

UPDATE

Week of November 16, 2009

Superintendent Cortines' Friday the 13th Letter

AAALA BARGAINING BULLETIN – NO. 3

On Friday, November 13, Superintendent Cortines e-mailed a letter to LAUSD union presidents in which he stated that our District is facing a projected \$480 million budget shortfall for the 2010-2011 school year. He asked each union “. . .to become a partner in finding a shared solution to the issue.” He further stated, “Without your shared commitment, this District will see layoffs of more than 7,500 to 8,500 personnel, which will result in more than 14,000 employees being noticed for possible reduction in force.”

The Superintendent went on to outline his solutions to the budget crisis: (1) Four furlough days this school year, in 2010, and (2) A 12% salary cut for 2010-2011. He explained that each furlough day is worth \$15 million to the District. One percent salary cut is equal to \$40 million. Simple multiplication reveals that implementation of the Superintendent's solutions yields \$540 million. He wrote that layoffs will commence on July 1, 2010, if LAUSD bargaining units do not agree with his proposed “solutions.”

In AALA's biweekly meeting with Superintendent Cortines on Monday, November 16, 2009, we asked for clarification regarding several points in his *Friday the 13th Letter*. Our questions and his responses follow:

AAALA: Some of the statements in your letter are inconsistent with your comments at the Board meeting on Tuesday, November 10, 2009, where you said that you would ask for either a 9% salary cut or nine furlough days to address the 2010-2011 deficit.

Superintendent: There was no contradiction.

AAALA: Could you please clarify if the four furlough days are for this year or next year?

Superintendent: This year.

AAALA: Please explain what cuts you are going to recommend.

Superintendent: The Board already approved some cuts. I'm going to add some things and delete some things.

AAALA: Did you look at the percentage of cuts each bargaining unit endured for 2009-2010?

Superintendent: No, and I'm not going to!

AAALA: You cut over 500+ AALA members for the 2009-2010 school year—20% of our membership.

Superintendent: I'm not going to negotiate with you!

AALA NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN NO. 3 (Continued)

AALA: AALA has suggestions for budget savings and for the District to enhance revenue. When will AALA staff have the opportunity to discuss these recommendations with you?

Superintendent: I don't know!

AALA has additional questions for the Superintendent:

- Why would you send a letter threatening to cut 8,500 employee positions if you are not willing to answer AALA's questions and provide clarification?
- Why do you persist in calling your unilateral approach a request for "partnerships" with bargaining units when you seem to be unwilling to listen to our suggestions for budget savings and revenue enhancement?
- Why are you asking LAUSD employees to subsidize a \$540 million deficit when you identified \$480 million as the projected shortfall? Why should the bargaining units shoulder the entire burden of the deficit? What other solutions have you identified?
- AALA requested last week that the District schedule immediate negotiations. Why has the District neglected to follow through?
- How much of the projected \$480 million deficit will be caused by a potential hand-over of LAUSD schools to unregulated charter operators? If the Board did not pursue its Public School Choice Resolution, how much revenue would be saved?

In past years when a budget crisis loomed, the District provided the County with potential reductions to reflect a balanced budget. The projected budget is always modified by variables yet to occur, such as the Governor's budget projections in January 2010 and potential resource enhancements. Threatening employees does not create an atmosphere in which we can partner to address the current crisis. The District should interact now with the bargaining units to prioritize potential cuts, with the understanding that maximum preservation of school sites is necessary, along with essential services for all students and staff members.

IN MEMORIAM

DR. EDWARD "ED" SAMS – Former Region Administrator, Operations; Director of Instruction; Principal of Carnegie Middle School; and Assistant Principal of Burbank and Irving middle schools. Ed retired on April 8, 1993. He passed away on November 14, 2009. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to his wife and family as follows:

Mrs. Leonor Sams and Family
1740 North Avenue 46
Eagle Rock, CA 90041

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

While Benefits Administration is always available to help with general questions, you may find that you can more easily get the assistance you need by contacting the appropriate Plan Administrator directly. They have teams trained specifically on the LAUSD plans and can answer your plan-specific questions.

