

UPDATE

Week of October 4, 2010

AALA POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC) NEWS

AALA's PAC Steering Committee met this week to begin the process of our engagement in this year's political campaigns that affect public education, in general, and our membership, in particular. The PAC Steering Committee is responsible for researching candidates' qualifications, identifying important issues and making recommendations to the PAC Council regarding which candidates to support in the upcoming elections and the amount of money to donate to their campaigns. The PAC Council, which is convened the same evening that AALA Representative Assembly meetings are held, will review the PAC Steering Committee recommendations and make the final decisions.

The Steering Committee developed a set of *AALA Core Values* to serve as the basis for assessing candidates' views and making recommendations to the PAC Council. The *AALA Core Values* are a work-in-progress and may be updated. The committee also developed a questionnaire to obtain the views of State Superintendent of Public Instruction candidates, **Larry Aceves** and **Tom Torlakson**. Once the two candidates return the completed questionnaires, the PAC Steering Committee will prepare recommendations for the PAC Council, which is scheduled to meet on October 14, 2010.

The filing deadline for Board of Education candidates is November 13, 2010. The deadline for candidates to file nomination petitions is December 8, 2010. The AALA PAC Steering Committee will interview as many Board candidates as possible to determine whom to recommend to the AALA PAC Council for support. We will continue to keep you informed about PAC activities in *Update*. Following are the *AALA Core Values* set forth by the PAC Steering Committee:

1. Collective bargaining agreements must be honored.
2. Lifetime health benefits are not negotiable.
3. The Health Benefits Committee has the right to make decisions regarding the monies related to the District's health benefits package.
4. Principals should be the summative evaluators of teachers and other staff members at their respective school sites.
5. Practitioners must be consulted when decisions are being contemplated that affect the scope of their work.
6. Line-staff protocol is essential for the implementation of Districtwide communication, supervision and evaluation.
7. The principalship is a year-round responsibility. Principals must have time to prepare adequately for student learning, safety and staff members' professional development. Therefore, principals should be afforded adequate time and compensation to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

AALA POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC) NEWS (Continued)

8. Administrative and classified norms must be adjusted to insure the safety and welfare of students and to provide for the appropriate supervision of instruction.
9. Administrative assignments must be determined by the District's existing promotional exam process, which is merit based.
10. Since State-funded programs establish mandates and require supervisory personnel to ensure accountability, communication and professional development, central and regional administrators are essential.

SCHOOLS NEED PLANT MANAGERS!

As you are aware, for the past four months AALA has urged Chief Facilities Executive **James Sohn** to rescind his decision to eliminate plant managers at elementary school sites. We have spoken with Superintendent Cortines and senior staff members repeatedly about the serious safety and security concerns that would arise if Mr. Sohn's "team cleaning" plan moves forward.

Furthermore, we asked Mr. Sohn if he had consulted with principals about these issues. He told us he had not, but agreed to do so. Many of you met with him and his staff members and spoke eloquently about the need to retain plant managers. To his credit, in response to AALA members' views, Mr. Sohn pared back the plan little by little. Instead of assigning minimally skilled School Facilities Assistants to schools during the daytime, he decided to assign Buildings & Grounds workers. Schools with 16 or more custodial hours will have a way to opt out of team cleaning and retain their plant managers (with approval of the Local District Superintendent). Local District Superintendents may authorize schools with 12 custodial hours to opt out if supplemental funding is available and/or there are other "mitigating circumstances."

However, AALA continues to insist that every school needs a plant manager, and we have told Mr. Sohn, Superintendent Cortines, senior staff and Board of Education members of our views loud and clear. We are deeply concerned that safety and security will be compromised if a skilled individual is not available to open and close schools, handle emergencies during the school day and after hours and be available to address the unexpected problems that arise on a daily basis.

AALA members, if you care about this issue, let your Board members know. Now is the time. Don't be afraid to speak up!

NOTE: *Mr. Sohn had promised to prepare a factual article for this week's Update detailing the modifications to his original plan. It never came. We will publish his article next week if we receive it.*

2010-2011 EVALUATION PROCESS - NO CHANGE

Because the District continues to distribute information promoting the use of the value-added model (VAM) in the evaluation of certificated personnel, AALA is reminding all members that at no time should this methodology be used to evaluate teachers or other certificated personnel during the 2010-2011 school year.

During a recent conversation with Superintendent Cortines, AALA President **Dr. Judith Perez** asked the Superintendent to clarify for AALA and UTLA members whether the District plans to attempt to modify any aspect of the current evaluation process for certificated personnel.

The Superintendent responded, first of all, by sharing his appreciation for administrators' work on evaluation last year, 2009-2010, commenting that he strongly supports AALA members' efforts. **He further stated that there will be no changes in the evaluation process for the 2010-2011 school year until negotiations involving both AALA and UTLA have been completed. Collective bargaining agreements would have to be revised in order for changes in the evaluation process to take place.** AALA appreciates Superintendent Cortines' response in this matter.

PAYROLL BRANCH ALERT FOR AALA ADMINISTRATORS

There have been some corrections to **REF-5205.1** that you should know about. An e-mail message was sent to time reporters and approvers indicating that the updated reference guide will be published sometime within the next several weeks.

