

Inside this Issue:

- **President's Message**
Pages 1 & 3
- **Thursday Photos**
Page 2
- **Executive Director's Message**
Page 4
- **Student Debt Forgiveness Workshop**
Page 4
- **News From the Table**
Page 5
- **Why I Teach...**
Page 6
- **Relay for Life**
Page 7
- **CTA endorsed 403(b) Plan**
Page 8
- **Dates to Remember**
Page 11
- **TGIF**
Page 12

February, 2018

Volume 31, Number 7

President's Message by Diana Abasta

Leadership: A Lonely Walk Or An Exhilarating March?

A leader who looks back and sees no one accompanying her is simply on a walk. A leader walking with ten people is still just a person on a walk but with friends. A leader accompanied by 236 people is on a mission and that was the feeling I took away after our state of our union meeting. Some commented that we should have had a bigger turnout and, of course, this is an ongoing goal. Nonetheless, major social change often begins with modest numbers of energized and dedicated people, and I can assure you that the level of commitment from those in the audience is what BTA leadership has already started to mobilize and organize around.

BTA asked all members to respond to a survey on Friday, January 21 and to date we have had 100 replies. Thank you for those who heard the call and responded.

Our organizing team is working on going through the responses and finding ways to categorize the needs and concerns. The goal is to publish the results in the next *Benchmark*.

One question that continues to resurface is wanting to know what BTA has done for all of us. This is an important one because in years of no compensation, or lower than what we needed in compensation and benefits, some members are not aware of the BTA negotiated improvements to contract language as well as important gains in health and welfare benefits over the past two decades. It may also be that some members were not in our district when these items were negotiated. Therefore, I thought I would give you an overview of what we have gained in the past 17 years under 6 presidents and 4 different executive directors with 878 members. Some of these are modifications and others are new additions.



Good Teaching Conference

March 16 - 18

Garden Grove, CA

Check BTA website for more information.

Deadline to be considered February 23, 2018

BTA Benchmark is a monthly publication of Burbank Teachers Association

3021 W. Burbank Boulevard,
Burbank, CA 91505
(818) 846-1304

Editor, Kim Allender

kimallender@earthlink.net

Continued on Page 3

BTA MEMBERS UNITE TOGETHER

THE FIRST AND THIRD THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH WEAR BLACK TO SHOW SUPPORT.



WOULD YOU LIKE A BTA T-SHIRT?

SEE YOUR SITE REPRESENTATIVE TO ORDER ONE.

THEY ARE FREE AND COME IN TWO STYLES BUT ONLY ONE T-SHIRT PER MEMBER PLEASE.

V-NECK (SLIMMER FIT) AND REGULAR CREW.

SIZES SM - XXXL

BTA Policy on Anonymous Letters

BTA would like to emphasize that we do not encourage or condone anonymous letters written for any purpose. The only appropriate use of anonymous communication would be to report fraud or malfeasance on the BUSD Fraud Hotline.

STAY INFORMED:

www.burbankteachers.org

- Get Bargaining information and updates
- News from the Table
- Benchmark
- Calendar of Events
- Contract information
- Flyers

Join us on Facebook



@BurbankTeachersAssociation

And On Twitter



@BurbankTchrAssn

President's Message Continued:

There really are too many to list in total, but all you would have to do is pick up a contract from July 2000 and compare to what we have now to clearly see what your union has accomplished on your behalf.