PLAN NAME	ADDRESS	WEB ADDRESS	PHONE
Medical Plans		All are www.	
Anthem Blue Cross	P.O. Box 60007 Los Angeles, CA 90060-0007	anthem.com/ca	800-700-3739
CVS Caremark (prescription drug services)	Caremark Research Team P.O. Box 832407 Richardson, TX 75083	caremark.com	888.752.7229
Health Net	P.O. Box 10364 Van Nuys, CA 91409-10348	healthnet.com/lausd	800.654.9821
Health Net Seniority Plus	P.O. Box 10198 Van Nuys, CA 91410-0198	healthnet.com/lausd	Enrollment info: 800.596.6565 Questions after you are enrolled: 800.275.4737
Kaiser Permanente and Senior Advantage	393 East Walnut Street Pasadena, CA 91188	kp.org/ca	800.464.4000
Secure Horizons	5995 Plaza Drive MS CA 108-0179 Cypress, CA 90630	securehorizons.com	866.622.8055
Dental Plans			
MetLife Preferred Dentist Program (PPO)	MetLife Dental Claims P.O. Box 981282 El Paso, TX 79998-1282	metlife.com/mybenefits	866.576.9121
MetLife Affiliated Dental Health Care Service Plan (SafeGuard DHMO)	SafeGuard Dental HMO Claims P.O. Box 981987 El Paso, TX 79998-1987	safeguard.net	866.576.9121
Western Dental DHMO	Western Dental Services Attn: Customer Service 530 South Main Street Orange, CA 92868	westerndentalbenefits.com	866.901.4416
Vision Plans			
EyeMed Vision Care	4000 Luxottica Place Mason, OH 45050	eyemedvisioncare.com	877.5LASERS6 (for LASIK Provider 866.723.0514 (benefit inquiries & provider locator)
VSP	P.O. Box 997100 Sacramento, CA 95899-7100	vsp.com	800.877.7195
Flexible Spending Accounts Plan Administrator			
UniAccount	P.O. Box 4381 Woodland Hills, CA 91365	anthem.com/ca	888.209.7976

CONTACT INFORMATION (Continued)

PLAN NAME	ADDRESS	WEB ADDRESS	PHONE
Employee Assistance Program		All are www. (except LAUSD Benefits Administration)	
United Behavioral Health (UBH)	P.O. Box 744925 Houston, TX 77274-4925	Liveandworkwell.com Access Code: LAUSD	866.312.3077
Life Insurance Plan			
MetLife	MetLife Recordkeeping Center P.O. Box 6169 Utica, NY 13504	metlife.com/mybenefits	866.492.6983

OTHER RESOURCES

LAUSD COBRA/AB528 Administrator, FBMC.	FBMC P.O. Box 730561 Ormond Beach, FL 32173-0561	myFBMC.com	800.342.8017
Sedgwick Claims Management Services (for Workers' Compensation assistance)			800.528.7392
Employee Reimbursement Program (ERP)		lausd.net	213.241.3130
Certificated Assignment Branch			213.241.5100
Classified Assignment Branch			213.241.3900
Public Employees Retirement System (PERS)			888.225.7377
State Teachers Retirement System (STRS)	P.O. Box 513307 Los Angeles, CA 90051-1307		800.228.5453 (Sacramento) 562.922.6838 (Los Angeles)
LAUSD Benefits Administration		http://benefits.lausd.net	213.241.4262

Source: LAUSD 2010 Benefits and Enrollment Guide

NOTE:
DUE TO THE THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY, UPDATE WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 23, 2009.

PLEASE GO TO THE AALA WEBSITE – www.aalausd.com - TO VIEW POSITIONS AVAILABLE. The flyers for positions can be printed out there.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST ARISES AS A CONCERN IN STANDARDS PUSH

By Mary Ann Zehr

A respected literacy-research organization is asking that a process be put in place to make more transparent potential conflicts of interest that writers of the common national academic standards might have, and to address them.