1. Administrators will receive **8 hours**, not 6 hours, for their special assignment professional development time (the two professional development days AALA negotiated on your behalf last year).
2. The Eligibility List of job codes has been updated to include the position of Assistant Principal, Secondary Counseling Services, at the school site.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (SPELA)
Intensive Support for Administrators**

Division of Special Education is offering an intensive training on October 20 – 22, 2010. SPELA is designed to assist participants in acquiring essential skills and knowledge in special education policies, procedures, instruction and compliance. While this training is mandatory for administrators with special education responsibilities who have not attended in a previous school year, it is being offered so that any administrator will have an opportunity to participate in learning. Each special education department will be presenting an overview and refresher of their supports and services. This training is organized so that a designee can attend with the administrator. If you choose this option, the administrator can attend the first day, review the agendas for the three days, and attend any sessions of interest. The designee can remain at the training for the entire 3-day session.

All participants will receive a resource notebook with presentations as well as resource books. Please see MEM-5131.0 or contact Jaelyn Hiller at jaelyn.hiller@lausd.net or (213) 241-5409 for further information.

PERFORMANCE IS NOT NECESSARILY LEARNING

By **Walt Gardner**, *Education Week*, August 23, 2010

Leave it to the British to teach Americans about their common language. A report by the Institute of Education on more than 100 international studies found that obsessing on *performance* on standardized tests is counterproductive to *learning* about the subjects evaluated by these tests (["Pupils do better at school if teachers are not fixated on test results," The Guardian, Aug. 13](#)).

Semantics comes into the picture because reformers use the words "performance" and "learning" interchangeably. But as teachers have repeatedly maintained, they are not *necessarily* the same. Students can score high (perform) but internalize little (learn). In my opinion, the result does not qualify as a quality education. **Albert Einstein** said it best: "Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted."

Nevertheless, when teachers point to this explanation, they are seen as making excuses. But the Institute of Education's recent study lends support to teachers. It found that when instruction focused on learning, as opposed to performance, students not only scored better on tests, but they became more analytical and better behaved. I'd venture to say that they also enjoyed their classes more because they became more engaged. These affective outcomes are important to emphasize if the goal is to develop lifelong learners.

Instead, high-stakes tests are portrayed as the *sine qua non*. Not surprisingly, intellectual life is sucked out of classrooms when they are converted into test preparation factories. What is left is little more than fragmentary knowledge that quickly evaporates. Test scores will almost always improve by the adoption of this strategy, but at what price? How are students and the country served?

The usual reply to this question is that students will have shown evidence of learning at least something. Isn't this better than the present system that allows students to graduate without reaching any reasonable level of proficiency? But this retort overlooks the need for enrichment, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. These students are precisely those most in need of stimulation. As the British study explained, teachers are under such pressure to boost test scores that they talk *at* their students, rather than talk *to* them. Drill has its place in the classroom, but when it constitutes the overwhelming pedagogy it is hardly the way to nurture a love of learning.

The *reductio ad absurdum* of this strategy is the use of scripted lessons by districts desperate to avoid sanctions. In this scenario, teachers are reduced to talking robots. It's little wonder that their students become bored and disruptive. And matters are only going to get worse as pressure mounts to provide evidence of learning. All it will do, however, is to provide evidence of performance.

**"Our progress as a nation
can be no swifter than
our progress in education."**

— [John F. Kennedy](#)

"VALUE-ADDED" TEACHER RATINGS ADD LITTLE VALUE

By [Bill Boyarsky](#), *The Jewish Journal*, September 21, 2010

The teacher evaluations recently posted on the Los Angeles Times Web site deserve careful but skeptical reading.

I studied them both as a grandparent of public school kids and as a journalist who writes about schools for *The Jewish Journal* and *LA Observed*, a Web site that focuses on local politics, government and the media. I also know how important the public schools are to Jewish families concerned about their children's education.

Like many other people, my attention was caught by the premise behind the series of stories in the Times and on its Web site — the promise of a new, trailblazing way of evaluating teachers. The Times has posted the names and evaluations of about 6,000 elementary school teachers on [latimes.com](#). On the first day that the series ran in the print edition of the newspaper, two teachers were singled out, one shown in a large picture, as among the least effective in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD).

I was offended by the way the two teachers were singled out and the fact that thousands more names and ratings have been posted on the Web site. Even in their weakened states, newspapers, especially one as big as the Times, are powerful instruments. I began to dig into the evaluation system.

The Times evaluations are based on the value-added system. As the Times explained it, "In essence, a student's past performance on tests is used to project his or her future results. The difference between the prediction and the student's actual performance after the year is the 'value' that the teacher added or subtracted. ... If a third-grade student ranked in the 60th percentile among all district third-graders, he would be expected to rank similarly in the fourth grade." If that student's test scores fell, it would show his teacher was ineffective. If they rose, the teacher would be classified as effective.

A strong caution on the value-added system came from Mathematica Policy Research, an organization working for the U.S. Department of Education that is headed by Education Secretary **Arne Duncan**, a supporter of value added. Mathematica's analysis offered "evidence that value-added estimates for teacher-level analyses are subject to a considerable degree of random error."

