

UPDATE

Week of November 10, 2008

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mr. David L Brewer III, Superintendent
Mr. Ramon Cortines, Senior Deputy Superintendent
Los Angeles Unified School District
333 South Beaudry Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Dear Mr. Brewer and Mr. Cortines:

AALA applauds your efforts to communicate to employees the magnitude of the budget shortfall facing the District. Holding the four community meetings is a very good idea. In addition, you have published memos outlining the priorities and focus of possible cuts. These actions will educate some to the issues, but many more will not know what has been said and how serious this crisis could become.

Clearly, the Governor's calling of a special legislative session will help drive home the point to employees, but more is needed. We at AALA would like to help get the facts out to all concerned, especially the 2600+ employees that we represent.

As you move forward with planning and strategizing ways to handle the fiscal issues, we would suggest that you focus on the following key points:

1. Cuts should only be made if they actually reduce costs. Making cuts based on symbolic action, or the perceived desire to appease certain factions of the District, should be avoided.

For example, reducing the number of Assistant Principal positions at schools will not help the bottom line. Virtually every Assistant Principal (indeed, every administrator) is first and foremost a fully tenured teacher who will always have a job. By the time you factor in the loss of work time (eight hours plus per day versus six hours), you will quickly see that it actually costs more to make these cuts.

In an auditorium of UTLA members, discussing the possibility of a reduction of administrators will, no doubt, elicit applause, but it is not a good business practice. You will not make any meaningful impact on the budget gap this way, despite what other organizations might suggest.

Furthermore, you will be weakening the thin blue line of staff overseeing the accountability of a school and its instructional program just at a time when scores have been increasing across the board. As experienced leaders, you know how valuable your field commanders are in keeping the organization and its employees on task, and they deserve better than this.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER (Continued)

2. LAUSD should not blindly move forward with cuts but actually craft a strategy to pursue additional revenues. The Facilities Division is king and pursues money with great vigor, but the Operations and Instructional divisions lack the same level of political savvy and vision. They need your help.

The recent success with the DWP lawsuit is a good example of getting revenue back to the general fund. All of that money can be given back to the general fund with careful oversight. Instead, it is slipping back into the murkiness of the IT and Facilities Divisions, and both of these divisions have considerably more money than the others.

The District needs to pursue a variety of efforts to get more resources for instruction and operations, such as challenging the Community Re-development Agencies (CRA's), pursuing the Educational Revenues Augmentation Funds (ERAF), crafting Federal earmarks, and vigorously pursuing state mandated monies owed, etc. The list is long.

Even Governor Schwarzenegger has finally seen the light and is calling a special legislative session to consider "revenues" and move away from cuts. He seems to be adverse to symbolic cuts based on rhetoric that will do nothing but feed the public's concept of Districtwide mismanagement as promoted by UTLA.

We look forward to working with you on real budget prioritization such as a May 2009 parcel tax or other types of revenue enhancements, and we stand ready to meet with your budget and financial staffs at any time. This needs to be a team effort or we are just moving chairs.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mike O'Sullivan
President
AALA

C: Board Members

ARCHITECTURAL ACHIEVEMENT OR MONEY PIT: YOU DECIDE

In the summer of 2002, LAUSD proposed to build a traditional high school at 450 N. Grand Avenue on land owned by the District and formerly the LAUSD headquarters. The estimated cost for construction was **\$54 million**.

The District headquarters had relocated to a 29-story building with inadequate parking at 333 South Beaudry Avenue. School construction bonds cannot and were not used for the Beaudry building purchase.

In August 2002, the Board of Education was encouraged by local business leaders in the Grand Avenue Partners to build a performing arts academy instead of a traditional high school. The school would be modeled after the famous High School for the Arts in New York City. The new estimated cost was **\$72 million** with a completion date of 2005.

