



BEVERLY HILLS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Educational Employees Working Together

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Letter to Editors of the Beverly Hills *Weekly* and the Beverly Hills *Courier*.

The Beverly Hills Unified School District has lost its way. Our superintendent's priorities lie first with shoring up the egos of the district office administration and second with the needs of our students. I condemn the Board of Education's action last week to eliminate 10% of the teaching force (33 teachers) and \$210,000 of classroom supplies while letting go of only *one* half-time administrator. Our superintendent recommended \$2.9 million in cuts to classroom jobs and only \$95,000 in cuts to administrator jobs. The district office has become a bloated "ivory tower" that employs one and a half times as many district office administrators (18) as school-site administrators (12). The district office is a drain on needed student funds, a drain on employee morale, and a drain on the taxpayers of Beverly Hills.

The Las Virgenes Unified School District recently performed a study of 21 school districts similar in size, constituency, and/or resources to Beverly Hills, including Santa Monica, Palos Verdes, La Cañada, and San Marino. In this study, Beverly Hills ranks 17 out of 21 in the percentage of the budget spent on instruction. However, Beverly Hills comes in 2nd place in student enrollment per district-level administrator. With the exception of Santa Monica, Beverly Hills has more district office administrators per number of enrolled students than any of the other districts on the list. And finally, Beverly Hills ranks #1 in district administrative costs per student. We spend about \$900 in administrative costs for each student enrolled. The average for the 21 districts is only \$460 per student.

The teachers of our district are on the front lines of education. They teach, counsel, assist, and provide direct support to our students on a minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour basis. Teachers' frequent, daily interactions with students make the learning occur. Period. Especially in these austere economic times, our classrooms need all of the resources the district can possibly provide.

Layer upon layer of think-tank, bureaucratic waste at our district office has resulted in an endless stream of meaningless busy-work being hyped as "reform." It has created resentment among the staff and is driving our district into the ground. Teachers need a supportive district office that provides them time, resources, and respect for the profession. A year and a half into the current administration has resulted in the exact opposite. Teachers now have less time to fulfill their classroom duties; less freedom to innovate; a greater number of valueless meetings to attend; and more scripted, top-down management to endure than ever before.

Community members must raise their collective voice. The quality of our students' education is being compromised by a district office administration more concerned with justifying its own perpetuity than with providing for the needs of the classroom. Please come to the March 11 Board of Education meeting and let your voice be heard. If you cannot attend, then please send an e-mail to your Board member (mdemeter@bhusd.k12.ca.us),

nmeshkaty@bhusd.k12.ca.us, mlurie@bhusd.k12.ca.us, sfenton@bhusd.k12.ca.us, bgoldberg@bhusd.k12.ca.us). The teachers of Beverly Hills strive to provide the highest quality education for our students, but find themselves under assault from an administration run amuck. Your vocal support is critical to help us preserve the integrity of our educational programs.

Christopher Bushée
President, Beverly Hills Education Association