- Benefits to include domestic partners
- **Article 4** - Association Rights – BTA has the right to consult on the development of site plans for underperforming schools. This allows us to have a voice and not just be forced to follow dictates.
- **Article 5** - Complaint Procedure – put language in place where there was none
- **Article 7** - Wages – Stipends have increased and have been added for different positions; We have gotten over 12% in raises; in 2005 we were able to get a 3% increase to the entire Adult School Schedule, a 4% in childcare entire schedule 2% in columns 1,2,3, a 3% in column 4, a 4% in column 5, steps 1-9, a 7% in column 5 steps 10-21, 4% in column 6 steps 1-8, and a 5% in column 6 steps 9-24.
- **Article 8** - Health and welfare- went from \$9,438 to \$12,000
- **Article 9** - Change from 10 to 14 shortened days for planning; Right to 90-minute lunch on pupil free, non-staff development days; Kindergarten teachers' improvements on a.m./p.m. and partner configuration; NO Counselor duty at lunch; Grade 3 shall receive 100 minutes of pupil free time for planning. On rainy days, the regular classroom may be used for student instruction not involving the third-grade teacher; Planning time of 100 minutes for 4th and 5th grade teachers; "inclement weather" schedule shall be developed by the site principal in collaboration with staff with the intention of preserving the regular duty-free lunch whenever possible; kept our 5 paid pre-service work days, secondary was able to designate some of the early release days for individual planning
- **Article 12** - development of new evaluation procedures and forms;
- **Article 13** - Leaves, Child care, Home Responsibility, and Family Care and Medical Leave. Parental Bonding language. We have strong protections in place. Jury Duty amount increased to \$100 a day
- **Article 14** - Language addition and clean up for involuntary transfers
- **Article 15** - Safety – Amounts in reimbursement for damages were increased
- **Article 16** - Professional Advancement- Eliminated one-year limit to submit units for salary advancement
- **Article 23** - PAR although no longer in place, we have been able to bring back some mentors to support teachers
- **Article 26** - Summer school flexibility in scheduling
- **Article 29** - Special Programs – Unit members with full inclusion students who attend regular meetings outside of regular duty hours with service providers, (inclusion specialists, etc.) will be paid for those meetings at Step 1 Column 1 in quarter hour increments. They will also have the opportunity to consult on the composition of the class, and accommodations or support services for the teacher to successfully support these special needs students.

Are we done?

No! You and all our members must stand strong and continue to show that "You can't put students first, if you keep putting teachers, counselors, nurses, and speech and language pathologists last!

In unity,

Diana



Executive Director's Message by Sonya Lowe

An issue that often arises here in Burbank is that of complaints. Whether it be from a parent or another employee, at times, people like to file complaints about our members and rather than going directly to the member to try and work out the issues, they tend to go to administration. First, I'd like to say that we always recommend members try and work issues out directly with each other. Also, we encourage all District employees and parents to talk directly to our members prior to going to an administrator if they have a problem they'd like to sort out.

There are times when people have complaints – whether it be a parent, community member or fellow employee. What not everyone is aware of is that the BTA-BUSD contract has a process that must be followed when dealing with certain types of complaints. In Article 5: Complaint Procedures, the process for dealing with informal and formal complaints is spelled out clearly. It also specifies that the procedure is to be used for specific complaints – not those that are violations of laws such as harassment or discrimination under Federal or State law.

The basic process for an informal complaint can be found in the BTA contract in Section 5.6.1. It states that complainants shall be advised to present their complaint to the employee PRIOR to presenting any formal complaint. The employee then has five days to respond to the complaint.

If the complaint is not resolved after this initial conversation, or the complainant is not comfortable meeting with the employee alone, the immediate supervisor shall schedule a meeting with the employee, immediate supervisor, and the complainant within ten working days of receipt of the informal complaint. The employee does have the right to representation at the meeting.

It is important to remember that in all cases of complaints, the employee concerned must be involved. The employee must be provided an opportunity to hear and respond to the complaint before any resolution is reached.

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal level, then it moves to the formal level if the complainant still wishes to pursue the complaint. The complaint must be submitted in writing to the employee's immediate supervisor. We often find that people are not willing to submit their complaints in writing, but this is required at this stage, and a copy must be given to the employee within 5 days.



The complaint must be investigated, and the investigation must be completed within 15 working days after receipt of the written complaint, which includes a meeting with the employee. The findings of the investigation will be given in writing to the employee within 5 working days of the conclusion of the investigation.

It is imperative that we make sure the District follows the proper process when investigating complaints. We often see complaints come in and they are handled in ways that aren't listed above. If you are told a complaint has come in, be sure to check the contract to see if your administrator is following the proper steps. The contract can easily be found on the BTA website burbankteachers.org. Contact the BTA office if you have any further questions on this.

SAVE THE DATE: MARCH 12, 2018

Generation Debt: Student Loan Forgiveness

BTA invites you to learn about student loan forgiveness and how to get your financial life in order.