When I asked Times Assistant Managing Editor **David Lauter** about this, he told me, "We took several steps to deal with the inherent error rate that is involved in any statistical measure."

In the Times evaluation system, the possibility of error is expressed as confidence levels, in terms of plus and minus. The margin of error for English scores is plus or minus five for the highest and lowest scorers. For math, it is plus or minus seven. Accuracy is even lower for teachers who score midrange.

To see how this worked, I looked up a teacher I know to be outstanding. The teacher was rated "more effective," just short of being rated most effective, in English and on his overall score. His highest ratings were in math.

"VALUE-ADDED" TEACHER RATINGS ADD LITTLE VALUE (Continued)

Then I learned something interesting. He did not teach his class math. This school used team teaching. He taught English and other subjects. But when it came time for math, the students went to the classroom of a teacher who specialized in math instruction. I thought this would seriously skew test results. I asked LAUSD officials about it.

One official said some, but not a majority, of Los Angeles schools engage in team teaching. It's up to the principals and the teachers. At the beginning of the school year, the students in a class are assigned to a particular teacher. We'll call him or her the "official teacher." In elementary school, this teacher is responsible for teaching all subjects to the students assigned him or her. But in a team teaching school, the students may go to the math teacher's classroom for instruction. Yet the "official teacher" administers all the tests and takes the credit or blame for students' performance on all subjects. "They will get credit for teaching math, even though they didn't teach math," one official told me.

This seems to be a huge flaw in the teacher rating system. There are others. Statistical analysis involves random sampling. Random sampling is important in such analysis. But a study by the Economic Policy Institute said test results usually do not come from classes where students were enrolled at random or by chance. Instead, classroom assignments are made by principals based on such factors as spreading high and low achievers among classrooms, separating troublemaking friends and yielding to parental pressure.

Lauter told me the Times analysis took these factors into account and produced "unbiased results." That's for the reader to determine. Test scores and the value-added system are a useful tool in evaluating teachers. But they are imperfect and fall short of telling the whole story.

The Times should have done a better job of revealing flaws in its system. When parents look up a teacher on the database, they should know the ratings have a substantial error rate and, at best, are a limited measure of a teacher's ability. As the old saying goes, don't believe everything you read in the newspapers.

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.

**"Education: That which discloses to the wise,
and disguises from the foolish,
their lack of understanding."**

-- *Ambrose Bierce*

SAVE THE DATES

MONDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2010 – Women in Educational Leadership (WEL) will host its **Fall Social** from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m., San Antonio Winery, 737 Lamar Street, Los Angeles. The event is free to 2010-2011 WEL members and \$20 for nonmembers. For information contact **Penny Sommers** at 323.463.3077 or Laurice.Sommers@yahoo.com.

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.

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.

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/ppda_monique.pdf.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE (Continued)

CERTIFICATED POSITIONS AVAILABLE

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, SECONDARY COUNSELING SERVICES (SCS)

Hamilton High School (3) MST 40, 2955 S. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90034

Hamilton is a B Basis school. For information and application procedures contact **Douglas Waybright**, Principal Leader, at 310.914.2100. **Filing deadline is Thursday, October 14, 2010.**

The following positions are available to view in their entirety by going to the AALA Website, <http://www.aalasd.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
Asst. Prin., Secondary	Nightingale MS	10/08/10	323.224.3100
Instr. Specialist	Markham Middle School	Until filled	employment@partnershipla.org
Operations Director	Roosevelt High School	Until filled	employment@partnershipla.org
Instr. Specialist	99 th Street School	Until filled	employment@partnershipla.org
Instr. Specialist	Griffith-Joyner School	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, SPECIAL EDUCATION DATA MANAGEMENT and REPORTING, MST 38 (Temp. Adv.), B Basis, Division of Special Education For information and application procedures contact Veronica Smith, Director, MCD Monitoring/Policies and Procedures, at 213.241.5438. 	5:00 p.m. Mon., Oct. 11, 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SPECIALIST, Pre-K – 12 MATHEMATICS PROGRAM, MST 38 (Temp. Adv.), B Basis, Local District 4 For information and application procedures contact Danny Palma, Administrative Assistant, at 213.241.0100. 	4:00 p.m. Mon., Oct. 11, 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SPECIALIST, STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS BRANCH, MST 38 (Temp. Adv.), E Basis, Office of Data and Accountability For information and application procedures contact Amancio Pardini, Deputy Director, at 213.241.2450. 	5:00 p.m. Mon., Oct. 11, 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COORDINATOR, PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT, MST 43 (Temp. Adv.), E Basis, Local District 6 For information and application procedures contact Rowena Lagrosa, Interim Superintendent, at 323.278.3900. 	5:00 p.m. Mon., Oct. 11, 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SPECIALIST, MODERATE TO SEVERE DISABILITIES, MST 38 (Temp. Adv.), B Basis, Division of Special Education For information and application procedures contact Geri Fuchigami, Coordinator, Transition and Behavior, at 213.241.8165. 	Thur., Oct. 7, 2010