed, the resolution would allow BHUSD to come to the bargaining table during the next school year to negotiate salary reductions. Even though the administration says it must cut \$1.1 million from the 09-10 district budget, it is not preparing for salary reductions for 09-10 at this time, said Supt. Jerry Gross at the June 16 Board of Education study session on budget cuts. At this meeting, the administration did not include salary reductions on its list of potential cuts for the Board to consider.

So where is this idea for a salary reduction resolution coming from? At the June 16 study session, Board Vice-Pres. Myra Lurie introduced the idea in open session as a way to help ensure BHUSD's fiscal solvency in the event that a worst-case scenario pans out for the district budget. Board member Myra Demeter agreed with Lurie, saying that other school districts are passing similar resolutions and that BHUSD must "safeguard" its interests. In response to Lurie's proposal, Board member Steve Fenton said that the "mere idea" of reducing salaries causes anxiety. He said he did not support the idea. Board member Brian Goldberg said he would need more details on what such a resolution would involve, but agreed with Fenton that anxiety would ensue. Board Pres. Nooshin Meshkaty said that such a resolution might be necessary for 10-11, but not for 09-10. The district is predicting much larger deficits for 10-11 than for 09-10. Meshkaty also responded to Demeter, saying that just because a neighboring district is passing such a resolution doesn't mean that BHUSD has to do so. BHEA Pres. Chris Bushée asked during the meeting for the Board's clear direction on this matter, but did not receive such direction, leaving the fate of this resolution in limbo as we head into the June 23 Board meeting. It would take three votes to pass the resolution.

BHEA is mobilizing its members to attend the June 23 Board meeting to speak out against the resolution.

BHEA calls on all members to attend the June 23 Board of Education meeting at 7:00pm in Salter Family Theater at the high school. Your jobs, salaries, and contract rights are all in jeopardy!

JOBS

\$283,000 of Classified Personnel Reductions, Including Four Layoffs, in Play at June 23 Board Meeting

Eliminations, downgrades, and conversions to part-time status of 8 OTBS and CSEA classified positions would save the district \$283,000 in 09-10, according to documents presented by the administration at the June 16 Board of Education study session. These cuts would result in 4 layoffs, 2 reductions from full-time to half-time status, 2 position conversions to lower salaries, and leave 1 currently vacant position unfilled. The administration asked the Board to consider these and other cuts totaling \$1.3 million in an effort to close a projected \$1.1 million budget deficit in 09-10. The administration's proposal included \$7,000 in cuts to administrative personnel, the result of a change of title of a district office administrator position. BHUSD has not proposed elimination of any administrator positions for 09-10.

BHEA Pres. Chris Bushée spoke on behalf of the classified employees who would be affected by the district's proposed cuts, telling the Board that the workers in these positions are valuable assets to our district and that the Board should not pull back from its investment in them. Bushée offered statistics to the Board. By using figures in the district's own budget documents, he reminded the Board that the district already made \$987,000 of non-management personnel reductions

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TABLE SHOWING ACTUAL 2008-2009 CUTS AND PROPOSED 2009-2010 CUTS TO BHUSD PERSONNEL

	Cuts to Non-Management (BHEA and CSEA Unit Members)	Cuts to Administrators
2008-2009	\$987,000	\$81,000
2009-2010	\$283,000	\$7,000
TOTAL	\$1,270,000	\$88,000

Goldberg Proposes Eliminating Four District Office Administrative Positions

At the June 16 Board of Education study session on budget cuts, Board member Brian Goldberg revealed a list of 09-10 cuts he thinks BHUSD should consider as an alternative to the district administration's recommendation. Goldberg's list includes elimination of four district office administrator positions: Director of Business Services, Director of Food Services, Director of Curriculum, and Coordinator of Special Projects. Goldberg pegged the total savings from the elimination of these four positions at \$511,000, which is about half of the \$1.1 million the administration says it needs to cut to balance its 09-10 budget. Goldberg said that "administrative overhead" at the district office has grown over the last 10 years. Goldberg talked about setting priorities. As an example, he said that when he must decide between giving the high school the financial resources to create the best bell schedule for students or keeping directors, he'll choose the former. He said that when he must decide between keeping class sizes small or keeping directors, he'll choose the former.

