

UPDATE

Week of August 10, 2009

PUBLIC EDUCATION, THE GREAT EQUALIZER

“Charters Get An Unsatisfactory Grade,” a recent *Los Angeles Times* opinion piece by **Diane Ravitch**, Research Professor of Education at New York University, (August 11, 2009, Page A21), addresses head-on the false assumptions underlying the pending Board resolution titled “Public School Choice.” **After reviewing findings of the Stanford study, NAEP data on charter schools and Rand Corporation research comparing Philadelphia’s district-run schools with charters and privately managed schools, she concludes that there is no evidence that charter schools are superior or that competition promotes public school improvement.** (So why is LAUSD headed down the proverbial “yellow brick road”?)

Many of the excellent charter schools Ravitch mentions receive extra funding, which enables them to afford smaller classes and additional resources. They routinely push out disruptive students and limit the enrollment of English learners and Special Education students. Furthermore, many charters skim off high-performing students from regular public schools, while leaving behind students with the greatest needs. Regular public schools are far more accountable for their results. In other words, the ground rules for charters and regular public schools are neither equal nor equitable.

Horace Mann¹, the great reformer, called education “the great equalizer . . . the balance wheel of the social machinery.” We, as public school administrators, are committed to educational improvement for all students, not just a preselected few. We spend our professional lives making schools work and holding them together in times of crisis. We know that there is no great mystery to improving student performance.

Dr. **Angel Barrett**², Principal of Plummer Elementary School, has received wide recognition for dramatically increasing her school’s API from 405 to 777 and leading her school out of Program Improvement status. She says it all starts with shared vision. She and her staff members are committed to creating a school where they would want their own children to attend. What kind of school is that? It is a school focused on learning, in which all staff members—administrators, teachers, classified staff—work collaboratively to nurture and engage students. Parents are welcomed on a daily basis. Nothing new so far, right?

What sets Plummer apart is the culture of improvement Dr. Barrett has spearheaded. She has helped her school institutionalize continuous planning schoolwide and by grade level. Every year Plummer’s data analysis process includes setting both long- and short-term goals, benchmarks that signal achievement of their goals and resetting goals, as needed. Every staff meeting starts with articulation of the vision in context of the agenda and ends with participants writing reflectively how they will apply what they have learned to achievement of the vision. These notes are traded for partner feedback and mutual support.

Vision, however, is not enough. Real, meaningful change takes time. We know from our cumulative experience that there is no quick fix. There is no magic program, no formula, no silver bullet, and no secret sauce! What we do have is the benefit of many thoughtful people working together on behalf of students. We have the relationships we develop, the trust we build, and the caring environments we create through long-term, in-depth work. Yes, it takes a lot of work.

PUBLIC EDUCATION, THE GREAT EQUALIZER (Continued)

While we may articulate differently what our priorities are, and while our specific experiences may differ, we share a great deal. During our current economic crisis, we must be mutually supportive, not fall prey to vested interests. We certainly cannot allow our District to be disassembled. We have said it before and will say it again: As administrators, we are parents, grandparents, and members of the community. We care deeply about the quality of public education or we wouldn't give our professional lives to the children and families of Los Angeles.

Diane Ravitch's *L.A. Times* article ends with the following quote, which we suggest the Board of Education frame and hang above the Boardroom horseshoe:

We evade our responsibility to improve public education by privatizing public schools. In doing so, we undermine the egalitarian promise of public education, thus guaranteeing that many children will continue to be left behind.

¹**Horace Mann on Education and National Welfare**, 1848 (Twelfth Annual Report of Horace Mann as Secretary of Massachusetts State Board of Education)

²Please share your school's successes with us for possible publication in UPDATE.

REMINDER: We e-mailed active members the AALA Negotiations Survey, "*Winning the Tools to Improve Our Schools*," on August 3, 2009. So far, we have received over 900 responses. If you have not yet completed the survey, please do so today. Your input will give you a voice in determining proposal priorities for our 3-year contract. As you know, negotiating a strong contract, especially during these challenging times, is one of the most important responsibilities we have. Make sure your voice is heard! **The deadline for submission of your response is August 21, 2009.**

PARENT/COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Superintendent Cortines has scheduled Parent/Community meetings in response to **Yolie Flores Aguilar's** motion on "Public School Choice."

We urge you to attend at least one of these meetings to express your views about school improvement and the outsourcing of public education to charters and other entities. AALA has had featured articles on this motion through the month of July and the beginning of August.

The meetings will be held from 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. as follows:

DATE	LOCATION
Monday, August 17, 2009	Hamilton High School, 2955 S. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles
Wednesday, August 19, 2009	Gardena High School, 1301 W. 182 nd Street, Gardena
Thursday, August 20, 2009	Bethune Middle School, 155 West 69 th Street, Los Angeles

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT

From time to time, *Update* will publish less-known provisions of AALA's contract with LAUSD. Our first piece is timely, given the fact that the workload of AALA members, including principals and directors, has increased dramatically this school year. How will these administrators find time to evaluate all of the individuals they are responsible for? Article VII of our contract may provide some relief.

