

UPDATE

Week of September 21, 2009

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION PULLED THE SHADES ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2009

AALA members will recall the September 7, 2009, UPDATE article entitled "Transparency Has Left the Building." Well, not only did Beaudry turn opaque last Tuesday but the Board of Education pulled the shades down this week! The "Mayor's Board Majority eliminated the District's Board of Education committee structure by a vote of 5-2. AALA strongly commends Board of Education Members **Marguerite LaMotte** and **Steve Zimmer** for addressing the negative aspects of this proposal and voting "no" on it.

AALA wishes to remind the Mayor's 5 that principals are held accountable for being transparent. Shouldn't Board Members be held to the same level of accountability? Dr. **Judith Perez** addressed the Board prior to the vote on this potential loss of transparency. The following are her remarks:

Good afternoon, Madam President, Members of the Board of Education, and Dr. Morris. My name is Judith Perez, and I am President of the Associated Administrators of Los Angeles.

I am here today to speak in support of retaining the Board's standing committees instead of eliminating them. The most valuable standing committees, Curriculum and Instruction, Safety, Budget and Facilities, provide the Board and the public in-depth information critical to our key mission as a District. All four are expanded committees, which in addition to Board members, include representation from among LAUSD staff, parents, teachers, and administrators. Standing committees meet just once a month for a couple of hours each. They are the only regular means the Board has to inform your decision-making, while giving stakeholders a voice and the public much needed transparency.

Replacing standing committees with the occasional task force will essentially eliminate public discussion and debate. Where will be your accountability? Principals are held accountable for organizing School Site Councils, ELAC, CEAC, SBM, and faculty meetings every month. They are required to allow open discussion on all agenda items, provide time for public comment, welcome community participation, and make sure budget, safety, curriculum & instruction are regularly discussed. If principals changed the rules to eliminate any of these requirements, they would be subject to discipline and the loss of critical funding for their schools.

What kind of democracy is there if you exclude the voices of those who carry out your initiatives? What kind of transparency do you provide when the parents whose children attend our schools are silenced?

Do the math: Efficiency does not equal TRANSPARENCY. I urge you to reconsider Proposal #2 and retain the standing committees of the Board.

SUPERINTENDENT CORTINES REJECTS AALA'S EFFORTS IN SUPPORT OF SMALL SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Dr. **Judith Perez**, AALA President, and staff requested during several meetings with Superintendent **Ramon Cortines** that the remaining 23 principals assigned to small elementary schools (sites with an enrollment of fewer than 300 students) have their compensation restored to MST 40. AALA's rationale included the loss of morale and the lack of support staff. The total cost of this salary restoration would be approximately \$50,000, less than the cost of a single teacher's salary! Superintendent Cortines responded to Dr. Perez's last request on September 14, 2009, by saying, "I don't care about morale!"

It is difficult to understand how an experienced superintendent does not see the correlation between morale and performance. From a budget-savings point of view, it should be noted that several additional positions authorized by the superintendent reflect a much greater expenditure for personnel than the aforementioned \$50,000.

Dr. Perez asked the superintendent to respond in writing to her repeated requests for the small school principals' salary allocation. His terse response follows:

"Good morning, Dr. Perez,

This e-mail is to notify you that I have considered your request regarding Small School Principals, and I must say no to your request at this time." Ray Cortines

LETTER TO STATE SUPERINTENDENT O'CONNELL

Dear Superintendent O'Connell,

I want to thank all of you on behalf of the students in California for all the things you do for them and for educators. With that said, I want to again point out an ongoing injustice in the accountability system that continues to plague education in the State and in the Nation. We jumped 37 API points this year into the 700's with all subgroups DESTROYING their growth targets on API. We made 21 out of 22 criteria on AYP, and because our English Language learners did not have enough proficiency on the tenth grade CAHSEE, we are now a year 1-program improvement school again. I want to remind you that 21/22 is 95%. In my book, 95% is an A. That means our teachers and students are doing "A" or excellent work. Labeling us as program improvement year 1 is an injustice to us all. For this and many other reasons, the accountability system in its current iteration is an injustice to us all. The accountability system needs to be reviewed and modified to ensure this type of injustice does not continue.

I have a question for you that has sparked my interest for a long time now. Why is a passing score on the CAHSEE 350 and proficiency 380? My view is that passing should be proficient. If passing is not proficient, and students can pass without being proficient, that is injustice to the students, teachers, administrators and the entire school community. I call this gap (350 passing/380 proficient) the criticism gap because it allows unjust criticism of our efforts and the label of a failing or a non-performing school without just cause.

LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENT O'CONNELL (Continued)

I will tell you emphatically that I reject the program improvement year 1 label. If we are a program improvement school with this kind of fantastic growth and all subgroups contributing to that growth by DESTROYING their growth targets, then we are a program improvement infinity school. You may as well label us with the infinity label. Ridiculousness meets ridiculousness. There is no reason to try to make AYP in an accountability system that is rife with injustice and is used as a political tool to falsely label school communities in this manner. I hope you agree with me and are willing to step in and help us with this situation. We are not a program improvement school except in the vein that all schools need to improve all the time. But we do not appreciate the label of failing or under performing when we have worked so hard to achieve what we have achieved. With all due respect, I look forward to your comments.

Randall V. Delling Ed.D.
Principal
North Hollywood High School

P. S. — I thought you might like to know that 86% of our 10th grade English language learners passed the CAHSEE. That's an 86% first-time pass rate for English language learners on the English language section of the CAHSEE. Many of them had the score of 377, one answer away from proficiency. If passing were proficiency, we would remain a nonprogram improvement school.

**IN THE ACCOUNTABILITY DEBATE, WHERE DOES
STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY FALL?**

In an opinion piece in *The Bangor Daily News*, educator **Lori Wingo** writes that after carefully reading the text of the president's back-to-school speech and its accompanying lesson plans, she fails to see how student responsibility is a "socialist agenda." The president's message is, rather, an antidote to the No Child Left Behind era, whose drive for "proficiency" has left good students idling at lower achievement levels, and struggling students thinking that "potential", matters over effort. In the accountability wars, Wingo writes, "there is a critical stakeholder who has not been asked to assume any responsibility in student achievement: namely, the students themselves." She decries the fact that schools, not students, are accountable for outcomes of standardized tests, while "there are no consequences for the student who takes the test with grudging indifference." Mediocre expectations -- a goal of "proficient" -- has college freshmen expecting the easy grades of high school, "only to experience academic meltdown when they realize they really have to go to class, take notes, study, turn in work and be accountable for their own learning experience." Educators have traded critical thinking and higher levels of learning "for a curriculum that asks only for proficiency and tests for it in multiple-choice format."

Read more: <http://www.bangordailynews.com/detail/120013.html>

Excerpts from an article by Catherine Gewertz, September 22, 2009, in EDUCATION WEEK.

(In her nine years at *Education Week*, Catherine Gewertz has written primarily about urban education. She now concentrates on the world of secondary schools, with a particular focus on the transitions into and out of high school.)

SHOULD EVERYONE GO TO COLLEGE?

As you probably know already, the common standards are supposed to help raise expectations to ensure that students are ready for the rigors of college work.

The argument that all students need to be ready for college certainly has its share of devoted supporters, fueled in no small part by a certain guy who moved into that big white house on Pennsylvania Avenue earlier this year, and has been calling for America to reclaim its former glory as a world leader in baccalaureate achievement. But the idea has its share of skeptics, too, and their arguments are part of an intriguing dialogue about how high school should be handling their students.

A couple of recent cases in point: *The Urban Institute* held a forum last week questioning whether everyone should go to college. A recent piece in the *Wall Street Journal* gives the college-isn't-for-everyone argument some prominence. A paper published recently on www.mindingthecampus.com, the new online magazine of the Manhattan Institute's Center for the American University, argues that admitting to college too many students with low levels of cognitive skill, discipline, or motivation wastes precious resources.

There is a progressive, egalitarian appeal in the argument that all young people can and should be prepared to do well enough to earn college degrees. But there are many smart, thoughtful, and experienced people out there who are urging everyone to think more carefully before pressing most students into college, or even demanding that they be prepared for college.

Several arguments come into play here, from a flammable one about whether all students have sufficient cognitive ability for higher education to questions about whether most future jobs really will demand a college education, and whether the right career- and tech-ed options can be equally good paths for students.

Some of these arguments win more political-correctness points than others. How that "correctness" will color the debate over the draft common standards, and its outcome, remains to be seen. Here's to an open and thoughtful debate.

REMINDER...
ANNUAL AALA RECEPTION
Honoring AALA Members, and welcoming Dr. Judith Perez, President

ALL ACTIVE and RETIRED MEMBERS, and FRIENDS
ARE INVITED
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2009
4:30 - 7:00 p.m.

