

UPDATE

Week of September 13, 2010

HARD LESSONS FOR JOURNALISTS

James Rainey, in his *L.A. Times* piece, “Hard lessons for Teachers” (*On The Media*, September 4, 2010), has unsuccessfully attempted to justify the *Times*’ publication of the names of 6,000 teachers based on how they fared in a questionable analysis of student test scores. The names were published in August following a series of three articles by *Times* reporters **Jason Song** and **Jason Felch**.

“What’s fair when private and public interests collide?” Rainey asks. Based on the assumption that the public has the right to know if their neighborhood school is performing well, the *Times* regularly publishes schools’ Academic Performance Index (API) scores, which are based on students’ standardized test results. The *Times* also publishes schools’ test scores for selected grade levels each year. Furthermore, the federal NCLB law has required schools to inform parents if their child’s individual teacher is not “highly qualified,” meaning the teacher lacks the appropriate teaching credential. Nevertheless, these actions are different from releasing teachers’ names for all to see. Does the public have the right to know about an individual teacher’s performance evaluation? California state law says no, even as the *Times* created a firestorm by releasing the names of the 6,000 teachers.

Rainey views this point as a mere technicality because LAUSD had not yet formalized the inclusion of value-added data in teacher evaluation when they published the names. He ignores the fact that in April 2009, the Board of Education established a taskforce to recommend ways to improve the current evaluation system. In April 2010, the taskforce presented its recommendations to the Board, which included student test data as one of multiple measures. On August 31, 2010, the Board approved the use of value-added data in teacher evaluation as part of an evaluation system that is in the process of development. The Board directed the Superintendent to sunshine initial bargaining proposals for AALA and UTLA at the Board meeting of September 15, 2010, to address evaluation.

Despite Rainey’s cavalier attitude toward confidentiality, the issue is not trivial. Where indeed does the public’s right to know end and the employee’s right to privacy begin? There is a narrow line between public and private interests, particularly in the case of public education, which touches us all, as parents, educators and taxpayers.

LAUSD is not blameless in this situation. The fact is that the *Times* requested the teachers’ names, schools and student scores under California’s Public Records Act. With the support of legal counsel, LAUSD released the information. AALA questions both the District’s judgment in this case and the *Times*’ actions. Confidentiality exists for good reasons, not the least of which is to create a positive environment for professional growth.

Rainey’s premise is that the *Times* took the “road less traveled,” which will lead to “a better way to figure out who is good at teaching and who is not.” However, the main purpose of teacher evaluation is

HARD LESSONS FOR JOURNALISTS (Continued)

the improvement of teacher effectiveness, not to inform the public which teachers are “good” or “bad.” Teaching is a craft to be practiced and honed over a lifetime. Public humiliation inspires fear, not trust. When a person is fearful, the tendency is to hide and avoid scrutiny—hardly an incentive for embracing improvement. How will the District regain teachers’ trust?

The *Times*’ publication of teachers’ names did not aid the cause of improved teacher evaluation. The paper’s actions set back needed improvements, which—despite Rainey’s claims—AALA, UTLA and the District agree are necessary. Ultimately, by using the excuse of the public’s right to know, the *L.A. Times*, in fact, has betrayed the public trust.

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS

At the Board of Education meeting on August 31, 2010, AALA President Dr. Judith Perez made the following comments about the new administrative procedures manual for charter school authorization. The manual contains a comprehensive section on Special Education. AALA has been informed that the Charter School Association and charter school representatives have lobbied Board members heavily in recent days to have this section removed from the manual.

Good afternoon, Madame President, Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent and Board Members. My name is Judith Perez, and I am President of Associated Administrators of Los Angeles. I am also authorized to speak today on behalf of **A. J. Duffy**, UTLA President and special education teacher.

We wish to commend the District for a specific section of the *Administrative Procedures Manual for Charter School Authorizing*, the one related to Special Education. We know that all public schools must meet the requirements of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which requires states and local education agencies that accept federal funds to ensure “a free appropriate public education” for children with disabilities. **As our Superintendent frequently reminds us, LAUSD charter schools are public schools; charter school students are our students. Therefore, charter schools must abide by the U. S. Constitution and the law.**

Furthermore, all charter schools authorized by LAUSD must adhere to the terms, conditions and requirements of the Modified Consent Decree, an agreement to settle a federal class action lawsuit brought against the District on behalf of students with disabilities. I hope you have all read the Independent Monitor’s illuminating June 5, 2010, compliance report on charter schools and Special Education.

