

UPDATE

Week of January 11, 2010

THE DENIAL OF FREE SPEECH AND THE LACK OF PROFESSIONAL COURTESY

On Tuesday, January 12, 2010, I arrived at the Board of Education at 1:00 p.m., fully prepared to address issues related to the District's proposed charter policy. This policy was to be voted on that afternoon. Seven speakers had pulled speaker cards to address the policy. Only the three who were present made their remarks. As I started to approach the podium to fill one of the missing speaker slots, I explained to the Board President that all seven speakers' cards were gone, but only three people had spoken. **Ms. García said, "We are looking for the other people with speaker cards. If you don't have a card, you can't speak!"**

I then pulled two speaker cards, one for Item 4, "Routine Personnel Actions," and the other for "Public Comment." I remained in the Board Room until 4:00 p.m., at which time I had to leave to attend the District's Teacher Evaluation Subcommittee meeting. I was never given the opportunity to speak.

Historically, in LAUSD Board meetings, bargaining unit presidents have always been permitted to address the Board of Education on issues pertaining to the students, parents and staff members of the District. **It is disappointing, to say the least, that a Board President can silence the views of the President of AALA, whose members are the very people who provide the leadership for District schools! The lack of professional courtesy is both disturbing and surprising.**

The presentation I would have made follows:

Good afternoon, Madam President, Members of the Board of Education, and Superintendent Cortines. My name is **Judith Perez**, and I am the elected President of Associated Administrators of Los Angeles.

I would like to remind you that the AALA contract requires the District to include our representatives on all Board committees. The task force responsible for developing the updated Policy for Charter Schools consisted of a preponderance of charter advocates, and **AALA was not included.**

We did meet twice with the District's Executive Director of the Innovation and Charter Schools Division and the Director of Charter Schools, reviewed a draft of the policy and made several key recommendations for improvement. However, we were told in December 2009, that our ideas were not being incorporated because of the limited time available to bring it to the Board. We urge you to give our suggestions future consideration.

We understand that in order to promote innovation and choice, charters are freed from certain rules and regulations. In exchange for this autonomy and flexibility, the new policy states that charter schools accept **higher levels of individual school accountability**. In the spirit of supporting this heightened accountability and District oversight, AALA makes the following recommendations:

DENIAL OF FREE SPEECH AND THE LACK OF PROFESSIONAL COURTESY (Continued)

(1) Persistently low-performing charters must be identified publicly as **FOCUS SCHOOLS**, be closely monitored and required to participate in the Public School Choice process. This entails developing a plan for improvement in competition with other internal and external entities, being selected by the Superintendent to continue as charters and approved by the Board.

(2) Successful LAUSD schools must be given incentives to remain part of the District. For example, regular schools that demonstrate continued improvement in student performance should be granted the freedom from regulations and flexibility to innovate that charters currently enjoy.

Chief Financial Officer **Megan Reilly** informed AALA last month that when Birmingham High School went charter, the District lost a minimum of \$15 million per year. Keeping schools within the District is particularly urgent now, given our massive budget deficit.

Board Members, expect to hear additional AALA recommendations for improvement at future Board meetings! Thank you.

AALA BARGAINING BULLETIN—NO. 6

Your AALA Negotiating Team has been deeply involved in bargaining with the District since mid-December 2009. We have presented some of our initial bargaining proposals, and the District has presented some of theirs. Negotiations have focused so far on our proposals related to recognition, staff development, filling of vacant and newly-created positions, 4214 appointments and expedited arbitration. There is no resolution, as of now, to any of these issues.

We bargained in-depth on the District's proposed furlough days for 2009-2010. No agreement has been reached, and at this point, it does not appear that we will be able to achieve an agreement on this issue with the District.

Likewise, there is no resolution so far on the issue of the Superintendent mandating paid parking for Beaudry employees next year. **Because the District has declined to rescind the notice of the new fees, your bargaining team has advised the District that we will employ other options to overturn this mandate.** Our next bargaining session is scheduled for later this month, and we will continue to keep you informed.

