

## UPDATE

Week of September 7, 2009

### TRANSPARENCY HAS LEFT THE BUILDING

Let's start with the facts: On Tuesday, September 1, 2009, as we reported last week, the Board of Education held a "special" meeting—not in the Board Room where they regularly meet—but rather in the "Blue Room." The meeting was not televised! The single topic was proposed changes in the Board meeting schedule and procedures. The meeting was posted forty-eight hours ahead of time to meet requirements of the Brown Act. AALA knows of no other advertisement of this meeting. Seven people made up the audience. Can you imagine what would happen if a school principal posted his/her scheduled meeting forty-eight hours in advance with no other communication to staff, parents, or community members? It appears that, minus the cigars, our Board is attempting to adopt the Boss Tweed era procedures of closed-door meetings, where policies are determined without open discussion and diverse points of view! Who has the responsibility of holding the Board accountable? Principals are held accountable by their parents, staff, community members, Local District staff, and the Board itself.

A principal is required to:

- Post agendas
- Provide meeting notification in a timely manner
- Allow open discussion on all agenda items
- Provide time for public comment
- Permit open community participation
- Provide committees for such areas as budget, calendar, curriculum, and safety
- Ensure proportional representation
- Provide for sign-in sheets in blue ink

If a principal attempted eliminating any of these requirements he/she would get in big trouble and lose critical funds. School-site administrators are held to strict regulations when it comes to School Site Council, CEAC, ELAC, SBM, LSLC, and faculty meetings. There are notebooks and bulletins on how to conduct meetings to which site administrators must adhere. The majority of the Board seems to want to do away with public comment, community engagement, and democratic participation. Shouldn't Board members be held accountable? Are there different norms and standards for the Board of Education? Principals must respond to alleged compliance violations. What about the Board? Transparency has left the building!

### More Questions for the Board

The LAUSD Board hurriedly convened another special meeting on September 8, 2009, with a single agenda item, a resolution sponsored by **Yolie Flores Aguilar** to get Board support for State Senate Bill X5 1, which claims to make California eligible for federal one-time *Race to the Top* funds. SB X5 1 provides for the use of student test data in teacher and administrator evaluations. It lifts the cap on the number of charter schools in the State and creates an open enrollment system, allowing students from low-performing schools to transfer to schools in other zip codes or districts. It also forces the 5% of schools with the lowest API scores to have redesigned governance.

### MORE QUESTIONS FOR THE BOARD (Continued)

The Board voted 4 to 2 in favor of this resolution, with **Marguerite LaMotte** and **Steve Zimmer** voting in opposition. (**Richard Vladovic** was absent.) Remember, the State legislature has not voted on this bill and will not for some time.

- Why are State lawmakers pushing to incorporate federal law into State statute?
- What sense does it make to change State law for possible one-time federal funds?
- Since Race to the Top is a competition among states, where is the guarantee California would even get the federal funds?
- Why did our Board of Education rush to convene another last-minute meeting, which severely limited public discussion on an important educational issue?
- What political alliances are being forged among Board members aspiring to statewide political office, the governor, and State legislators?
- Did anyone read the bill before voting?
- Has transparency left the building for good?

## AALA NEGOTIATIONS SURVEY RESULTS: *Winning the Tools to Improve Our Schools*

In preparation for negotiating AALA's three-year contract with LAUSD, we surveyed all active members between August 3 and August 21, 2009, to determine our members' priorities. The bargaining team has completed the analysis of the 1,032 survey responses we received and has begun crafting our proposals. Here are some major survey findings:

- Health benefits ranked as the highest priority for members, followed by compensation, administrative workload and advancement opportunities, respectively.
- Maintenance of health benefits at current levels is a top priority. Members overwhelmingly emphasized the importance of their benefits for their families, spouses, dependents, and into retirement.
- AALA members overwhelmingly endorsed adding to or modifying contract language related to improving working conditions.

As you know, health benefits are negotiated with benefits providers separately by the Health Benefits Committee (HBC), which represents all LAUSD unions and the District. We will continue to provide you information about HBC negotiations and agreements in our weekly *Health Benefits FAQ* column.