Every public school must provide a sound educational program for every child and must serve all students. Research conducted last year revealed that 11% of LAUSD students receive Special Education services, but only 7% of those in charters do—and they have mild disabilities. The likelihood that students with special needs are enrolled in charters is only one-fourth the likelihood of their enrollment in traditional public schools. AALA has been informed of cases where charter schools have discouraged parents of Special Needs students from enrolling them

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS (Continued)

and counseled them to return to a traditional school. If this pattern is allowed to continue, students with special needs will be segregated in a few schools. Such discrimination violates the letter and spirit of the law.

Finally, the failure of so many charters to serve all students equitably skews their academic performance results. Simply stated, charters may appear to do an excellent job, but they do not serve a comparable population of students.

For all of these reasons, both AALA and UTLA presidents support the Special Education section of the charter schools administrative procedures manual.

DOES VALUE ADDED REALLY ADD UP?

In a new Economic Policy Institute (EPI) briefing paper (August 29, 2010), leading educational testing experts caution against heavy reliance on the use of test scores in teacher evaluation.

Student test scores are not reliable indicators of teacher effectiveness, even with the addition of value-added modeling (VAM), a new Economic Policy Institute report by leading testing experts finds. Though VAM methods have allowed for more sophisticated comparisons of teachers than were possible in the past, they are still inaccurate, so test scores should not dominate the information used by school officials in making high-stakes decisions about the evaluation, discipline and compensation of teachers.

The Obama administration has encouraged states to adopt laws that use student test scores as a significant component in evaluating teachers, and a number of states have done so already. *The L.A. Times* recently used value-added methods to evaluate teachers in the Los Angeles Unified School District based on the test scores of their students, and Secretary of Education **Arne Duncan** supported the paper's decision to publicly release this information, asserting that parents have a right to know how effective their children's teachers are. But the conclusions of the expert coauthors of this report suggest that neither parents nor anyone else should believe that the *The L.A. Times* analysis actually identifies which teachers are effective or ineffective in teaching children because the methods are incapable of doing so fairly and accurately.

The distinguished authors of EPI's report, *Problems with the Use of Student Test Scores to Evaluate Teachers*, include four former presidents of the American Educational Research Association; two former presidents of the National Council on Measurement in Education; the current and two former chairs of the Board of Testing and Assessment of the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences; the president-elect of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management; the former director of the Educational Testing Service's Policy Information Center and a former associate director of the National Assessment of Educational Progress; a former assistant U.S. Secretary of Education; a former and current member of the National Assessment Governing Board; and the current vice-president, a former president, and three other members of the National Academy of Education.

The coauthors make clear that the accuracy and reliability of analyses of student test scores, even in their most sophisticated form, is highly problematic for high stakes decisions regarding teachers. Consequently, policymakers and all stakeholders in education should rethink this new emphasis on the centrality of test scores for holding teachers accountable.

DOES VALUE ADDED REALLY ADD UP? (Continued)

Analyses of VAM results show that they are often unstable across time, classes and tests; thus, test scores, even with the addition of VAM, are not accurate indicators of teacher effectiveness. Student test scores, even with VAM, cannot fully account for the wide range of factors that influence student learning, particularly the backgrounds of students, school supports and the effects of summer learning loss. As a result, teachers who teach students with the greatest educational needs appear to be less effective than they are. Furthermore, VAM does not take into account nonrandom sorting of teachers to students across schools and students to teachers within schools. There are further negative consequences of using test scores to evaluate teacher performance. Teachers who are rewarded on the basis of their students' test scores have an incentive to "teach to the test," which narrows the curriculum not just between subject areas, but also within subject areas. Furthermore, creating a system in which teachers are, in effect, competing with each other can reduce the incentive to collaborate within schools and studies have shown that better schools are marked by teaching staffs that work together. Finally, judging teachers based on test scores that do not genuinely assess students' progress can demoralize teachers, encouraging them to leave the teaching field.

Evaluating teachers accurately is an extremely important piece of the effort to improve America's schools, and VAM methods are appealing in that they seem to offer an objective and simplified way of comparing one teacher with another. However, as EPI's report makes clear, "There is simply no shortcut to the identification and removal of ineffective teachers." The authors conclude that, "Although standardized test scores of students are one piece of information that school leaders may use to make judgments about teacher effectiveness, test scores should be only a small part of an overall comprehensive evaluation."