ACADEMIC DECATHLON VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The 2010 LAUSD Academic Decathlon competition, the 29th annual, will be held on Saturday, January 30, 2010, and Saturday, February 6, 2010, at Roybal Learning Center, 1200 West Colton Street, Los Angeles 90026. Past support by administrators and teachers, **elementary, middle, and high school**, for this competition has been outstanding, and that support is needed again this year, especially on the first date, January 30, for the Speech, Interview and Essay events. Volunteer applications are available at all participating high schools, Local District offices, and at www.acadecala.net. Contact **Cliff Ker**, Academic Decathlon Coordinator, at 818.654.3714 or at cliff.ker@lausd.net if you have any questions.

Special Request for Retired Administrators: Readers are needed to score the student essays on Wednesday, February 3, 2010, from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Beaudry, 25th Floor. If you have questions regarding this request or can help read the essays, please contact Cliff Ker at the numbers above. Validated parking will be available in the Visconti garage.

Why Business Leaders Should Not Be in the Driver's Seat

By [Diane Ravitch](#) on December 1, 2009, *Education Week*

Dear Deborah,

I hope you had a happy Thanksgiving. We have much to be thankful for in this wonderful country. I am forever thankful that my mother came to this country after World War I (from Bessarabia), and that my paternal grandparents came to this country in the mid-19th Century (from Poland). When I visit Houston or Savannah, where each grew up, I am reminded of how lucky they were to escape the fate that awaited the family members who remained behind in Europe. One of the institutions that made this country a great haven for immigrants was its public education system. After only a few years in Houston, my mother learned to speak perfect English, and she was a proud graduate of the Houston public schools (circa 1926). Free public education helped our country to prosper. And above all, it provided almost everyone a chance to make a better life for themselves and their children.

Our public schools were never perfect. There was never a golden age when everyone graduated high school and learned to a high standard of excellence. Improving education and expanding equality of opportunity have been the slow, steady work of generations.

Yet now, we live in an age when it is the custom to bash the public schools, not to thank them for helping to build our nation. It has become commonplace for the president, the secretary of education, and the leaders of the business community to lament the terrible state of our schools and to demand radical, one might even say revolutionary, changes. We live in an age of data, and the data (they say) are awful. They look at NAEP test scores, international test scores, graduation rates, and anything else that is measurable, and they demand solutions, now.

Note that they never speak of the state of learning, nor even the state of education, because those words connote many intangibles that cannot be measured and converted into data. The politicians and business leaders do not speak about whether young people read in their spare time, whether their reading consists of good literature and nonfiction, whether they know how to write an engaging essay or a well-constructed research paper, whether they can engage in an informed discussion of history, whether they are knowledgeable about our governmental system, whether they perform volunteer service in their community, whether they leave high school prepared to serve on a jury and vote thoughtfully. No, instead what we now hear from our business leaders is that the schools must be redesigned to function like business. They conveniently overlook the fact that business practices and the ruthless pursuit of a competitive edge nearly destroyed our national economy a year ago.

Last week, [an opinion piece](#) in *The Wall Street Journal* by **Harold E. Ford** Jr. (chairman of the Democratic Leadership Council), **Louis V. Gerstner** Jr. (former chairman of IBM), and **Eli Broad** (founder of the Broad Foundations) enunciated the new wisdom about school reform. (Leave aside the fact that these three have never reformed a school; nonetheless, they know how it should be done.) Schools with low scores must be closed, and states must open the floodgates to unlimited numbers of privately managed charter schools. Schools must compete for students. Teachers must compete with one another for higher test scores. Everyone must be evaluated by those scores. Everything else is an "insignificant" idea.

In the same week, Mayor **Michael Bloomberg** of New York City announced that he intends (despite a state law to the contrary) to evaluate teachers for tenure on the basis of their students' test scores. He will ask the state legislature to require all school districts to use test scores to evaluate teachers. And, of course, he wants the state to remove the cap on charters.