THE CENTER AT CATHEDRAL PLAZA
555 W. TEMPLE STREET, LOS ANGELES

PLEASE RSVP TO: AALA, 1910 Sunset Blvd., Suite 510, Los Angeles, CA 90026
Phone: 213.484.2226 - Fax: 213.484.0201 - E-mail: rsvp@aala.us

VALIDATED PARKING IN THE CATHEDRAL PARKING STRUCTURE

2010 HEALTH BENEFITS – CHANGES AHEAD

Health plan changes will occur for the new benefit year beginning January 1, 2010. Faced with premium cost increases ranging from 14.5% to 16%, the Health Benefits Committee was forced to make plan design modifications. The benefits budget that was negotiated in 2008 contained an increase in the annual contribution cap of 3.5% to cover all premium increases. Although insurers remain the same, significant changes have been made to the Anthem plans. Out-of-pocket medical and prescription co-payments have risen as well.

The 2010 Open Enrollment booklet will feature the details of each plan. The booklet is scheduled to arrive at your designated home address around November 1. AALA urges you to review the plan options carefully and make an election. If you do not do so, you may be placed in a default plan.

SUMMARY OF BENEFITS PLAN CHANGES FOR 2010

Medical Coverage Opt-out: The payment for active employees who wish to opt-out of medical coverage (participants are still eligible to enroll in dental and vision coverage) will be increased from \$1,000 to \$3,000. Those who choose this option will be paid in installments in their monthly payroll check.

Anthem Blue Cross HMO: The network of providers in the Anthem Blue Cross HMO has been reduced and the plan is now called “**Anthem Select Network HMO.**” Some medical groups previously under this plan will no longer participate including UCLA and Cedars Sinai (However, most of these medical groups, including UCLA and Cedars Sinai, will be included in the HealthNet HMO). There will be no change to the co-payment and deductible amounts under the Anthem Select Network HMO when compared to the current Anthem HMO, except for prescriptions.

Anthem Blue Cross HMO Plus, Anthem Blue Cross PPO, and the Anthem Blue Cross Fee for Service plans: *These plans have been eliminated and replaced with a new Anthem Exclusive Provider Organization (EPO) Plan.* This plan is similar to a PPO plan except that no out of network benefits are provided; you must use an Anthem Blue Cross network provider within the US to receive benefits.

Retirees: *Beginning January 1, 2010, retirees age 65 or older **must be enrolled in both Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B to have medical coverage under any District plan.*** Those 65 or older, or those who will soon turn 65 and are not enrolled in both Medicare Part A and Part B should contact the nearest Social Security office as soon as possible for additional information regarding Medicare enrollment.

Kaiser HMO and HealthNet HMO Plans: There will be higher co-payments, deductibles, and co-insurance requirements for both the Kaiser and HealthNet HMO plans. (As indicated above, there will be no changes to the co-payments and deductibles for Anthem Blue Cross HMO, now referred to as Anthem Select Network HMO).

Prescription Co-payments: The amount of prescription co-payments for all plans will increase. *There will be three different amounts of co-payments for prescriptions depending on whether the drug is for a generic, preferred brand, or non-preferred brand.* The Kaiser HMO Plan will offer only

CHANGES AHEAD (Continued)

generic and preferred brands; non-preferred brands will not be included. Below are the new prescription co-pay amounts.

HealthNet HMO Plan prescription co-pay amounts:

In Store: Generic \$5; Preferred Brands \$25; Non-Preferred Brands \$45 (30 day supply)
Via Mail: Generic \$10; Preferred Brands \$50; Non-Preferred Brands \$90 (90 day supply)

Anthem Select Network HMO Plan prescription co-pay amounts:

In Store: Generic: \$5; Preferred Brands \$25; Non-Preferred Brands \$45 (34 day supply)
Via Mail: Generic \$10; Preferred Brands \$50; Non-Preferred Brands \$90 (90 day supply)

Anthem Exclusive Provider Organization (EPO) Plan prescription co-pay amounts:

In Store: Generic \$10; Preferred Brands \$30; Non-Preferred Brands \$50 (34 day supply)
Via Mail: Generic \$20; Preferred Brands \$60; Non-Preferred Brands \$100 (90 day supply)

Kaiser HMO Plan prescription co-pay amounts:

In Store: Generic \$5; Preferred Brands \$25 (30 day supply)
Via Mail: Generic \$10; Preferred Brands \$50 (100 day supply)

New/Newly Eligible Employees: Kaiser HMO Plan and the new Anthem Exclusive Provider Organization (EPO) Plan will not be available to newly eligible employees until they have been employed at the District for at least three years. Kaiser HMO will be available to newly eligible employees only if the employee was previously enrolled in Kaiser immediately prior to being hired by the District.