In response to your priorities, our contract negotiations will focus on **working conditions** for administrators in schools and offices. Increased compensation will not be a bargaining highlight this year because of the District budget. However, we will demand parity with other unions in case they negotiate a raise for their members. Look in future issues of *Update* for news about the progress of negotiations and how you may help.

## AALA WELCOMES MIKE PEREZ and STEVE QUON

Recently retired administrator **Mike Perez** has joined the AALA staff as a part-time Consultant. Mike has a strong administrative leadership background, having served as a principal and a director. He has had numerous successful administrative experiences at Gardena High School, Elizabeth Learning Center, South Gate Middle School, and Jordan High School. Mike's experience and service attitude will serve AALA members well.

AALA is pleased to announce that recent retiree **Steve Quon** will be joining the AALA staff. Steve has served the District well in a variety of administrative capacities. Steve's experiences include serving as principal of Marshall High School and as a District Staff Relations Coordinator. His role with AALA will be as a Field Representative serving school-site administrators.

**NOTICE!**  
**AALA**  
**IS MOVING UP!**  
**...TO THE 8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR (Suite 850)**

The moving date is the week of September 14, 2009. However, there are many logistical issues that must take place before the office can become operational again, such as:

- Equipment has to be disconnected, moved and reconnected (computers and peripherals, phones, inserter, copy machines, postage machines).
- Desks, file cabinets, bookcases, kitchen equipment, and paper inventory need to be moved and rearranged.

This MAY require closing the office down for a few days. The UPDATE will not be published during the week of September 14. We will keep you informed via e-mail.

## ***NOTICE***

**Next week, the week of September 14, 2009, the UPDATE will not be published, due to our move to the 8<sup>th</sup> floor.**

## **POSITIONS AVAILABLE**

**can be viewed in their entirety by accessing the AALA website, <http://www.aalausd.com>. Click on "Positions Available" on the menu on the left of the website. Select either "School-based Positions" or "Nonschool-based Positions" and click on any position to view the specific flyer.**

## **REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

All employees, school-based or not, are required to report **reasonable suspicion** of child abuse. Any type of abuse—sexual, physical, emotional, or neglect—at the hands of anyone including an adult such as an employee or parent or another student must be reported whether it happens on or off campus. It must be reported immediately to the proper child protection authorities—immediately by and in writing within 36 hours. **Reasonable suspicion equals reporting!**

Reasonable suspicion of abuse must be reported to the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, or a local law enforcement agency such as the Los Angeles Police Department or the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, depending on your location. Telling a member of the school police department is **NOT** sufficient because that department is not a child protective agency. Neither is reporting the incident to a supervisor, although inappropriate conduct by an LAUSD employee must be reported to a supervising administrator. **You are not to investigate an incident yourself.** Let the professionals handle it. Even if you are not certain of the facts, it's best to report it. **WHEN IN DOUBT, REPORT IT!**

## HEALTH BENEFITS FAQ\*

### *How can AALA members save on out-of-pocket medical costs?*

#### *Flexible Spending Accounts*

If you are an active employee and can estimate some of your known out-of-pocket health care expenses for the coming calendar year, you are a candidate for the Health Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA). Flexible spending accounts allow you to pay for certain health care and dependent care expenses using tax-free pay. The District offers two special tax-savings accounts to eligible employees: a) Health Care FSA and b) Dependent Care FSA.

Only expenses incurred by you and the dependents you claim on your federal tax return can be reimbursed through the Health Care FSA. Expenses for domestic partners and children of domestic partners are not eligible for reimbursement. There is a “Use It or Lose It” Rule. Any money remaining in your FSA accounts after a 2½-month extension into the following calendar year will be forfeited.

#### *Health Care FSA – Examples of Eligible and Ineligible Medical Expenses*

Eligible out-of-pocket costs include deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, over-the-counter (OTC) medications, orthodontia or other planned dental treatments, LASIK, prescription eyewear and contact lenses, OTC contact lens cleaners and solutions, and other expenses not covered or only partially covered by your medical plan. Ineligible health care expense examples include maternity clothes, fees or dues for exercise clubs or classes, premiums on health care plans and long-term care plan, products such as exercise equipment, whirlpools and saunas, charges for vitamins, and cosmetic surgery (unless it is directly related to a mastectomy).