The report's coauthors are:

- **Eva L. Baker**, Professor of education at UCLA and Co-Director of the National Center for Research on Evaluation Standards and Student Testing (CRESST)
- **Paul E. Barton**, former Director of the Policy Information Center of the Educational Testing Service
- **Linda Darling-Hammond**, Professor of education at Stanford University, former President of the American Educational Research Association
- **Edward Haertel**, Professor of education at Stanford University, former President of the National Council on Measurement in Education, Chair of the National Research Council's Board on Testing and Assessment, former Chair of the committee on methodology of the National Assessment Governing Board
- **Helen F. Ladd**, Professor of public policy and economics at Duke University, President-elect of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management
- **Robert L. Linn**, professor emeritus at the University of Colorado, former President of the National Council on Measurement in Education and of the American Educational Research Association, former Chair of the National Research Council's Board on Testing and Assessment
- **Diane Ravitch**, Research Professor at New York University and historian of American education
- **Richard Rothstein**, Research Associate of the Economic Policy Institute
- **Richard J. Shavelson**, Professor of Education (Emeritus), former dean of the School of Education at Stanford University, and former president of the American Educational Research Association
- **Lorrie A. Shepard**, Dean and professor at the School of Education at the University of Colorado at Boulder, former President of the American Educational Research Association, immediate past President of the National Academy of Education

JOIN ACSA TODAY!

Why is it important to join ACSA? Administrators are under attack in the press and in the State legislature. AALA members are in the same perilous position in which other public employee union members find themselves. Pensions are being viewed as a way to reduce the budget deficit, and an attempt could be made to reduce financial support for administrators who are members of CalSTRS. ACSA will continue to take the lead in Sacramento to make sure no "backroom deal" devastates administrators in this cash-strapped state.

Additional benefits of ACSA membership include a \$1 million liability policy, the opportunity to interact with peers from all over California and an excellent array of professional development programs, including Superintendent and Personnel Academies.

ACSA is offering a generous opportunity for administrators to join at the cost of **\$1 a day**. If we double our Los Angeles membership, ACSA Region XVI will be the largest in the State! ACSA-R also invites LAUSD retirees to join at the low cost of **\$10 per year!**

Subsequent communications from ACSA Region XVI (Dr. **Angel Barrett**, President) and ACSA-R (Dr. **Michael O'Sullivan**, President) will be sent in the near future. Join ACSA now!

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

AALA members will receive a link to an online professional development survey on September 15, 2010. The survey, which was designed by the joint LAUSD/AALA Professional Development Committee, will be posted for two weeks. The purpose of the survey is to identify your PD needs and interests, help the District design differentiated PD to better meet the needs of administrators and communicate the PD opportunities available. The survey should take less than 10 minutes of your time. We urge you to participate. Your views are important!

IN MEMORIAM

HOWARD ASPLUND – Former Assistant Principal of Sylmar Elementary School, Foshay Learning Center, Mount Gleason and Le Conte middle schools. He retired on May 17, 1991, and passed away on August 26, 2010.

JANICE WALSH – Former Principal of Gledhill Street, Westwood Charter and Alexandria Street schools; former Assistant Principal of Stonehurst Avenue, Plascencia and Rockdale Avenue schools. She retired on August 15, 1997, and passed away on August 21, 2010.

News from CalSTRS—

PARTIAL LUMP SUM WINDOW CLOSING

The window of opportunity to receive a portion of your Defined Benefit as a lump sum payment is closing soon. Until December 31, 2010, members have the choice to receive a partial lump sum in exchange for a permanent reduction in their monthly allowance.

If you want to receive a partial lump sum, you must retire on or before December 31, 2010. If you choose to take a partial lump sum payment, you must submit your application before your retirement effective date.

The amount of the lump sum payment will differ from person to person, depending on age, earnings and years of service credit at retirement, but will be the lesser of:

- 15 percent of the lifetime value of your retirement benefit, or
- The lifetime value of your benefit in excess of an amount equal to 2 percent of your final compensation multiplied by your years of service credit and divided by 12.

If you choose to take a partial lump sum payment, you can either have it paid to you directly or rolled over to a qualified plan. A rollover must be done through a trustee-to-trustee transfer to a qualified plan, such as 403(b), 457, or a traditional or Roth IRA.

For more information, call 800.228.5453 or visit www.CalSTRS.com/calculators to estimate the partial lump sum amount you can receive.

LONGEVITY BONUS ENDING SOON

As specified in the 2000 legislation that created the longevity bonus, eligibility for the bonus is scheduled to end on December 31, 2010. This change could affect your retirement if you're CLOSE to earning 30 years of service credit. **You don't have to retire by December 31, 2010, to qualify for the longevity bonus, but you MUST HAVE AT LEAST 30 YEARS OF EARNED SERVICE CREDIT BY THAT DATE.** If you meet the requirements by the sunset date, you may continue to work, retire at a later date and still receive the bonus at retirement.