However, there were immediate disputes over the architectural design for the school, and **Eli Broad** insisted on his own architect. There were also disputes over how students would be selected and who would pay for increased operating expenses. An agreement in principle, instead of a formal memorandum of understanding, was reached between the Board of Education and the interested city leaders. A majority of the students would come from the local Belmont area and the remaining students from across the District as magnet students. Broad committed \$5 million and assured the Board of Education that he would raise operating funds through a nonprofit organization that would oversee the arts program in partnership with Local District 4. The original architect would be replaced by Coop Himmelb(l)au, an avant-garde firm from Austria. Coop Himmelb(l)au had no experience in California school construction. Additional funds were pledged by the business partners to cover the expenses engendered by the new architectural design. In November 2002, voters approved the redesignation of the project from a traditional high school to a performing arts high school when they approved bond Measure K.

By August 2003, the estimated cost had ballooned to **\$88 million** based primarily on the cutting edge design including the tower that is so prominently visible from the Hollywood Freeway at Grand Avenue. The Department of State Architect (DSA) in the process of design approval required additional site preparation, including removal of the old Pacific Electric tunnel under the site, which delayed construction and added costs. The estimated completion date was revised to Summer 2006.

YOU DECIDE (Continued)

As the project progressed, it became apparent that the new design was driving costs up, the DSA was inexperienced in plan checking an avant-garde design, and engineering and materiel costs were skyrocketing. By February 2006, the budget was **\$200 million** and the expected completion date was upped to 2008.

Currently, the budget stands at **\$230 million** with the school opening in Fall 2009. The fact is that the Board of Education and Superintendent **Roy Romer** approved the project without a real written agreement from the supposed benefactors to pay for the additional costs. The Bond Oversight Committee (BOC) requested a written agreement, but it was never implemented. The BOC is advisory and its request was in the form of a recommendation to the Board of Education. The Board of Education trusted when they should have verified. If this is to be a teachable moment, the lesson to be learned is that philanthropic billionaires may not be as good as their word as well as their prior building experience. One would only have had to look at the cost overruns associated with Disney Hall.

ALA hopes that the billionaire philanthropist and his associates would do everything in their power to raise money to cover the cost between the original \$72 million for the performing arts academy and the current cost. The **\$158 million** donation to the District could be used for other pressing budget needs in this time of State budget uncertainty so that all students in LAUSD could have a quality education. **By the way, the school is spectacular! But, that's a lot of money in difficult times.**

RETIREMENT CELEBRATION

Name	Date/Time	Location	Contact
Chieko Rupp	Friday, November 21, 2008 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	Home of Donnalyn Jaque-Anton 917 N. Cordova Alhambra	Vivian Chen vmchen@gmail.com

NOTE:
DUE TO THE THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY, UPDATE WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 24, 2008.

HONORING SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY

AALA salutes all members, active or retired, living or deceased, who have served their country in a time of need.

Admiral **Mike Mullen**, Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, stated it beautifully. Here is the text of the chairman's message:

"When Armistice was declared on Nov. 11, 1918, effectively ending World War I, over sixty-five million individuals had been mobilized for the "Great War" that resulted in almost nine million deaths and over twenty-one million wounded. In just a year and a half of operations, 126,000 Americans lost their lives on the muddy landscapes of Europe and in the icy depths of the North Atlantic. Such loss of life and limb is hard to fathom today.

History has debunked the notion of a 'War to End All Wars.' And history has also proven that peace does not preserve itself. It requires millions of dedicated men and women, like you and your families, all working in unison toward what one memorial hails as 'high idealism, courageous sacrifice, and gallant achievement.'

Today, a new generation of veterans carries this torch. Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom have forged the most combat-hardened force in our nation's history. Yet, no war is without its casualties. Whether seen or unseen, the wounds of war last a lifetime, and so should our care.

Our wounded veterans and their families deserve only the best medical care our nation can provide, care on par with the service and sacrifice these patriots have rendered. From the battlefield to regional hospitals, and rehabilitation centers to reintegration programs, our wounded, ill and injured service members and their families, merit a continuum of care that lasts a lifetime.

To all our veterans, past and present, and your families, the Joint Chiefs and I salute you and thank you for your service and your sacrifice. As we remember those who have gone before us, may we honor their service through ours."