#### *Dependent Care FSA – Examples of Eligible and Ineligible Expenses*

Eligible expenses include child or adult day care services provided in your home, including Social Security taxes paid on behalf of your employee, child or adult day care services provided at someone else’s home, expenses for a licensed day care center, a portion of wages for a housekeeper whose duties include caring for a qualified dependent, schooling costs for children not yet in kindergarten (if it cannot be separated from the cost of care). Ineligible expense examples include babysitting charges for non-work hours, charges paid to one of your dependent children under age 19, charges paid to someone who doesn’t report income to the IRS, kindergarten or overnight camp, and charges incurred if your spouse is not working, not going to school full time for at least five months, or is not disabled.

#### *Some Restrictions in Coverage*

Only expenses incurred by yourself and dependents you claim on your federal tax return can be reimbursed through the Health Care FSA. Expenses for domestic partners and children of domestic partners are not eligible for reimbursement.

## HEALTH BENEFITS FAQ (Continued)

### *How Much to Put Aside*

When you enroll, you decide how much pay to set aside for the Health Care FSA and/or Dependent Care FSA. A maximum of \$5,000 per year per household is allowable. Your annual contribution will be divided equally and deducted from your pay throughout the year. The minimum contribution is \$120 annually. No taxes will be deducted from the money you set aside.

### *Reimbursements*

When you have an eligible expense, you pay for the expense and file for reimbursement from your FSA. You are reimbursed with your own money from the appropriate account, and the money remains untaxed. The District pays the full cost of administering these FSA accounts.

### *Enrollment*

You may enroll in either FSA (Health FSA or Dependent Care FSA) during the annual Benefits Open Enrollment period. The FSA plans run on a calendar year basis, from January 1st to December 31st.

### *Other Information*

For a guide to eligible and ineligible health care expenses, visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) to retrieve the most current editions of the IRS Publications 502 and 503. Please note that the IRS publications are not definitive guides to what is reimbursable under the District's FSAs.

For more information regarding the District FSAs programs, visit the Benefits website at <http://benefits.lausd.net>.

*\*Question responses have been supplied by the District. While some lengthier responses may have been shortened, the key information remains the same.*

### **For Your Information –**

## **ATTENTION: Principals**

Many of your teachers may be interested in becoming a School Counselor and/or a School Psychologist. Tell them about PHILLIPS GRADUATE INSTITUTE located in Encino. The program's primary goal is to train capable, self-reliant educators to become effective School Counselors/School Psychologists. School Counselors can be alerted that Phillips Graduate Institute offers these programs and credentials as well as the PSA (Child Welfare and Attendance) Credential.

Classes are flexible and designed to accommodate the busy lives of working adults with evening and weekend schedules available.

For more information about the School Counselor/PPS/CWA program, contact **Maria Elena Tostado** at 818.386.5648 or e-mail [mtostado@pgi.edu](mailto:mtostado@pgi.edu). For information about the School Psychologist program, contact **Barbara Fuller** at 818.654.1706 or e-mail [bfuller@pgi.edu](mailto:bfuller@pgi.edu). Visit the website at [www.pgi.edu](http://www.pgi.edu).

**TECHNIQUES TO USE WHEN CALLED TO A CONFERENCE**

1. Ascertain the nature and purpose of the conference.
  - a. Disciplinary? (If so, contact AALA immediately. You have a contractual right to have a representative present.)
  - b. For discussion purposes?
  - c. A sharing of information?
  - d. Fact-finding?
  - e. Will a Conference Memo be sent to you after the meeting?
2. Determine who will be present at the conference. (IMPORTANT: see #6)
3. To the degree possible, prepare for the conference by:
  - a. Placing your facts in chronological order.
  - b. Gathering written statements from witnesses that may support your position.
4. Do not over respond to questions — state the facts succinctly — only respond to the question(s) asked.
  - a. It may be a good idea to prepare a set of notes (if the subject of the conference is known).
  - b. It is OK to say, "I don't recall" or "I don't know."
5. Do not permit the conference to be electronically recorded.
6. If the person holding the conference with you has an additional person present, you are also entitled to have someone with you.
7. Take notes of key items discussed during the conference, especially those items which you may wish to research or respond to following the conference.
8. Do not engage in "off the record" comments. Oftentimes "off-the-record statements" become part of the record!

