



BEVERLY HILLS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Educational Employees Working Together

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Speech on new district direction delivered by BHEA Pres. Chris Bushée at the December 7, 2009 Board of Education meeting:

“Good evening, members of the Board of Education and administrative staff. I congratulate Lisa Korbатов and Jake Manaster on their victories in the Nov. 3 school board election. I recognize Steven Fenton, Brian Goldberg, and Myra Lurie for their continued service on our Board of Education. I acknowledge Nooshin Meshkaty and Myra Demeter for their service on the board and wish both of them well in their future endeavors.

Classroom teachers, counselors, program specialists, psychologists, librarian, nurse, occupational therapists, speech therapists, secretaries, clerks, technicians, and instructional assistants. We are the Beverly Hills Education Association. We proudly serve the school community and we call upon the Board to support us in the hard, honest work of educating today’s youth and tomorrow’s future.

Politics and education would seem to be unlikely bedfellows. Parents expect decisions about their children’s education to be insulated from politics. Educators expect their professional judgments about the learning environment, their academic freedom, to be insulated from politics. School is perceived as a special, almost magical place that is sheltered from the vagaries of the real world, the political world.

Juxtaposed upon this dreamy image is the fact that the governance of our schools is determined from the most basic political process of our democracy, elections. Therefore, it is healthy to recognize that even though the inside of the classroom thrives when politics are left at the door, the major issues facing our schools should be and must be decided in the political arena...through open, honest, respectful discussion that, while at times uncomfortable, will lead to amicable decisions in the end.

As the president of BHEA, I will remain optimistic. There may come a day when BHEA and the Beverly Hills Unified School District can no longer sustain productive, results-oriented communication...but it is not this day. There may come a day when BHEA members lose faith in the district to be responsive to our needs and to those of our students...but it is not this day. There may come a day when we feel we need to stop building bridges and start building fences...but it is not this day.

This day we walk out of this auditorium with our heads up high. This day we call on ourselves and on the district to rise above the feelings of despair and recommit to substantive, two-way communication between our respective organizations. This day we ask the district to acknowledge our call...because our ability to communicate effectively and grow mutual respect is the key to maintaining a learning environment that is both excellent and worthy of our students’ hopes and desires.

Thank you and here’s to a nice evening together.”