



BEVERLY HILLS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Educational Employees Working Together

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Speech on budget cuts delivered by BHEA Pres. Chris Bushée at the June 16, 2009 Board of Education study session:

“Good evening. I have reviewed the budget guidelines on tonight’s agenda. In an effort to maintain high quality education and avoid laying off certificated and classified personnel, I suggest dipping into our 4% reserve, which is meant to be used in times of economic uncertainty. I believe what’s going on with the education budget in Sacramento right now qualifies as economic uncertainty. As you know, the state only requires us to maintain a 3% reserve. So, I suggest drawing down the reserve to 3% but also investigate the conditions under which the state allows us to use part of this 3% to withstand this economic downturn. Reserves wouldn’t exist unless there were reasons to use them. Our state’s finances are in utter turmoil. Now would seem an appropriate time to spend a portion of our reserves.

I suggest delaying the creation of a basic aid reserve and instead spend this money for the immediate benefit of our students.

I have reviewed the budget assumptions on tonight’s agenda. The district has publicly expressed an interest in possibly increasing class sizes in K-3 up to 22 students per teacher in an effort to reduce the need to hire more teachers. I believe that teachers, administrators, and parents are committed to full utilization of the state’s class size reduction program, intended to create K-3 class sizes of 20 to 1. Because the state has virtually eliminated the financial penalties for going up to 22 to 1, this has put districts in the uncomfortable position of trying to honor the spirit of the class size reduction program while simultaneously trying to balance their budgets in these hard economic times. BHEA and BHUSD have a trustworthy relationship at the bargaining table and I am hopeful that any negotiations that may arise on the subject of class size will result in a mutually agreeable solution...because going to 22 to 1 would require a change in our employment contract.

I suggest that the district include our current technology teachers in discussions that look at integrating technology into the regular classroom before changing, reducing, or eliminating our technology program.

I suggest that the district not use the August 15 layoff procedure for non-management certificated personnel.

I suggest that the district maintain the spirit of Morgan-Hart class size reduction in 9th and 10th grade, keeping in mind that cuts to Morgan-Hart have a direct, immediate, negative impact on the classroom by reducing the amount of individual attention each student receives.

I suggest that the district not add new educational programs for next year.

I suggest that if the district makes the dire decision to lay off certificated or classified personnel, that BHEA’s unit members not continue to bear a disproportionate amount of the cuts in comparison with administrators.”