The *Literacy Research Association* sent a letter Oct. 21 to the groups overseeing the development of common standards that, among other points, expresses concern that many of the authors are “representatives of multiple commercial entities that stand to profit enormously from selling curricula, instructional materials, assessments, and consultancies as the standards are rolled out.” Such connections should be “explicitly revealed and addressed,” says the letter from the group, formerly called the National Reading Conference. While the letter does not cite specific names, a significant number of people selected to write the standards, which are geared initially toward college and career readiness, are representing ACT Inc. and the College Board. The authors’ names and primary affiliations are listed on the project’s materials.

Kathleen A. Henschman, the president of the Oak Creek, Wis.-based professional association and the author of the letter, said the *National Governors Association* and the *Council of the Chief State School Officers*, the two organizations in charge of the common-standards endeavor, should provide a public document that goes further by identifying ties that the writers have to companies or organizations that might benefit financially from products aligned with the standards.

Jodi Omar, a spokeswoman for the *National Governors Association*, said the letter from the *Literacy Research Association* is among the public feedback the NGA has received to the standards draft. “At this point,” she said, “it’s too early to comment on any of the comments.”

At least one federal official made a significant financial profit from a reading program that he wrote and promoted while he was an adviser to states about the federal program, according to a 2007 Senate report. Another *Reading First* contractor and researcher received a large boost in income during the program’s tenure when she was also advising states on which assessments and texts to select to meet its requirements, that same report said. (“Senate Report Cites ‘Reading First’ Conflicts,” May 16, 2007.)

Some of those who made money off the venture were affiliated with universities rather than businesses and wrote curriculum materials, developed tests, or consulted.

Gerald E. Sroufe, the director of government relations for the American Educational Research Association, said his organization doesn’t share the apprehensions of the Literacy Research Association.

The creation of common standards, he said, doesn’t lend itself to the kinds of conflict-of-interest issues that emerged with *Reading First*, the federal government’s flagship reading program in the No Child Left Behind Act. “The common standards are so very general that I don’t see that they benefit anyone by virtue that they are being adopted,” he said. “These are more like objectives, even though they are called standards.”

CONFLICT OF INTEREST (Continued)

Neal P. McCluskey, an education analyst at the *Cato Institute* think tank, said possible conflicts of interest are difficult to avoid because the education community isn't very big. "Invariably, there are going to be lots of connections," he said. He suggested that it would be tough to gauge how meaningful it would be to publicize explicit information about the various business connections of standards' writers. "If you want people to say they have a conflict of interest, the only value is if people [then] say, 'We don't have to follow the standards,' " which he contends would undermine the value of creating them in the first place.

Some observers, though, say the *Literacy Research Association* has a valid concern. "It makes a lot of sense to indicate the relationships between people who are designing education policy and their various roles in government and business," said **Patricia H. Hinchey**, an associate professor of education at Pennsylvania State University. With the connections spelled out, she explained, someone could say, "You supported X rather than Y, and oddly, X lends itself to a business agenda. Why is that?" Ms. Hinchey is also a research fellow with the Education and Public Interest Center at the University of Colorado.

Kylee Beers, the president of the *National Council of Teachers of English*, said she doesn't believe that the connections of standards' writers need to be spelled out further than they are now. Already, Ms. Beers said, anyone can see that most of the writers are representing ACT Inc., of Iowa City, Iowa; the New York City-based College Board; or Achieve, a Washington group launched by governors and business leaders. That, she said, is sufficient information about their affiliations.

But **Roy Romer**, a senior adviser to the president of the College Board and a former Colorado governor and Los Angeles schools superintendent, said he can't see any problem with having the same individuals who write standards also write tests based on those standards. The standards for college and workplace readiness that have been drafted for mathematics and English/language arts, he said, are too general to be translated into, "I favor this kind of task," or something that would produce a specific example for a test-writer. "I don't see any conflict of interest," Mr. Romer said. "The standards are not something we dictated or had a carbon copy of. We threw our ideas on the table with a whole lot of people."