NOTE:

Two books of interest have been written about veterans who were proud of their service in World War II and in the Los Angeles Unified School District. "One Pilot's Story," which was written by Andrew "Andy" Anderson (former secondary principal), tells of his exploits in the 91st and 8th Air Force as a bomber pilot. Paul Possemato, William "Bill" Johnston, and his son D. Michael Johnston wrote "Heroes and Teachers." This book tells stories of many men and women who served in World War II and in LAUSD. If anyone would like information about purchasing either or both of these fine books, call the AALA office at 213.484.2226 or e-mail Cathy Vacca at cvacca@aala.us.

D. C. CHANCELLOR, UNION CLASH OVER PLAN TO FIRE INEFFECTIVE TEACHERS

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT), parent union to the Washington Teachers Union (WTU), is gearing up for a long fight over D. C. Chancellor **Michelle Rhee's** plan to fire teachers who are found to be ineffective, reports the *Washington Post*. Under a plan that has long been on the books but has seldom been used, teachers are given about five months to improve their performance. The plan enlists helping teachers, who intervene with struggling instructors in the classroom and report to central office administrators on all assistance given to instructors. In an attempt to block widespread teacher dismissals, the WTU has announced that the AFT will join it in providing "support and strategies" to any teacher selected for the plan. The struggle can be viewed as a proxy fight over Rhee's proposal to overhaul the beleaguered system's teaching force with instructors who are willing to tie job security to student achievement and to forfeit tenure for higher salaries. The AFT is opposed to this proposal, and is concerned about the potential impact of Rhee's proposal on teacher tenure nationally.

Read more at:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/24/AR2008102403630.html>

TEACHER ABSENCES SEEN HURTING POOR KIDS THE MOST

Absences by public school teachers -- which average about 9 or 10 days a year -- disproportionately affect students from low-income families, says a report by the *Center for American Progress*. "Students in schools serving predominantly low-income families experience teacher absence at higher rates than students in more affluent communities. Part of the achievement gap is thus due to a teacher attendance gap." That's a good reason for policy people to revisit the issue of teacher absences, the think tank maintains. It also points to other reasons: (1) "Teacher absence is expensive. With 5.3 percent of teachers absent on a given day, stipends for substitute teachers and associated administrative costs amount to \$4 billion, annually"; and (2) "Teacher absence negatively affects student achievement. Researchers have found that every 10 absences lower mathematics achievement by the same amount as having a teacher with one year to two years of experience instead of a teacher with three years to five years of experience." The report recommends that the federal government require school districts to provide data on teacher absences under the No Child Left Behind law, that state legislators re-examine teachers' leave privileges, and that local policymakers experiment with incentives to reduce teacher absences.

Read more at http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/10/teacher_absence.html

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IN MEMORIAM

SAMUEL "SAM" MARCHESE - Former Principal of Eagle Rock HS, Area H Alternative School and LAUSD/USC School for the Arts/Math/Sciences. He retired June 30, 1984, and passed away on November 5, 2008. Sam was one of the founders of AEIOU.

GWEN WATERS – Former Physical Education Instructional Specialist. She retired in 1979 and passed away on October 21, 2008.

REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY ATTENDANCE

AAALA thanks the following members for serving as Representative Assembly members at the meeting held on October 30, 2008. Adult Department – Fred Hermosillo, Ben Avila, Howard Saxe, Richard Wormus, and Don Kehara; Elementary Department – Angel Barrett, Elizabeth Abramowitz (also representing AJE), Joan Blair, Andre Cunningham, Judy Dichter, Sharon Kaiser, Dona Lawrie, Marie Leyva, Jane Urbina, Ken Urbina, Robin Evans, Barbara Honig, and David Santamaria; Secondary Department – Margaret Prietto, Mark Simmons, Gail Garrett, Scott Schmerelson, Mike Smith, Dan Schar, Pamela Donesley, Stephen Foster, Nia Karamanos, Jackie Purdy, John Ford, Consuelo Garcia, Frank Rodriguez, Willie Richardson, Margaret Kearns, Harold Boger, Regina Awtry, Odus Caldwell, Angela Cleveland, Cecil McLinn, Alex Placencio, Fay Chu, Dan Ellis, Karen Redway and Marino Parada; Supervisory Department – Lynn Williams, Manuel Caldera, Barbara Huff, Michael Guillemet, Robert Meier, Martin Myers, Evon Smith, and Phil Naimo; Early Education Administrators – Euna Anderson, Elizabeth Blackwell, Karen Bowles, Delores Johnson, Maylin Ramirez, and Terri Winbush; Association of Asian Pacific Educators – Brian Sida; Association of California School Administrators – Jack Moscowitz; Council of Black Administrators – J. Maxie Hemmans and Edna Burems; President - Mike O’Sullivan; AAALA Staff - Dan Basalone, Jane Pollock, Lorraine Bush, David Tokofsky, Jack Silas, Gema Pivaral, Gloria Souquette, Cathy Vacca and Steve Weingarten; Guest – Jack Pollock.