Article VII (Evaluation and Due Process)

Under the Education Code, successful administrators have the same opportunity as teachers to request an extension of the evaluation period.

Article VII (Evaluation and Due Process) section 1.3 Frequency of Evaluation reads, in part: Employees shall be evaluated at least once during each of the first two school years of service within the classification to which assigned, and except as provided below, at least every other school year thereafter. ... In the case of permanent employees who have been employed by the District for at least 10 years, and who have continuing status in the class, the period between evaluations may, in the joint discretion of the evaluator and the employee, be extended beyond the two-year period so that the evaluation may be made once in a three, four, or five-year period.

This extension is subject to the provisions delineated in the AALA contract.

If you are scheduled to be evaluated this year and have been employed by the District for at least 10 years with continuing status in your current class, you meet the minimal requirements for requesting that "the period between evaluations be extended beyond the two-year period." However, in consideration of the intent of the provision, AALA recommends that only administrators that can demonstrate a proven successful track record through past evaluations and student achievement request an extension.

Requests should be made, in writing, to the immediate supervisor.

For example, "Having been employed by the District for more than ten years and with continuing status in my current position, I respectfully request that my evaluation period, currently scheduled for the 2009-2010 school year be extended to no later than 2013-2014 school year as provided in the Education Code (Section 44664) and summarized in the AALA Contract, Article VII, Evaluation and Due Process."

(Optional) "Furthermore, my successful track record in my position can be demonstrated by a review of my past evaluations and an analysis of student progress."

A written response is required to extend the evaluation period. For example, "By mutual agreement, the evaluation period is extended to the 2013-2014 school year." The evaluator then changes the evaluation tab in the computer to reflect the agreement.

Both the evaluator and the employee to be evaluated need to keep a copy of the written agreement.

HEALTH BENEFITS FAQ*

This is the first in a series of frequently asked questions on District-provided health benefits. We begin with two of the most basic questions:

What benefits do AALA members currently receive?

AALA members receive the same benefits as other employees. The table below outlines what benefit types are available for active employees and eligible retirees:

<i>Benefit Type</i>	<i>Actives</i>	<i>Retirees</i>
<i>Medical (includes Rx and mental health coverage)</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>P</i>
<i>Dental</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>P</i>
<i>Vision</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>P</i>
<i>Flexible Spending Accounts</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Not Available</i>
<i>Basic Life Insurance</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Not Available</i>
<i>Optional Supplemental Life Insurance</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Available only as an individual policy directly with the vendor.</i>
<i>Employee Assistance Program</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Not Available</i>

Do retirees receive the same benefits?

Generally, yes. However, Medicare eligibility at age 65 affects your District-provided medical coverage. Specific information and guidelines will be described in a future Update.

Next Update: Health Benefits for Student Dependents - Student Verification

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

Please note a correction to last week’s Health Benefits FAQ: One of the questions indicated that members need to enroll in Medicare just before age 65, even if they are not retired. THIS IS NOT TRUE. Enrollment in Medicare is REQUIRED for retirees and spouses over 65 only.

WHEN OPENING SCHOOL: Tasks for the Administrative Team

Knowledge and understanding of the information listed in "Tips for the Principal...When Taking Over a School" is critical when opening a school site. In addition, there are useful suggestions listed below that will assist in ensuring a smooth and organized school opening. The checklist is organized in priority order so that it reflects immediate actions and long-term actions to help new administrators prioritize the requisite responsibilities. There are some suggestions that are elementary specific, and some that are secondary specific, but most are applicable at all schools. While the list is extensive, it is not meant to be complete. Again, the good judgment of the principal can never be underestimated.

1. Send an opening letter to staff members welcoming them back to school, introducing yourself and apprising them of important information, including Pupil Free Day schedule, new staff members, etc.
2. Send a letter to parents welcoming them back to school and apprising them of pertinent information for the opening of school, including registration procedures, emergency information, orientation meetings for new students.
3. Be certain that all staff positions are filled.
4. Be certain there are sufficient supplies, instructional materials and textbooks.
 Be familiar with procedures for delivering, requesting and requisitioning supplies, etc.
5. Provide an updated staff handbook or opening folder for each staff member.

