On November 30, 2018, Burbank Teachers Association launched its new campaign on retaining and recruiting quality educators in Burbank as part of a Negotiations theme. It is important to send a unifying message to our general membership and an educational message to our community. Outside of BTA, people do not understand how important wages and working conditions are to being able to recruit and retain teachers in Burbank.

**Measure QS**

Although the community in large supported Measure QS, about 948 votes made the difference. As a result, what would have been an ongoing source of local revenue to give BUSD educators a much needed salary increase of 3% to make us more competitive, to keep the programs we have in place, and to address the structural deficit, the parcel tax did not meet the 2/3 requirement to win.

Today more than ever we must work together to put another parcel tax on the ballot in 2020. We must use the message of what it takes to have quality schools and put it in our classrooms to increase our visibility and to extend our reach. Wearing a BTA shirt, wearing a button, and posting our posters during Open House sends a message of unity and it expands our reach to our parents and community. There is value in having power in numbers; we witness that in the actions of other unions that organize and mobilize before there is a crisis in place. We too cannot afford to wait until it impacts “me” in order to get involved.

First, BTA wants to work together with parents and community members to build a better and more effective campaign. We need to reach out to our business community and city officials. Though we have many parent owned businesses that support us and our schools, we need to do a broader reach. If you know of any businesses that would be willing to support us, we need you to give us the names and contact information of these businesses. Next our organizing committee will contact them and ask if they will put one of our Quality Schools posters in their windows. We want to eventually publish a directory of businesses that would support us and we in turn would support their business. When our community sees our message, it begins to resonate that Burbank quality educators care about their students and want them to have the best possible education. In order for that to happen, they need to support us in our work to ensure that the District does what is right for students by doing right by teachers, counselors, speech and language pathologists, and nurses.
An important initiative recently qualified for the November 2020 ballot. It’s called the California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act and the campaign to support it, endorsed by a broad coalition, Schools and Communities First. The initiative, if passed, will provide $11 billion annually for public services in California by reforming commercial property taxes for the first time in 40 years since Prop 13 passed and it limited property taxes in our state.

Since the passage of Prop 13, California’s education funding has fallen behind most other states and even after fully restoring the cuts from the Great Recession, California still ranks 41st in the United States in per-pupil funding. California has the fifth-largest economy in the world and students should share in that prosperity. If this initiative passes, $4.5 billion will support K-12 education and community colleges. The remainder will be shared by counties, cities and special districts to support community services, including health clinics, trauma care and emergency rooms, parks, libraries and public safety.

**Facts about the initiative:**
- Reforms commercial property taxes, while guaranteeing existing protections for residential property and agricultural land.
- Mandates full transparency and accountability for all revenue restored to California from closing the commercial property tax loophole.
- Benefits small businesses in three ways: it exempts owner operated small businesses from reassessment until they are sold, it levels the playing field so small businesses can compete more fairly with big corporations, and it reduces their taxes by eliminating the property tax on fixtures and equipment (the business personal property tax) for all small businesses.

- Places California on par with how most states treat commercial property by assessing them at fair market value. This initiative only affects under-valued commercial properties, creating a level playing field for those businesses that already pay their fair share. California’s commercial property taxes will still be among the lowest in the country because of Proposition 13’s cap on tax rates, which the California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act does not change.

- Closes the millionaire, billionaire, and big corporation tax loophole by requiring all commercial and industrial properties to be assessed at fair market value, putting California on par with how most of the country assesses these properties. California’s commercial property taxes will still be among the lowest in the country because of Proposition 13’s limits on property tax rates, which this initiative does not change.

The initiative has already been endorsed by dozens of public interest organizations, faith-based organizations, small business owners, local governments, and elected officials. For more information, and to learn how to get involved, visit schoolsandcommunitiesfirst.org.

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**UNION CODE OF CONDUCT**

- I will not criticize any union colleague except to the individual directly.
- If any union colleague is being criticized in my presence, I will confront the criticism and ask that it stop.
- I will not participate in any conversations with management that criticize, or negatively speculate about any union colleague.
- I will settle my differences with colleagues within the union.
- I will engage in debate, offer others every opportunity for debate and respect minority viewpoints, but I will observe and support the majority mandate of the union.
**President’s article continued:**

**Ten Minute Meeting**

All of us work diligently and put in long hours. Attending another meeting even for ten minutes seems like another task. When your Site Rep. puts out a notice that there will be a ten minute meeting during lunch or after school, the mindset has to change. We cannot leave it to a small group of members, we need your help. Not being involved reduces our power and keeps us stuck in isolation.

As union members let us commit to stand together and stand up for our professional academic freedom, for our professional autonomy, and for our professional roles.