In their respective caucuses, the following were elected as department Directors: **Joan Blair**, Elementary; **Scott Schmerelson**, Secondary; and **Barbara Huff**, Supervisory. AAALA jackets were distributed to all Representative Assembly members and all members were encouraged to wear their "Unions United for Healthcare" buttons.

STRATEGIES: EXITING FROM THE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Superintendent Advisory Council of the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University is sponsoring a seminar entitled "STRATEGIES FOR EXITING YOUR SCHOOL FROM THE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM." The seminar will be held on Wednesday, November 26, 2008, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Pepperdine University West Los Angeles Campus, 6100 Center Drive, Room 336, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Complimentary lunch will be provided. The speakers will be Dr. **David Verdugo**, Superintendent of Paramount Unified School District; Dr. **George Giokaris**, Superintendent of Fullerton Joint Union High School District; and **Jackie Sanderlin**, Principal of Carver Elementary School, Compton Unified School District. Each has recently exited a school out of Program Improvement. They will offer hands-on strategies that you can put into effect immediately. If you can't make it, Pepperdine suggests sending a school staff member. R.S.V.P. to **Vanessa Jahn** at 310.568.5662 by November 20, 2008.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Minimum Qualifications: Candidates are responsible for making sure all the District requirements for administrative positions have been met. AALA is not responsible for errors in publication.

NOTE: Please do not contact AALA for information regarding administrative positions. Use the listed contact phone number, or contact LAUSD Human Resources Division at 213.241.6886 or via e-mail at http://certificated.lausd.k12.ca.us/admin_vacancies.

NOTE: Effective Friday, October 24, 2008, the District implemented a hiring freeze on all certificated school-based and nonschool-based positions.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, ELEMENTARY

Erwin Street School (2) MST 37, 13400 Erwin Street, Van Nuys, CA 91401
 Erwin is a B Basis school. For information and application procedures contact **Jack Bagwell**, Director, School Services, at 818.755.5427. **Filing deadline is Friday, November 21, 2008.**

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL SPECIALIST (EIS)

CORRECTION -

Canyon Charter School (3) MST 37, 421 Entrada Drive, Santa Monica, CA 90402
Fairburn Avenue School (3) MST 37, 1403 Fairburn Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024
This is a SHARED POSITION. Canyon is a B Basis school. Fairburn is a B Basis school. For information and application procedures contact **Gay Havard**, Director, Elementary Support Services, at 310.253.7123. **Filing deadline is Friday, November 21, 2008.**

Westwood Charter School (3) MST 37, 2050 Selby Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90025
 Westwood is a B Basis school. For information and application procedures contact **Pamela Sasada**, Director, School Support Services, at 310.253.7100. **Filing deadline EXTENDED TO Friday, November 21, 2008.**

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, SECONDARY COUNSELING SERVICES (SCS)

Sepulveda Middle School (1) MST 39, 15330 Plummer Street, North Hills, CA 91343
 Sepulveda is a B Basis school. For information and application procedures contact **Lynda Schwarz**, Director, School Support Services, at 818.654.3644. **Filing deadline is Wednesday, November 19, 2008.**

PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED POSITIONS STILL AVAILABLE

Position	Location	Deadline	Contact
Instructional Specialist	Local District 6 - For Huntington Park High School	11/21/08	323.278.3900
Extended/Required Learning Academy Administrator	Local District 1 – For Columbus Middle School	11/21/08	818.654.3644