WHY BUSINESS LEADERS SHOULD NOT... (Continued)

Never mind that in many states the test scores are phony, doctored, and meaningless. We might start, for example, with New York and Illinois. The Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago released a report ("[Still Left Behind](#)") earlier this year that documented the lowered cut scores on Illinois's state tests, which gave the illusion of progress in Chicago. Chicago students are still far behind, and progress during **Arne Duncan's** tenure was meager. The report reaches these key findings:

"Most of Chicago's students drop out or fail. The vast majority of Chicago's elementary and high schools do not prepare their students for success in college and beyond." "There is a general perception that Chicago's public schools have been gradually improving over time. However, recent dramatic gains in the reported number of CPS elementary students who meet standards on state assessments appear to be due to changes in the tests made by the Illinois State Board of Education, rather than real improvements in student learning." "At the elementary level, state assessment standards have been so weakened that most of the 8th graders who "meet" these standards have little chance to succeed in high school or to be ready for college. While there has been modest improvement in real student learning in Chicago's elementary schools, these gains dissipate in high school." "The performance of Chicago's high schools is abysmal—with about half the students dropping out of the non-selective-enrollment schools, and more than 70 percent of 11th grade students failing to meet state standards. The trend has remained essentially flat over the past several years. The relatively high-performing students are concentrated in a few magnet/selective enrollment high schools. In the regular neighborhood high schools, which serve the vast preponderance of students, almost no students are prepared to succeed in college." Similarly, the scoring of the state tests in New York was dumbed down dramatically from 2006-2009, and it became possible for students to reach Level 2 by random guessing. Proficiency rates on state tests soared dramatically at the same time that the state's scores on NAEP remained flat. As a result of the state's dumbed-down tests, New York City's accountability system crashed, and 97 percent of all elementary and junior high schools were rated A or B because of their alleged gains on the state tests. Having just launched its own "merit pay" plan, New York City was required to pay out more than \$30 million in bonuses to teachers, triggered by the remarkable (and phony) gains on state tests. My friend **Andrew Wolf**, who wrote an education column for the now-defunct *New York Sun*, described the collision of the state tests and the city accountability system thus: "It is like two thieves trying to rob the same bank at the same time." New York City and Chicago are two districts that adopted competitive business practices, aggressively closing down schools and spurring competition. What are the results? Grade inflation on state scores, but neither district saw significant improvement on NAEP since 2003. (NYC did get a gain for its 4th grade students in math in 2007, but not in 4th grade reading, 8th grade reading, or 8th grade math, and in 2009, the state's math scores were flat, which indicates that the city's were, as well.) Living as we do in an age when test scores are so easily manipulated and so often fraudulent, we should proceed with caution before using them to determine the fate of students, teachers, principals, and schools. I give Mssrs. Ford, Gerstner, and Broad the benefit of the doubt: They think that school data are as meaningful as a profit-and-loss statement or a price-to-earnings ratio. Presumably, they don't realize that what is measured and can be measured may not be the most important things that happen in schools. Where I do not give them the benefit of the doubt is that they assume that the Race to the Top is "enforcing academic standards." That is simply not true. In fact, it is sad or laughable, I am not sure which. The main themes of RTTT are privatization via charters and evaluation via phony test scores. How this translates into "rigorous standards" defies my understanding. Nor do I admire their belief that schools will get dramatically better if they compete, just like businesses do. Maybe people in business win by competing, maybe competition produces better mousetraps, but that is not the way that schools function. Schools work best when teachers collaborate with one another to identify students who need extra attention or a different program or to mentor weak teachers; schools work best when they collaborate around common goals. Schools are not trying to build a better mousetrap. They are trying to educate our citizenry. Schools are not businesses, and we will continue to flounder so long as we put politicians and business leaders in the driver's seat on education policy.

Diane

"AN UNCOMMON JOURNEY TO DIVERSITY"

The Associated Administrators of Los Angeles is proud to be an organizing partner of the community project - "An Uncommon Journey to Diversity." The program is a collective student project that celebrates the commonalities of all people across the city despite their ethnicity, race, and religion as students research and create original paintings of their family members and ancestors, and share their findings through their writings and art.