Board member Myra Demeter disagreed with Goldberg. She said she supports keeping the director positions. As a reason, she said that the Business Services department is already short on secretarial staff. Board Vice-Pres. Myra Lurie said she doesn't support eliminating administrators, saying that they're not just "fat." She said she would be open to reorganization of the administrative staff by separating out the component parts of their jobs. Board member Steve Fenton said that BHUSD was more streamlined administratively many years ago. Board Pres. Nooshin Meshkaty said that smaller student enrollment would justify a "smaller district office."

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and layoffs in this current 08-09 school year, while making only \$81,000 of administrator personnel reductions in 08-09 (see table on Page 1). Combining the 08-09 cuts with all of the proposed 09-10 cuts, the district would be making \$1,270,000 of non-management personnel reductions over this two year period, while making only \$88,000 of administrator personnel reductions. Bushée said that BHUSD spends about \$32 million on salaries for all employees. Of this, he said, around \$3 million is spent on administrator salaries, about one-tenth of the total. He then pointed out to the Board that \$88,000 in cuts to administrator salaries over two years should correspond to no more than \$880,000 in non-management salary cuts over the same time period without assuming any over-staffing in administration. Since the Board has already made \$987,000 in non-management salary cuts, Bushée argued that 08-09 budget cuts have already had a disproportionately large impact on our unit members and would only be exacerbated by \$283,000 of additional non-management personnel cuts in 09-10. Bushée concluded by suggesting that the Board retain all of the targeted classified positions and use a tiny fraction of the district's \$2 million reserve to close next year's budget gap.

Board member Brian Goldberg suggested using \$250,000 of a separate \$1 million "basic aid" reserve to help close the budget gap. Board member Steve Fenton agreed with Goldberg. Board Vice-Pres. Myra Lurie and Board member Myra Demeter disagreed with Goldberg's proposal, with Demeter saying that now is the time to make "hard" choices. Board Pres. Nooshin Meshkaty did not commit one way or another to Goldberg's proposal. The Board finally agreed to simply revisit the amount of the basic aid reserve at each budget session.

There appeared to be some support for retaining a HS security guard position. However, the study session ended without clear Board direction on the other 7 targeted classified positions and Board members engaged in very little actual discussion of the proposed classified cuts.

As Board members began packing up their papers in a signal to end the meeting, Bushée asked to speak and was recognized by Meshkaty. Bushée said he was "confounded" that there had been so little discussion by the Board on the contributions of the classified staff members whose salaries and jobs were being targeted.

CONTRACT RIGHTS

District Postpones Approval of BHEA-BHUSD Tentative Agreement

BHEA can confirm that BHUSD will *not* put on its June 23 Board of Education agenda consideration of approval of this school year's tentative agreement for our certificated unit. This decision comes as a shock to BHEA, considering that all bargaining team members for both BHEA and BHUSD agreed to an approval timeline for this agreement. The last step of this timeline is Board approval of the agreement on June 23. BHEA expressed a desire to have the agreement in place prior to July 1 because one of the contract changes would give new child-enrollment rights to our members before a June 30 deadline later this month.

BHEA will not speculate as to why the district has chosen this course of action, but rather will ask the Board of Education publicly on June 23 why such a delay is necessary. BHEA will also ask the Board to schedule a special meeting no later than June 30 to approve the agreement. Brown Act restrictions prevent the Board from voting on items that do not appear on the agenda.

For your information, BHEA has acted professionally and competently throughout this bargaining year and has protected its members' interests by following all negotiations protocols governed by California's Educational Employment Relations Act. Our bargaining team has met monthly, sometimes twice-monthly with BHEA's Executive Board to give updates and receive direction in line with our union's interests. The Executive Board has given our team the latitude and authority to negotiate and move forward on issues at every bargaining session we have attended. We successfully reached a tentative agreement on June 3 with the district on several items, an agreement supported by all members of both BHEA's and BHUSD's bargaining teams. BHEA announced the details of this agreement on June 8 to its members. We held a general meeting of the membership on June 10 to explain the agreement and answer any questions. We conducted a successful ratification of the agreement on June 15, with about two-thirds of our certificated membership participating in the ratification, resulting in 190 YES votes and 6 NO votes, or a 97% approval rating.

BHEA firmly believes that the 20-day time period between the signing of the tentative agreement on June 3 and the Board of Education meeting on June 23 is a sufficient amount of time for our Board members to review the agreement and be able to make an informed decision on whether or not to approve it. BHEA believes that our Board of Education has a professional responsibility to fulfill its bargaining duties.