



BEVERLY HILLS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Educational Employees Working Together

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Speech on curriculum, salaries, and turnover of staff delivered by BHEA Pres. Chris Bushée at the Oct. 9 Board of Education meeting:

Good evening. There are a couple of discrepancies I'd like to clear up. Recently, I heard Ms. Roston tell the community that high school teachers and administrators met for a whole year to work on a solution to the test release issue and that the end result was to keep the status quo. There are two inaccuracies here. I was on the task force that crafted a compromise two years ago. The bulk of our collaborative work was completed in two months, from March to May of 2005. We took the summer off and then met again in September of that year to finalize details. We generated a 3-page assessment vision document that, among other things, called for the release of 25% of the questions on our benchmark exams precisely so that parents and students could gain insight into the kinds of questions asked on tests. This became the policy at the high school until November of last year, when our district reignited the issue by killing this policy and replacing it with a directive that did little more than inflame passions and divide us.

Also, I recently heard Ms. Lurie tell the community that some teachers received raises as high as 13% last year. The average salary increase last year was 4.4%. Due to our restructuring of the salary schedule, individual increases ranged from 3 to 7% according to data provided at the bargaining table by the administration, showing 90% of the staff receiving raises of 5% or less.

Now, considering the mass exodus of staff from our district in the last few years, I sympathize with our Board members' desire to put the best spin possible on the compensation package offered to teachers. Given our divisions on curricular issues and our district's lagging competitiveness in salary and benefits, it's no wonder that almost 40% of our certificated staff has been hired since 2004. It's no wonder that 60% of our certificated administrators have been hired since 2005. It's no wonder that 139 of our 353 teachers and administrators have been hired in the last four years. Now, in all fairness, the longer you go back in time, the more likely you are to have situations where someone was hired, say in 1988, stayed for 10 years, and then left our district. That person would not show as a hire in 1988 on this graph (*see graph on next page*) because this graph shows the seniority dates of current employees only, not those who have come and gone. However, look at the trend since 1968 and notice how out of proportion the last four years has been. If one were to continue with the general trend over the last 40 years, we might have expected 40 to 60 hires since 2004. As you can see by this bar, we actually hired 3 to 3.5 times that many.

In closing, I'll say that I think high turnover has been a problem in our district over the last few years. I think it has destabilized the learning environment. I think the lack of continuity due to so many changes has presented monumental challenges for our district. I think this discussion belongs in the public forum. Thank you.

Seniority Dates of Certificated Staff in 4-Year Periods

