



BEVERLY HILLS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Educational Employees Working Together

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April 28, 2010

Letter to Editor of Beverly Hills *Weekly*:

I wish to inform the community that on May 11, the school district administration is planning to present to the Board of Education a resolution that would take final action on laying off ten teachers: two Beverly Vista elementary teachers, three El Rodeo elementary teachers, one Horace Mann elementary teacher, one El Rodeo middle school physical education teacher, one high school math teacher, one high school English teacher, and one high school physical education teacher. These layoffs are involuntary and most of the affected teachers would continue teaching our students next year if allowed to return.

Although the general economy has been poor for some time now, our school district is fortunate to have sturdy buffers in place to minimize the negative impacts facing so many other districts. Our district enjoys basic aid status, which will bring in \$8 million of additional revenue for the two-year period 2009-2011 compared to funding we would have received from Sacramento. Our district also enjoys strong ties with the City of Beverly Hills, including a joint powers agreement that is a win-win for everyone. Residents gain access to the use of district facilities during non-school hours and our district receives generous financial support totaling \$22 million for the two-year period 2009-2011. Finally, our district receives financial donations from BHEF and PTA, our hard-working fundraising organizations whose support we greatly appreciate.

With so much additional revenue, no public school district in the state of California, perhaps with the exception of Palo Alto, has more money to spend per pupil than Beverly Hills Unified. Our exceedingly healthy budget is the envy of the state and should rule out the need for layoffs, furloughs, and salary cuts. The administration's efforts to convince a skeptical community that over \$1,000,000 of layoffs and furloughs to classroom teachers is necessary to balance the budget have not been sufficient nor convincing. BHEA has offered multiple options over the last three months to help the district focus on other areas of the budget to address its perceived deficits. I commend the district for the positive steps it has taken so far, but we continue to await further budget analysis and further budget clarity as these ten layoffs still loom.

I invite you to join teachers on May 11 at the school board meeting. Until we gain more confidence in the budget, we continue to believe that the district has other financial options available that do not include layoffs. Layoffs represent a morale issue for teachers and an educational quality issue for students. It's not too late for the district to forge its own path, lead us to brighter days, and stand by its investment in our children's teachers.

Christopher Bushée
Beverly Hills Education Association