The purpose of this project is to engage middle and high school students of varied religious and cultural backgrounds in researching their family history, ancestors and individual heritages. Students from Taft High School, Woodland Hills Academy, Fremont High School, and New Community Jewish High School have worked together at the Jewish Community Center at Milken to create original paintings based on family photographs and oral histories under the tutelage of renowned Historical Artist and Authors **Rick Hyman** and **Ronda Hyman**. The works of Mr. Hyman have been featured on the **Bill Cosby** Show and displayed in our State Capitol. His work along with the student paintings and the stories that inspired them will be on display throughout the month of February in celebration of Black History Month. The exhibit is free and open to the community in the Finegood Art Gallery on the Milken Campus, 22622 Vanowen Street in West Hills. **All AALA members are encouraged to arrange for their students (all grade levels) to attend.**

As part of this project, Mr. Hyman's book entitled My Texas Family, An Uncommon Journey to Prosperity was read by students and used as a model along with its companion study guide workbook. The goal of this endeavor is being realized by students who discovered the benefits and beauty of diversity while developing a sense of pride for their own cultures. The Committee for An Uncommon Journey to Diversity includes representatives from the Los Angeles Human Relations Commission, Los Angeles Unified School District, Beyond the Bell Branch, The Jewish Community Center at Milken, with partnerships with the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles Valley Alliance, and the Finegood Art Gallery. In addition to the artwork, an Opening Reception of the exhibit will be held at 6:30 p.m. in the Finegood Art Gallery located in the Jewish Community Center at Milken on Monday, February 1, honoring the start of Black History Month. The exhibit will continue for the entire month. **We hope to see you and your students sometime during the month of February.** The following link highlights the project as shown on KNBC-TV News:

[http://www.nbclosangeles.com/station/as-seen-on/Uncommon Journey to Diversity Los Angeles.html](http://www.nbclosangeles.com/station/as-seen-on/Uncommon_Journey_to_Diversity_Los_Angeles.html)

The story can be seen on the AALA website as well. Go to www.aalausd.com. Click on "Search Documents," "General Info," then click on "An Uncommon Journey to Diversity."

CTEL CLASSES FOR ADMINISTRATORS

California State University, Long Beach, is willing to offer California Teacher of English Learners (CTEL) classes to a cohort of administrators at the Beaudry Building. Administrators are asked to contact **Denise Robert** at 213.241.5300, Extension 29390, if they are interested in earning their CLAD certification through coursework at a Central Office location.

EDUCATION FORUM POSTPONED

We greatly appreciate your support for the education forum with candidates for the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. We regret to inform you that both Senator **Gloria Romero** and Assemblyman **Tom Torlakson** have had a change of schedule. The legislature has scheduled final appropriation hearings on January 21. Therefore, we will have to postpone the event. Just as soon as the event is rescheduled, we will notify you of the new date.

Dr. Angel Barrett, President, ACSA Region XVI
Dr. Judith Perez, President, AALA

IN MEMORIAM

ROBERT NAIDIS and **MARIE NAIDIS** – Robert was a former Principal of Monroe and Washington Prep high schools and Assistant Principal of Lincoln and North Hollywood high schools and Bancroft and Harte middle schools. Marie was a former Assistant Principal of Mount Gleason and Adams middle schools and Foshay Learning Center. They both retired on January 29, 1982. Robert passed away on December 7, 2009, and Marie passed away on December 23, 2009. Both deaths were the result of a traffic accident in Sacramento. They had made their home in Bend, Oregon.

REMINDER...REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY MEETING

The second of this school year's four Representative Assembly meetings is scheduled for **Thursday, January 28, 2010**. The format will be same as in the past: 4:30 p.m.—Departmental caucuses; 5:30 p.m.—Dinner meeting/ Third Floor Conference Room. These meetings are always important and even more so now. Please RSVP your attendance to AALA at 213.484.2226 or e-mail to rsvp@aala.us so that we may prepare adequately for the meal.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the LAUSD All District Honor Marching Band and Drill Team for another superb performance, 39th consecutive, in the Tournament of Roses Parade on January 1, 2010. The band and drill team members, approximately 350, come from throughout the District's senior high schools to participate in this premier unit and to display to the world their outstanding musical talent. AALA commends **Tony White**, Coordinator, Visual and Performing Arts, Beyond the Bell Branch, and **Art Duardo**, Principal, El Sereno Middle School, band directors; their assistant musical directors; and all the other educators who assisted with preparing the band and drill team for the annual Tournament of Roses Parade. In addition to the Rose Parade, the band and drill team performed in the Tournament of Roses Bandfest and at Disneyland. This group is definitely LAUSD's pride.

HEALTH BENEFITS FAQ

Topic: Continuity of Care Provisions When Enrolled in New Health Plans

What is meant by “Continuity of Care” in our District health plans?

