



## Teachers Association of Long Beach, CTA/NEA

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# ***UPDATE***

March 20, 2009

## **NEGOTIATIONS, DISTRICT BUDGETS, STATE BUDGETS...AND THE FUTURE**

Bargaining a new contract with the District continues at a slow and steady pace. TALB and the District bargaining teams have discussed a number of issues. In the last few sessions a great deal of time has been spent on the transfer process. The TALB team has been focused on attempting to assure that the process is clear and concise and that all members have equal access to posted positions.

**ARE MORE CUTS COMING?** There will certainly be additional cuts to LBUSD school budgets. **The school board is meeting on Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, to consider what to cut.** At the bargaining table the District has made a few formal proposals for takeaways or “cuts” in our contract. They have proposed to reduce the amount of time an employee is eligible for Family and Medical Leave Act coverage – ***and we have not agreed to this modification because it would reduce medical coverage for employees suffering from long term medical absences.*** To date the District has made no other proposals to cut health benefits or salaries.

**BUT WILL THEY?** The District has not given any indication of their plans for the future. We have been clear with the District that we are willing to conclude negotiations and reach an agreement to maintain a largely status quo contract that protects salary and benefits. Their response has been that they want to continue bargaining. The law requires TALB to continue to bargain in “good faith”, and we will do so. If there is an opportunity to wrap up negotiations and reach an agreement that protects our salary and benefits, we will do so. In the meantime, the very act of bargaining in good faith allows the parties to continue to be covered by the current contract and what is effectively a status quo agreement. If at some point the District decides to make a proposal for takeaways (and they have made NO INDICATION one way or another on this matter) we have been clear that we will organize and protect our critical interests. ***While negotiations are ongoing, no unilateral cuts can be made to the existing contract provisions – including salary and benefits.*** Bargaining dates are scheduled for April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and May 11<sup>th</sup>. We will keep you updated on the progress.

**WHAT ABOUT CUTS AWAY FROM THE BARGAINING TABLE?** While there have been no agreed upon cuts at the bargaining table, and Superintendent Steinhauser has committed to no layoff of probationary and permanent teachers for the next year, there have been and will be continued cuts to programs. Temporary teachers are losing jobs; other teachers are being “displaced” and will need to be placed in openings as others retire. Unfortunately, more cuts will likely be imposed by the District due to the budget shortfall. Head Start Director, Linda Perry, has indicated she wants to cut five (5) days from the Head Start calendar (from 217 days to 212 days) – ***but the District has made no actual proposal to do so*** (Head Start reductions are subject to E.C. 8366). The March 30<sup>th</sup> School Board meeting will provide our first public glimpse of what they intend to do.

**WHAT'S NEXT?** The state budget continues to be a wildcard. Incoming state revenues are already coming in short of earlier estimates, creating an additional shortfall in the recently agreed upon budget. In addition, the fate of much of the new revenue increases (taxes) used to balance the budget and fund our schools will depend upon the outcome of a Special Election on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

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# **UNITE FOR EDUCATION**

## **PRESS CONFERENCE A SUCCESS – NOW THE HARD WORK BEGINS**

The press conference announcing the formation of UNITE for EDUCATION – LONG BEACH was a success. Leadership from local unions, PTA, LBUSD, LBCC, CSULB, LB Mayor Bob Foster, and Assembly Member Warren Furutani, joined together to announce the event. Approximately 150 teachers, parents, and administrators attended in support. The event was covered by television, print media, and online media outlets.

Now the hard work begins for the group. The effort is intended as a long term attempt to join forces to protect Long Beach schools. In the short term, all of the involved groups will need to organize to stop the wholesale dismantling of school funding, or as CSULB President F. King Alexander bluntly said, our society must literally choose between “education and incarceration.”

Thanks to all of you who wore pink, made calls, and attended the press conference in solidarity with pink slipped teachers across the state.

## **DID YOU TRANSFER THIS PAST YEAR? BE SURE YOU WORKED A FULL CONTRACT YEAR**

Article VIII, Section B.3, of our contract says:

***“Teachers transferring from schools on traditional calendars to schools on year-round calendars shall be provided the opportunity to work additional days during their first year of service in the year-round school to assure they are a full year of State Teachers Retirement System/Public Employees Retirement System credit. Teachers in year-round schools who change tracks and need to work additional days to assure a full year of STRS/PERS credit shall be provided the same opportunity.”***

Does this apply to you? If you will not end up working a full-year (182 days for most teachers), you should act immediately so you do not have a “short year” that will result in a reduction of your STRS credit. The days must be worked in the school year of the transfer for STRS credit. As the year comes to a close, there are few opportunities left to make up the days. If you fall into this category (or are unsure), immediately contact the District (Employee Relations) at 562-997-8220.

## **DISABILITY OPEN ENROLLMENT... DEADLINE IS COMING SIGN-UPS ARE LOW, SO PLEASE ACT NOW**

Our sign-ups for the STANDARD open enrollment income protection are not near the required 213 new enrollees. The GOOD NEWS is we still have time....but you need to act now if you are thinking about signing up as the deadline is March 31<sup>st</sup>. Remember, if we don't get the minimum number, then new enrollees are subject to health screening to qualify for the plan. Only members can sign-up. If you are not a member and want to sign-up for this great coverage, you can join TALB and are immediately eligible to enroll. **Questions call Ingrid at 562-426-6433 xt 223.**

## **QUICK HITS -- brief news on important stuff...**

**TALB ELECTIONS** – Reps will receive ballots this week. TALB Elections will be held from March 25<sup>th</sup> to April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Be sure to vote and get your ballot back to the TALB office not later than 5PM on THURSDAY, APRIL 2<sup>nd</sup> (ballots arriving after 5PM on April 2<sup>nd</sup> will not be counted).

**COBRA ENHANCEMENT** – COBRA gives workers who lose their jobs, and thus their health benefits, the right to purchase group health coverage provided by the employer under most circumstances of involuntary job loss. Under the current law, coverage can be purchased for up to 18 months at the group rates. Under the new enhancement passed as part of the federal stimulus package, the federal government will pay 65% of the premium and the employee will pay 35% of the premium. Details on this law can be found at [www.dol.gov/ebsa/COBRA.html](http://www.dol.gov/ebsa/COBRA.html)

**MICHELLE'S LAW** – A new federal law requires health plans to extend dependent coverage when a college student would otherwise lose eligibility due to a medically necessary leave of absence from school. This law will go into effect beginning with our next plan year (Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010).

**FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO  
[WWW.TALB.ORG](http://WWW.TALB.ORG) OR CALL 562-426-6433**