



Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association

FOCUS Newsletter

January 2010

www.bakersfieldteachers.org



President's Message

by Brad Barnes

BCSD Teachers Denied Prep Time

The most frequent topic of the many calls to the BETA Office in the last two years has been about workload and preparation time. This why BETA has proposed in this contract negotiation cycle that all classroom teachers will have a minimum guaranteed, individualized, uninterrupted preparation time. One would think that it would be obvious that teachers should have prep time already, but BCSD seems to fill our time with meetings, perhaps in violation of the contract we already have. Some of these meetings produce very little, yet it takes away valuable time from the teacher to prepare lessons, prepare materials, collaborate with colleagues and parents, prepare the room, etc., etc., etc.

In recent weeks you completed the "Preparation Time and Meetings Survey." In this survey you told BETA about your prep time and indicated what you would do to defend it. Here is what BETA members said:

"I average two days a week of 30 minutes prep time. Therefore, I spend too much non paid time preparing...Meetings of all kinds...When I do get prep time some of it is spent filling out 'Action Plans', forms, and other reports," writes a teacher at McKinley.

"The absurdity of the lesson planning that is being asked for is monumental...We spent 90 minutes to plan a 15 minute lesson. Let us use responsible consideration as teachers," another teacher at McKinley writes.

From Stiern a teacher reports *"Now they are scheduling lunch meetings. This has got to stop somewhere. We are all working hours and hours at home. I feel guilty when I go to a movie or go shopping."* A teacher at Hills writes *"My prep is 15 minutes a day if I'm lucky. The required staff meetings are full of useless information."* Another survey from Hills reports *"not enough planning time. We either have meetings, feedback from walk-thrus, or work on the new curriculum, the focus wall, filing reports, Galileo, data analysis meetings in which the message is that teacher cheating is fine."*

A Frank West teacher: *"Prep time is gone. OVER*

Calendar

- Monday, January 25, Executive Board @ 4
- Monday, January 25, Sierra Service Center Council @ 5
- Tuesday, January 26, BCSD School Board @ 6:30
- January 29-31, CTA State Council
- Monday, February 1, Representative Council @ 4
- Monday, February 1, Principal surveys due
- Wednesday, February 3, Legal Rights Workshop @ 3
- Monday, February 8, Lincoln Holiday
- Monday, February 15, Washington Holiday
- Thursday, February 18, Elections Workshop at SSC @ 5
- Monday, February 22, Executive Board @ 4
- Tuesday, February 23, BCSD School Board at 6:30
- Monday, March 1, Representative Council @ 4
- Tuesday, March 2, NEA Read Across America
- Wednesday, March 3, Estate Planning Workshop at BETA at 3:30

Bargaining Update #3 by Bill Griffith

BETA met with the district's negotiators today for the third time. Each side has presented their proposals for the 2009-2012 Collective Bargaining Agreement. Today's session clarified the intent and effects of each side's proposals. BETA's proposals were based on the bargaining surveys that our members have submitted during the last months. The results of your bargaining surveys are: •Benefits must be fully paid •Too many meetings and too little prep time •Class sizes have gone up too much •The district has made many demands and duties, but hasn't taken away duties, so it has become almost impossible for to do our jobs.

BCSD holds \$44,000,000 in unrestricted reserves
BCSD holds \$7,000,000 in reserves for economic uncertainty•

The Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association has requested a positive modification to the salary schedule and fully paid benefits. The cost of fully paying BETA member's benefits is \$1,000,000.

Continued...

LEGAL WORKSHOP

Protect Your Professional Rights

A training for all BETA members. Presented by BETA and CTA endorsed attorney Ernle Tuttle. Learn how to protect your legal rights at work

Wednesday at 3:00-5:00, February 3, 2010
At BETA. Please RSVP 327-4567

President's Message Continued... *I have never been so overworked before. I am not afraid of hard work, but this is ridiculous. What is BETA, CTA, NEA going to do to protect us from all the hours, stress, intimidation, negative criticism and harsh evaluations? Nobody wants our students to be proficient more than their teachers. Nobody works harder."* A teacher at Noble reports *"The District keeps giving us more paperwork and rules. We are being micromanaged and the extra paper work keeps us from preparing lessons. Morale is low and we are tired of people telling us how to teach every time they come into our classrooms."*

From Fremont: *"I don't get any uninterrupted prep time. If I want to correct student work, student grouping or focus walls, it has to be done on my own unpaid time."*

Some of the comments were too harsh to print. Members are demanding action now to restore preparation time and reasonable workloads. Actions the membership preferred in the survey includes: work to the rule, picket in front of school or district office, decline additional assignments, write letter to school board, and refuse to attend meetings.

One comment from College Heights summed it up: *"If all teachers were willing to 'work the rule' the district would wake up and give us more prep time. All they seem to understand is test scores, which have risen only because teachers work hour after extra hour for free. When teachers are denied their prep time, it's the children who suffer."*

Estate Planning Workshop

Wednesday, March 3, 3:30-5:00 at BETA

This is a **FREE** presentation and consultation with attorney Joseph Pearl of Chain, Cohn, and Stiles

Learn about Living Trusts, Wills and More

For yourself and your parents

RSVP to BETA 327-4567

Meet your 2009-2010 BETA Crisis and Issues Committee

Brad Barnes- BETA

Dan Brown- College Heights

Lisa Buckner- Noble

Susan Damsky- Franklin

Joann Hardy- Fremont

Armida Madrid- Voorhies

Shannon Olmstead- Sequoia

Pam Tarango- Downtown

Tom Tarrer- Emerson

Principal Evaluation Survey

BETA has distributed its annual Principal and Administrator Evaluation Survey. The survey includes 36 items to rate on a scale from unsatisfactory through outstanding. There is also a page for your written comments. Your comments are taken seriously and you should report them again this year, even if you reported them previously. Surveys are due to your site representative or to the BETA Office

February 1, 2010.

Contract 2009-2012 ...Continued

Here is a summary of BETA's Contract Proposals:

- BETA has proposed changes to the Evaluations Article that will result in greater fairness, consistency, and clear procedure in evaluating unit members.
- BETA has proposed strengthening your Leave Rights in case of member illness, family member illness, personal necessity, sabbatical, and personal business.
- BETA has proposed a reduction in class sizes, especially in intermediate and middle grades.
- BETA has proposed that observation reports completed by one unit member on another shall be anonymous if given to administration and copies of such reports will be given to the unit member.
- BETA has proposed that the district will provide lesson plans to all teachers who ask for them.
- BETA proposes that Special Education teachers will have not less than 51 minutes a day to conduct IEP meetings, assess students, and prepare documents.
- BETA has proposed that all classroom teachers will have a minimum guaranteed individualized, uninterrupted preparation time.
- BETA proposes that classroom visitation by observers will be limited.
- BETA has requested that we leave school 10 minutes after the students on the day before all holiday weekends.
- BETA proposes that Pre-Kindergarten contact time will be limited.
- BETA proposes that Pre-Kindergarten teachers will be compensated for taking students who do not have a substitute teacher.
- BETA proposes that Junior High and Middle Schools must be staffed with a Librarian and Counselor whose work day is actually devoted to library and counseling duties.
- Teachers should not be assigned to intensive level students for the entire day.
- BETA proposes that recess be lengthened.
- BETA has proposed that Pre-Kindergarten teachers who become K-8 teachers shall retain their seniority and salary increments.