In closing, feel free to contact your Site Rep. if you do not have a BTA t-shirt. Those who have one, wear it on meeting dates. Your Rep should have a list of meeting dates posted on the BTA bulletin board. **The last ask is for you to reach out to the Rep and offer to give 10 minutes of your time to meet when there is a site meeting.**

In unity,
Diana Abasta
BTA President

A good article on why teachers join the union is [Why Do Teachers Join The Union? - Forbes](#)

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**STATE OF THE SCHOOLS BREAKFAST**

On Wednesday, February 27, 2019 at 7:00 a.m., Nate Banditelli, BTA UniServ Executive Director, Alice Holmes, BTA Office Manager, and Diana Abasta, BTA President attended the Burbank Education Foundation's State of the School's breakfast at The Castaway in Burbank. It was well attended by city official, business members, parents, community members and District staff. Burbank High's jazz band provided lovely background music and later BHS cheerleaders and drumline paraded through the venue in an effort to get people to make donations. Matt Hill, Supt., spoke of the great need to fund the programs we have in place. He shared that one music teacher position had been saved due to a donation by BAFA and that it was his goal to help raise enough to save the other music teacher position as well as other positions that aid in the running of our district and schools. Warner Brothers offered a match of up to $10,000 if the Burbank Education Foundation can raise more money by March 31. All in all the message was conveyed effectively that quality schools start with quality educators. For more information or to see the Supt.’s powerpoint, please look on the District’s website.

Eric Carter, Diana Abasta, Supt. Hill, Roberta Reynolds, Armond Aghakhanian, Steve Frintner
Photos credit: Gino Gloriani of Gloriani Productions
The BTA negotiating team comprised of BTA’s Executive Director, Nathan Banditelli, Sue Conway (Luther), Brenda Kosbab (BHS), Heidi Lavitt (Stevenson), and Laura Mixon (McKinley) met with the BUSD team, comprised of Sarah Niemann (Human Resources Director), David Jaynes (Asst. Supt. Business Services) and John Paramo (Director of Secondary Ed.).

Hot Topics

- BTA and the District agreed to form a secondary report card committee comprised of a middle school teacher, high school teacher, counselor, athletic director, and site and district administrators.
  - The committee will explore the necessity of 4 report cards a semester and alternative ideas for when and how report cards will be done.

Budget Update

- David Jaynes presented a budget update.
  - The update included information from school services on the governor’s proposals for 2019 – 2020 and the UCLA economic outlook for next year.
    - The governor’s proposed budget brings funding to $63 billion (up from 61 billion in 2018 – 2019). The statutory COLA is 3.46% (prop 98 formula).
    - The District will pay 17.10% for employer contributions to CalSTRS, down 1.03%
    - The governor will revise the proposed budget for 2019 – 2020 in May.
  - The District presented budget balancing ideas to close the 3-million-dollar deficit.

Open Articles

- Article 9: Hours
  - 9.3.3.1 – 9.3.4.1
    - The District presented a counter proposal to BTA’s language for additional independent planning days per semester on early release days.
  - BTA presented language regarding the length and time of meetings and required class coverage.

- Article 8: Wages
  - BTA presented a wage proposal
    - Effective retroactive to July 1, 2018, bargaining unit members will receive a salary increase of 3%.
    - Effective for the pay period after ratification of this agreement, Counselors shall be placed on the same pay schedule as the rest of the bargaining unit. This will not result in a loss of pay or impact STRS retirement credit.
    - The District has not responded to BTA’s offer yet.

Next Negotiations Meeting: March 29

BTA SCHOLARSHIPS

Are you working on getting your clear credential? Are you pursuing an advanced degree in your teaching area? Then we have a great deal for you!

Applications for BTA Member Scholarships are now being accepted. Four (4) scholarships for $500 each will be awarded to members who are continuing their educational pursuits in their credential area to clear their credential, or who are pursuing an advanced degree or credential in their area of education and are continuing in BUSD in 2019/2020. This would not apply for any type of Administrative credential.

If you are interested in applying for one of the four scholarships go to www.burbankteachers.org for an application.
The California Casualty Music & Arts Grant was established to provide support for K-12 public schools negatively impacted by reduced budgets.

California Casualty has partnered with education associations for nearly 70 years. We understand the importance of music and arts education for children. As a member of one of our partnering education associations, you can apply for a grant award of $250 for a music or art need at your school. The deadline is June 30 for grant requests to be considered for the fall of the next school year. All grants will be notified of their status by September 30.

Keep the creativity flowing with a music or art grant from us!

For more information about the California Casualty Music and Arts Grant or to apply online, go to: CalCasMusicArtsGrant.com or email musicartsgrant@calcas.com.
FREQUENTLY REQUESTED PHONE NUMBERS

BTA Office
Alice Holmes, Office Manager
818 846-1304

Questions Regarding Your Health Insurance?
Blue Shield - 1-800 334-5847
Kaiser - 1-800 464-4000
Blue Cross - 1-877 737-7776
Prescriptions - 1-877 542-0284
Mental Health
(Employee Assistance Plan - Cigna)
1-800 866-6534

State Teachers Retirement System (STRS)
1-800 228-5453
The Standard
(Income Protection)
1-800 522-0406
California Casualty
Auto and Home Insurance
1-866 680-5142
CTA/NEA Retired
650 552-5355
CTA Member Benefits
(Insurance, Financial, Discounts, Travel)
650 552-5200
CTAMemberBenefits.org
NEA Member Benefits
1-800 637-4636
neamb.com/learnmore