If you don't think you'll have earned 30 years of service credit by December 31, 2010, you may be eligible to *purchase* certain types of service credit to get you there. There are 2 types of service credit you may be able to purchase (See *Purchase Additional Service Credit*, available at CalSTRS.com/publications). For more information about the longevity bonus or purchasing service credit, consult chapter 6 of the *CalSTRS Member Handbook*, available at CalSTRS.com/publications, or call 800.228.5453.

SAVE THE DATES

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2010 – The **ACSA 2010-11 Social** will be held 4:30-6:00 p.m. at the San Antonio Winery, 737 Lamar Street, Los Angeles. Refreshments will be served. The benefits of ACSA membership will be shared. Please RSVP by September 15, 2010, to Dr. **Angel Barrett** at 818.895.2481 or abarr5@lausd.net or to **Brian Sida** at 818.609.2522 or bsida@lausd.net.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2010 – The **Council of Mexican American Administrators (CMAA)** will hold its **Fall Reception** at 5:00 p.m., Tamayo Restaurant, 5300 East Olympic Boulevard, Los Angeles. For additional information contact **Eva Garcia** at 323.232.4856 or eva.n.garcia@lausd.net.

CTEL CLASSES FOR ADMINISTRATORS

California State University, Long Beach, will be offering **California Teacher of English Learners** classes to a cohort of administrators at the Beaudry Building. Administrators are asked to contact **Denise Robert** at 213.241.5300, Ext. 29390, if they are interested in earning their CLAD certification through coursework at a central office location. Classes will begin on October 4.

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.

CLASSIFIED POSITIONS AVAILABLE

PROJECT MANAGER, TRANSPARENT BUDGETING

This position is part of a technical assistance team that supports the LAUSD Transparent Budgeting team responsible for implementing a need-based, per pupil resource allocation system. This full-time position has a salary of \$75,000-\$85,000 commensurate with experience. To apply, send a cover letter and résumé to **Steve Jubb**, c/o **Allison Carter** at acarter@pivotlearningpartners.org.

SENIOR POLICY ANALYST, MAYOR'S OFFICE OF EDUCATION

The Senior Policy Analyst will work with the Deputy Mayor of Education to carry out the Mayor's education policy agenda. Compensation will be negotiated within established annual salary range commensurate with demonstrated skills and work experience. Interested individuals should send a letter of interest and résumé to **Alysha-Stein Manes** at alysha.stein-manes@lacity.org.

EDUCATION POLICY DIRECTOR

The Education Policy Director will work with the Deputy Mayor of Education to carry out the Mayor's education policy agenda. Compensation will be negotiated within established annual salary range commensurate with demonstrated skills and work experience. Interested individuals should send a letter of interest and résumé to **Alysha-Stein Manes** at alysha.stein-manes@lacity.org.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE (Continued)

PROGRAM AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT ADVISOR

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is seeking a highly qualified and motivated individual with extensive knowledge and considerable experience managing the entire life cycle of large-scale school reform initiatives. The individual chosen to fill this position will be part of the innovative team that will be setting strategic vision for the District's future. For information about this opportunity go to:

<http://lausdjobs.lausd.k12.ca.us/appv1/main> or <http://lausdjobs.lausd.k12.ca.us/appv1/main/pdf/ppdamonique.pdf>.

CERTIFICATED POSITIONS AVAILABLE

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 School-Based and Nonschool-Based positions and click on any position to view the specific flyer.

Position	Location	Deadline	Contact
Operations Director	Roosevelt High School	09/14/10 or Until filled	employment@partnershipla.org
Instructional Specialist	99 th Street School	Until filled	employment@partnershipla.org
Instructional Specialist	Santee Education Complex	Until filled	employment@partnershipla.org
Instructional Specialist	Florence Griffith-Joyner School	09/08/10 or Until filled	employment@partnershipla.org

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ADMINISTRATOR, INSTRUCTIONAL AND OPERATIONAL OVERSIGHT, MST 45, B Basis, Charter Schools Division For information and application procedures contact Aaron Eairleywine, Central Business Advisor, at 213.241.5516. 	UNTIL FILLED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SPECIALIST, PROGRAM/FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY UNIT, MST 38 (Temp. Adv.), B Basis, Division of Special Education For information and application procedures contact Dr. Carmencita Davino, Coordinator, at 213.241.6708. 	5:00 p.m. Fri., Sept 17, 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SPECIALIST RELATED SERVICES PROGRAM (2 Positions), MST 38 (Temp. Adv.) B Basis, Division of Special Education For information and application procedures contact Lisa Jordan, Administrator Coordinator, at 213.241.6200. 	12:00 p.m. Fri., Sept. 24. 2010