NO CHANGES WERE MADE TO THE FOLLOWING PLANS:

Kaiser Senior Advantage, PacifiCare Secure Horizons, HealthNet Seniority Plus Plans: These plans have not changed.

Dental Plans: MetLife Affiliated Dental Health Care Service Plan (SafeGuard DHMO), MetLife Preferred Dentist Program (PPO), and Western Dental DHMO have not changed.

Vision Plans: EyeMed Vision Care and VSP have not changed.

NOVEMBER OPEN ENROLLMENT:

Open Enrollment is scheduled to begin Sunday, November 1, 2009 and close on Sunday, November 22, 2009. As mentioned above, your Benefits Open Enrollment packet will be sent to you soon. The packet will contain detailed information on all of the benefits plans offered by the District. As there have been many changes in the plans for the 2010 year, it is critical that you read all information in the packet and make your selections carefully.

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, ELEMENTARY

112TH Street School (7) MST 41, 1265 East 112th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90059
112th Street is an A Basis school. For information and application procedures contact **Francisco Gonzalez**, Director, at 323.242.1315. **Filing deadline is Wednesday, September 30, 2009.**

92nd Street School (7), MST 42, 9211 Grape Street, Los Angeles, CA 90002
92nd Street is an A Basis school. For information and application procedures contact **Francisco Gonzalez**, Director, at 323.242.1315. **Filing deadline is Wednesday, September 30, 2009.**

68th Street School (7) MST 43, 612 W. 68th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90044
68th Street is an A Basis school. For information and application procedures contact **Francisco Gonzalez**, Director, at 323.242.1315. **Filing deadline is Wednesday, September 30, 2009.**

PRINCIPAL, SECONDARY

Bethune Middle School (7) MST 45, 155 West 69th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90003
Bethune is an A Basis school. For information and application procedures contact **Russell Thompson**, Director, at 323.242.1315. **Filing deadline is Friday, October 2, 2009.**

POSITIONS AVAILABLE (Continued)

INSTRUCTIONAL SPECIALIST (MST 39, B Basis)

Stevenson Middle School, 725 South Indiana Street, Los Angeles, CA 90023
Gompers Middle School, 234 East 112th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90061
Markham Middle School, 1650 East 104th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90002
Hollenbeck Middle School, 2510 East 6th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90023
For information and application procedures contact **Stephen Cockrell** at Stephen.Cockrell@partnershipla.org. **Filing deadline is Friday, October 2, 2009.**

"Most Americans do value education as a business asset, but not as the entrance into the joy of intellectual experience or acquaintance with the best that has been said and done in the past. They value it not as an experience, but as a tool."

-- Milton S. Eisenhower

POSITIONS AVAILABLE (Continued)

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
Coordinator, Behavior and Transition/LRE Support, Temp. Adv., MST 42, A Basis, Division of Special Education. For information and application procedures contact Nancy Franklin , Director, Professional Development, Least Restrictive Environment, at 213.241.6701.	5:00 p.m., Friday, Oct. 2, 2009
Specialist, Behavior LRE Support, Temp. Adv., MST 39, B Basis, Division of Special Education. For information and application procedures contact Nancy Franklin , Director, Professional Development, Least Restrictive Environment, at 213.241.6701.	5:00 p.m., Friday, Oct. 2, 2009
Coordinator, Secondary Mathematics Programs, Temp. Adv., MST 41, A Basis, Local District 1. For information and application procedures contact Jean Brown , Superintendent, at 818.654.3611.	5:00 p.m., Friday, Oct. 2, 2009
Specialist, Federal and State Education Programs, Temp. Adv., MST 39, B Basis, Federal and State Education Programs Branch. For information and application procedures contact Debbie Ernst at 213.241.6990.	5:00 p.m. Friday, Oct. 9, 2009

PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED POSITIONS STILL AVAILABLE

Position	Location	Deadline	Contact
Director of Instructional and Operational Oversight	Charter Schools Division	UNTIL FILLED	213.241.2656
Principal, Secondary	West Adams Preparatory High School - DEADLINE EXTENDED TO	09/30/09	213.745.4928
Principal, Secondary	Millikan Middle School - DEADLINE EXTENDED TO	09/30/09	818.755.5361

"Nations have recently been led to borrow billions for war; no nation has ever borrowed largely for education... no nation is rich enough to pay for both war and civilization. We must make our choice; we cannot have both."

-- Abraham Flexner