You have the right to Continuity of Care, which allows continued medical care even if your previous doctor is not part of your current health plan. Continuity of Care is defined as temporary coverage when you become a member of another health plan and have an acute or serious chronic condition being treated by an out-of-network provider. In addition to these conditions, other covered medical conditions include pregnancy, care of a newborn child up to 30 months, terminal illness, scheduled surgery, and active treatment for a behavioral condition.

How do I know if my condition is covered under Continuity of Care?

Each health plan provides Continuity of Care or Transition of Care information. Your LAUSD Benefits Administration web page, www.benefits@lausd.net provides two web links to continuity or transition of care information and forms--Anthem Blue Cross and Health Net’s HMO and Seniority Plus. For Kaiser, contact Member Services at 800.464.4000. For Secure Horizons, call 866.622.8055. If you have additional questions, contact your health plan’s member services and speak to a Continuity of Care representative.

What if I need immediate treatment for a medical condition covered under Continuity of Care?

Complete the continuity or transition of care application form and contact the Member or Customer Service number for your plan. Be sure to identify your medical emergency and your need for immediate care. Your request should be expedited.

SAVE THE DATES

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 2010 – The 44th State Association of Mexican American Educators (AMAE) Conference will be held from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Renaissance Hotel, 1755 North Highland Avenue, Hollywood. Register online at www.amae-events.com. For information contact **Lydia Soto** at 818.486.6225 or e-mail losangeles-amae@sbcglobal.net.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 2010 – The PDK-USC Chapter will host its Annual Emery Stoops Lecture Dinner at 6:00 p.m. (Social Hour at 5:00 p.m.), USC University Club (formerly the Faculty Center). Guest speakers will be Dr. **Angel Barrett**, California 2009 National Distinguished Principal, and Dr. **Karen Symms Gallagher**, Dean, USC Rossier School of Education. Cost is \$40. For questions and reservations contact **Teresa Miller** at TeacherTMM@aol.com.

ASSOCIATED ADMINISTRATORS OF LOS ANGELES 2009-2010 MASTER CALENDAR

January

Monday 18 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Birthday Observed
 Tues. - Fri. 19 - 22 Mail Community Award Applications to members
Thursday 28 Representative Assembly
 Saturday 30 Academic Decathlon - Speech/Interview/Essay Events -
 Roybal Learning Center

February

Saturday 6 Academic Decathlon - Objective Tests/Super Quiz -
 Roybal Learning Center
 Monday 8 Second Semester Begins - Single Track Schools
 Thursday 11 Administrative Interest Groups - Breakfast Meeting - AALA
 Thursday 11 Academic Decathlon Awards Ceremony - Hollywood High School
 Monday 15 Presidents' Day

March

Monday 1 Executive Board Meeting
 Monday 15 ACSA Legislative Action Day - Sacramento
 Friday 19 AALA Scholarship/Community Award applications due
Thursday 25 Representative Assembly
 Saturday 27 AEIOU Dinner Dance - Casa Italiana
 Monday 29 Eve of Passover
 Tues./Wed. 30/31 Passover
 Mon. - Fri. 29 - April 2 Spring Recess - Single Track Schools

April

Friday 2 Good Friday
 Sunday 4 Easter
 Tuesday 6 Selection of AALA Scholarship recipients - AALA Committee
 Wednesday 7 AAPA Spring Social - Empress Pavilion
 Thursday 8 Selection of AALA Community Award recipients - AALA Committee
Monday 12 Executive Board Meeting
 Wednesday 21 Administrative Professionals Day
 Thursday 22 AALA Retirees Luncheon - Stadium Club, Dodger Stadium

May

Thursday 6 ACSA - Region XVI Awards Banquet - Casa Italiana
Thursday 13 Representative Assembly
 Sunday 16 AJE Scholarship Brunch
 Wednesday 19 AAPA Scholarship Dinner - Empress Pavilion
 Thursday 20 Scholarship/Community Awards Banquet - Millennium Biltmore Hotel
 Monday 31 Memorial Day Observed

June

Saturday 5 COBA Black Child Conference/Scholarship Luncheon
Monday 7 Executive Board Installation Dinner
 Monday 28 Adult Year-End Luncheon (tentative)