**NOTE: You need to provide a written response to any Conference Memos.**

**WHEN IN DOUBT CONTACT AALA**

*REMINDER...*  
*ANNUAL AALA RECEPTION*  
Honoring AALA Members, Board Members,  
and the Superintendent

ALL ACTIVE and RETIRED MEMBERS, and FRIENDS  
ARE INVITED  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2009  
4:30 - 7:00 p.m.

*THE CENTER AT CATHEDRAL PLAZA*  
*555 W. TEMPLE STREET, LOS ANGELES*

PLEASE RSVP TO: AALA, 1910 Sunset Blvd., Suite 510, Los Angeles, CA 90026  
Phone: 213.484.2226 - Fax: 213.484.0201 – E-mail: [rsvp@aala.us](mailto:rsvp@aala.us)

*VALIDATED PARKING IN THE CATHEDRAL PARKING STRUCTURE*

**POSITIONS AVAILABLE**

**Minimum Qualifications:** Candidates are responsible for making sure all the District requirements have been met. Do not contact AALA for information regarding positions. Use the listed contact phone number.

***ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, VISUALLY IMPAIRED***

**Frances Blend School (4) MST 37**, 5210 Clinton Street, Los Angeles, CA 90004 AND –  
**Van Ness Avenue School (4)**, 501 North Van Ness Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90004

Blend is a B Basis school for the blind or visually impaired. Van Ness is a B Basis school and has an integrated visually impaired population. For information and application procedures contact **Luis Valentino**, Director, School Services, at 213.241.0132. **Filing deadline is Monday, September 21, 2009.**

THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO VIEW IN THEIR ENTIRETY BY GOING TO THE AALA WEBSITE, <http://www.aalausd.com>. BY CLICKING ON “POSITIONS AVAILABLE” TO THE LEFT OF THE SCREEN, YOU CAN SELECT NONSCHOOL-BASED POSITIONS AND CLICK ON ANY POSITION TO VIEW THE SPECIFIC FLYER.

POSITION	FILING DEADLINE
<b>Specialist, Least Restrictive Environment, Temp. Adv., MST 38, B Basis, Division of Special Education, Support Unit-North.</b> For information and application procedures contact <b>Cheryl Krohn</b> at 818.256.2800.	<b>5:00 p.m., Friday, Sept. 18, 2009</b>
<b>Coordinator, Pre-K–12 School Counseling, Temp. Adv., MST 41, B Basis, Local District 1, 3, 6</b> (1 position for each). For information and application procedures contact <b>Sharon Riley</b> at 213.241.5333.	<b>EXTENDED TO 5:00 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 17, 2009</b>
<b>Specialist, BTSA Induction, Temp. Adv., MST 38, B Basis, Teacher Support Unit.</b> For information and application procedures contact <b>Peggy Taylor Presley</b> , Director, at 323.932.4690.	<b>5:00 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2009</b>
<b>Specialist, Pre-K–12 English Learner Programs, Temp. Adv., MST 38, B Basis, Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and School support.</b> For information and application procedures contact <b>Carole Rose-Johnson</b> , Administrator, at 213.241.5333.	<b>EXTENDED TO 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2009</b>

**PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED POSITIONS STILL AVAILABLE**

Position	Location	Deadline	Contact
<b>Director of Instructional and Operational Oversight</b>	Charter Schools Division	<b>UNTIL FILLED</b>	213.241.2656
<b>Principal, Secondary</b>	West Adams Preparatory High School - <b>DEADLINE EXTENDED TO</b>	<b>09/30/09</b>	<b>213.745.4928</b>
<b>Asst. Prin., SCS</b>	Garfield High School	09/15/09	323.224.3120
<b>Asst. Prin., SCS</b>	El Sereno Middle School	09/18/09	323.224.3120
<b>Asst. Prin., Special Education</b>	Willenberg Special Education Center	09/18/09	310.354.3400