Policies and Procedures for Staff:

- Hours
- Sign-in cards
- Absence; leaves of absence
- Beginning of the year procedures; end of the year procedures
- School map
- Substitute information folder
- Instructions for opening day/week attendance recording
- Child Abuse reporting/Sexual Harassment/ Bias Motivated incidents
- Health procedures and Health Office referrals; Blood Borne Pathogen Procedures, etc.
- Emergency procedures
- Staff notification of use of pesticides
- Teacher mailboxes
- Teacher meetings
- School security
- Lesson planning
- Daily or weekly bulletin
- Field trip requests
- Use of school telephone
- Photocopying materials
- Supply room
- Other policies, procedures that staff should know

WHEN OPENING SCHOOL (Continued)

Policies and Procedures for Students:

- School discipline policy/school standards, including procedures for referral
- Student accidents and injuries
- Cafeteria
- After school activities
- Homework policy
- Student use of restrooms
- Other policies, procedures that students should know

6. Prepare an information bulletin for parents.

- School hours and schedules
- Lunch and breakfast programs and appropriate forms
- Youth Services program
- Safety and emergency procedures
- Parent/Guardian notification of pesticide use
- Procedures following absence or tardiness
- Picking up students during the school day
- Special programs and school events
- Itinerant services
- Volunteer programs and requirements
- Parent education
- Parent conferences
- Parent leadership groups
- Policy for bicycle riding to and from school/staff, parent, student parking/location of buses
- Policy for taking books home
- When and how Parent Student Handbook will be distributed
- School dress code/uniform policy
- Student behavior expectations
- Homework policy
- Other policies, procedures that parents should know

7. Be sure the office staff has the following procedures/systems in place:

- Registering and assigning new students to classes
- Admission and enrollment requirements (original birth certificate, immunization records, verification of address, etc.)
- Permit policy
- Health requirements
- Cumulative Records
- Attendance tracking
- Absence procedures
- Releasing students during school day/emergency card information
- Emergency cards for students and staff
- Visitors Policy
- Checking out keys
- Room equipment inventory
- Processing of mail

WHEN OPENING SCHOOL (Continued)

8. Prepare the following schedules:

- Staff class schedule
- Breakfast, recess, lunch
- Bells
- Playground areas and activities for noon and recess
- Yard and cafeteria supervision
- Lining up, dismissal, traffic patterns
- Inclement weather
- Use of restrooms
- Auditorium/MPR
- Library
- Computer Lab
- Minimum and shortened days
- Youth Services
- Opening and securing gates and main doors
- Bus transportation

PART 2 WILL BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

RETIREMENT CELEBRATIONS

Name	Date, Time	Location	Contact
Rosalinda Ofalla	Friday, August 21, 2009 6:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	The Castaway 1250 Harvard Road Burbank	Cressie Jones 323.664.1024
Annie Webb	Saturday, August 22, 2009 12:00 – 4:00 p.m.	Ports O' Call Restaurant 1060 Nagoya Way San Pedro	Jacqueline Olvera 323.932.2221 jacqueline.olvera@lausd.net Monica Webb 310.341.9648
May Arakaki	Saturday, August 22, 2009 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Pala Casino 11154 Highway 76 Pala, CA (San Diego County)	elaine.kinoshita@lausd.net jyamamot@lausd.net mguerr3@lausd.net npaiz2@lausd.net
Clarence Lutcher	Sunday, August 23, 2009 12:00 – 3:30 p.m.	Monterey Hills Steak House 3700 W. Ramona Road Monterey Park	Lupe Sarinana Trudy Hawkins 310.547.5551

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.

PRINCIPAL, SECONDARY

Wilson High School (5) MST 46, 4500 Multnomah Street, Los Angeles, CA 90032
Wilson is an E Basis school. For information and application procedures contact **Cristopher Ziegel**, Assistant Superintendent, at 323.224.3190. **Filing deadline is Friday, August 21, 2009.**

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, COMMUNITY DAY SCHOOL

Jack London Community Day School (2) MST 37, 12924 Oxnard Street, Valley Glen, CA 91401
Jack London is an E Basis school. For information and application procedures contact **José Rodriguez**, Director, at 818.755.5300. **Filing deadline is Friday, August 21, 2009.**

INSTRUCTIONAL SPECIALIST, SMALL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Polytechnic High School (2) MST 40, 12431 Roscoe Blvd., Sun Valley, CA 91352
Polytechnic is an A Basis school on a 4x4 schedule. For information and application procedures contact **Maria Ochoa**, Director, High School Services, at 818.755.5316. **Filing deadline is Friday, August 28, 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
Coordinating Specialist, Due Process Department, Division of Special Education. Temp. Adv., MST 39, E Basis. Contact Lisa Kendrick, Administrative Coordinator, at 213.241.6718.	5:00 p.m., Friday, August 21, 2009

PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED POSITIONS STILL AVAILABLE

Position	Location	Deadline	Contact
Principal, Secondary	Millikan Middle School	08/17/09	818.755.5361
Director of Instructional and Operational Oversight	Charter Schools Division	UNTIL FILLED	213.241.2656
Principal, Elementary	Ford Boulevard School	08/18/09	323.224.3172