2018-2019 BTA Site Representatives

ADULT SCHOOL — Julie Grair, Fred Rivas
BRET HARTE ELEM. — Dahlia Dobbertin, Allison Shaw
BURBANK H.S. — Bob Shaw, Gina DiFrancesco, Natalie Setaghian, Caroline Sasorski, Laura Messian
BURROUGHS H.S. — Robyn Russon, David Hedin-Abreu, Jeil Salem, Rex Bullington, Les Cohn, Alexis Weiner

COMMUNITY DAY — Trevor Rapp
DISNEY ELEM. — Bridget Highfill, Sonia Angulo
EDISON ELEM. — David Engel, Sandy Solis
EMERSON ELEM. — Samantha Robman, Margarita Tubbs
HORACE MANN CHILDCARE — Cathi Zsupnik
INDEPENDENT LEARNING ACADEMY — Heather Good
JEFFERSON ELEM. — Kris Uribe, Anna Basinski, Chris Copeland
JORDAN M.S. — Lori Pacino, Dana Ragle, Amy Fuhr
LUTHER M.S. — Lisa Raluy, Nick Lundy, Lucas Gattuso
McKINLEY ELEM. — Dug Gutierrez, Amanda Denney
MILLER ELEM. — Brian Collins
MONTEREY H.S. — Tanase Petrenco
MUIR M.S. — Corey Howard, Brad Frank, Kathy Gallego, Mark Norberg
PROVIDENCIA ELEM. — Kate Bailey, Lola Stewart
ROOSEVELT ELEM. — Rhonda Wright
SPED — Janice Gresham
STEVENSON ELEM. — Heidi Lavitt, Jasson Przebieda
TOSA — Eric Carter
WASHINGTON ELEM. — Chandra Collins, Dorothy Hernandez

2018-2019 BTA Board of Directors

PRESIDENT: Diana Abasta - BHS
VICE PRESIDENT: Vacant
SECRETARY: Dahlia Dobbertin - Bret Harte
TREASURER: Jerry Mullady - JBHS

HIGH SCHOOL DIRECTORS:
Tony Franco - BHS
Vacant - JBHS

MIDDLE SCHOOL DIRECTOR: Jessica Wertlieb - Muir MS

ELEMENTARY DIRECTORS:
Samantha Robman - Emerson
Theresa Landin White - Washington

AT-LARGE DIRECTOR: Michelle Dixon - JBHS

STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:
Alexis Weiner - JBHS

STATE COUNCIL ALTERNATE:
Bridget Highfill - Disney
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WHY I Teach.... ELVA GASPAR

Disney Around The Bell is a before and after school program. We provide child care for our students. We have grown tremendously and currently have 60 percent of our Dual Immersion Spanish students in our program. Because I am a bilingual teacher, I have been able to assist students with reading, writing, and speaking in Spanish. It’s rewarding and exciting to see students learn a new language.

Since students are here before and after school, I try to create an environment that is rich in play. Through play, students learn to socialize, explore and learn new concepts. Many students stay in our program for three to six years. I constantly seek ways to enrich their minds as they continue to develop and grow. Because it is important I try to develop strong relationships with the students and their parents.

Disney's program is not just a daycare, it is a rich experience for all students. I love to supplement when I can but lately, it has been more difficult because of budget constraints. I believe in investing in my students. They will thrive when they receive the quality care they deserve.

“I AM BTA” - Washington Elementary

On March 5th Washington Elementary School’s BTA members broke their fast together with delicious Noah’s bagels, tasty cream cheese, fresh fruit, juices, and coffee. It was a nice gathering of hard working teachers taking a few minutes to chat about what our union does for us, why we are members, and encouraging each other. The Washington BTA Representatives gave out a few gift cards to Barnes and Noble and Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf as tokens of our appreciation for our members. Some gift cards were planned as surprises, while the longest standing member at Washington, the newest member, and our only male BTA member at Washington were also recognized with one. The Washington BTA members are a fierce force who are very dedicated to their students. It was nice to take some time out to recognize them for their hard work and their commitment to our strong union.
On March 1, 2019 Read Across America was in full swing at Bret Harte Elementary school. I had the pleasure of reading to Dahlia Dobbertin's first graders. Ms. Dobbertin and her students modeled their Dr. Seuss hats after I read an old time favorite, *Green Eggs and Ham*. It is a joy to see our young students so engaged in reading. When I asked what they learned from the story, one student answered that we should give new things a try before we decide what we think about them. Wisdom from such a young age and that is why we must always continue to infuse our students with the love of reading.

-- Diana Abasta --

Each year BTA donates books taken from California Reads, a list put together by CTA, to every school library. This year BTA donated *Natsumi* by the author Susan Lendroth and the illustrator Priscilla Burris to Bret Harte’s library. It is a heartwarming tale about a young girl named Natsumi who is full of exuberance and puts her girl power to good use when she discovers a Japanese tradition as energetic as she is. The story stresses being true to oneself; it is perfect for readers who march to their own beat. The drawings are rich in color and texture.

Diana Abasta, BTA President is with Martha Walters, Bret Harte Principal.