Source: Education Week, November 2, 2009

"Education is a companion which no misfortune can depress, no crime can destroy, no enemy can alienate, no despotism can enslave. At home, a friend; abroad, an introduction; in solitude, a solace; and in society, an ornament. It chastens vice, it guides virtue, it gives at once grace and government to genius. Without it, what is man? A splendid slave, a reasoning savage."

-- Joseph Addison

CHARTER SCHOOL RESEARCH: The Beat(ing) Goes On

By Debra Viadero

The back-and-forth on charter school research never seems to end.

The latest analysis takes to task the much-publicized study of New York City's charter schools that was conducted by Stanford University economist **Caroline M. Hoxby** and colleagues.

In the new critique, **Sean F. Reardon**, a colleague of Hoxby's at Stanford, points up what he sees as flaws in the New York City study. For one, he says, in measuring the effects of charter schooling on students in grades 4-12, the study relies on statistical models that include test scores from the previous year, which are measured after the admissions lotteries take place. Because of that timing, he says, the scores could be affected by whether students attend a charter school, which "destroys the benefits of the randomization" that is a strength of Hoxby's study.

Reardon, a research methodologist, also faults the Hoxby study for "inappropriately" extrapolating data on students' achievement gains between kindergarten and 8th grade to calculate learning benefits over their entire school careers and raises some other, equally technical, issues as well.

Reardon's bottom line: While it makes an important research contribution, the report "likely overstates the effects of New York City charter schools on students' cumulative achievement, though it is not possible—given the information missing from the report—to precisely quantify the extent of overestimation."

You can find the full paper at the Web site for the Think Tank Review Project, which posted it on Thursday. The project, which specializes in reviewing studies in the news on hot-button education issues, is a joint project of the University of Colorado at Boulder Education and the Public Interest Center and the Arizona State University Education Policy Research Unit.

And here's a side note: If you think nobody pays attention to all these studies on charter schools, think again. The final guidance issued by the Federal Education Department this week for its \$4 billion Race to the Top program indirectly references some of that research in relaxing language, in the draft guidelines, that many had interpreted to be an endorsement of charter schools as the chief remedy for failing schools. The new language reads:

"Notwithstanding research showing that charter schools on average perform similarly to traditional public schools, a growing body of evidence suggests that high-quality charter schools can be powerful forces for increasing student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and spurring educational innovation."

That first clause sounds to me like a reference to a national study released over the summer by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes, or CREDO, which is also based at Stanford. The wording also partly explains, in a nutshell, why so much of the research on charter schools seems to conflict. Some charter schools are very good and some, not.

Source: Education Week, November 13, 2009

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, SECONDARY

Canoga Park High School (1) MST 40, 6850 Topanga Canyon Blvd., Canoga Park, CA 91303
 Canoga Park is a B Basis school. For information and application procedures contact **Larry Rubin**, Director, High School Services, at 818.654.3672. **Filing deadline is Wednesday, December 2, 2009.**

Monroe High School (1) MST 40, 9229 Haskell Avenue, North Hills, CA 91343
 Monroe is a B Basis school. For information and application procedures contact **Myra Fullerton**, Director, High School Services, at 818.654.3673. **Filing deadline is Wednesday, December 2, 2009.**

THE FOLLOWING POSITION IS AVAILABLE TO VIEW IN ITS 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
DIRECTOR, SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, Temp. Adv., MST 45, A Basis, Student Health and Human Services. For information and application procedures contact Rene Gonzalez , Assistant Superintendent, at 213.241.3840.	4:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 30, 2009

PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED POSITION STILL AVAILABLE

Position	Location	Deadline	Contact
Director of Instructional and Operational Oversight	Charter Schools Division	UNTIL FILLED	213.241.2656

Have a Wonderful Thanksgiving!