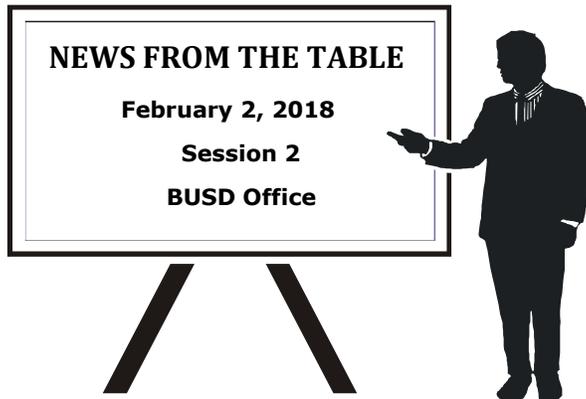
Burbank High School Library

3:30 - 5:30p.m.

There is no cost to attend this workshop.

RSVP to 818-846-1304 or
aliceholmes@burbankteachers.org





The BTA negotiating team comprised of BTA's Executive Director, Sonya Lowe, Lori Adams (BHS), Sue Conway (Luther), Kim Anderson (Jefferson), Heidi Lavitt (Stevenson), and Les Cohen (JBHS) met with the BUSD team, Anita Schackmann (Human Resources), Matt Hill (Superintendent), David Jaynes (Asst. Supt. Business Services), Laura Flosi (Edison), Sandra De Barros (Jefferson), and April Evans-Weaver (Jordan).

Hot Topics

1. **Exchange Day Request Form** will be updated to reflect contract language. Currently, the form implies that it is a requirement to only take exchange days on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. The Collective Bargaining Agreement states that those days are "encouraged", not required.
2. **Payroll** is working on establishing forms and processes for teachers of combo classes to request their release/extra pay days and Speech and Language Pathologists to receive their retention bonus.

Budget

David Jaynes and Supt. Matt Hill presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Governor's Budget Proposal. BUSD will be receiving approximately \$4 million in one-time funds and \$6.5 million in ongoing funds in 2018-19. The District also provided information on the irrevocable trust for Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB), Deferred Maintenance and Textbook Adoption monies.

Wages

BUSD will counter BTA's proposal of 8.1% increase in all salary schedules at the next meeting following the creation of the 2nd Interim Budget. The 2nd Interim Budget will give the District more of an idea of what expenses for this year will be.

Article 9: Hours

BUSD is opening Article 9 to clarify that the paid release days for teachers of combination classes are limited to teachers of general education combination classes. BTA's team will return to the next session with additional proposals for changes in this article.

Article 4: Association Rights

With the passage of AB 119 and in anticipation of losing the Supreme Court case *Janus vs. AFSCME*, and the subsequent loss of fair share, BTA is opening Article 4 to codify current practices of member engagement.

Future meeting dates: 3/15/18 at BTA, 4/6/18 at BUSD, 4/20/18 at BTA, 5/10/18 at BUSD.

Cal STRS Workshops For Teachers At All Career Stages

Mark Your Calendar to Attend the Workshop right for you

Contact the BTA office for more information 818-846-1304

• February 22, 2018 My Retirement Decisions (For members 3 to 5 years from retirement)

Is your retirement date within reach? This workshop is designed for members who are close to retirement and are looking for information on the steps you need to make informed decisions. In this hands-on workshop you will learn how to calculate your retirement benefit and learn about topics like beneficiary options, service retirement forms, choosing retirement dates, defined benefit supplement and what to know after retirement. Start preparing for the retirement you want by getting the accurate information you need. (About 1 hour)

• April 19, 2018 My Retirement System (For new educators)

Looking for a quick and easy way to learn about CalSTRS and how it plays a large part in your retirement? This workshop is designed to provide you with the foundation you need to know as a CalSTRS member. You will learn important topics that include understanding the CalSTRS hybrid retirement system, contributions, creditable services and other resources CalSTRS offers based on their career stage. Take the first step in your life journey with CalSTRS. (About 30 minutes)

• May 3, 2018 My Retirement Benefits (For members 10 to 15 years from retirement)

Are you ready to get serious about understanding your retirement? This interactive workshop is designed to give you all the tools you need to calculate your retirement. You will also learn about important topics like the CalSTRS' hybrid retirement system, survivor benefits, your retirement gap, and steps to increase your retirement income. Get the information you need to know to be informed about CalSTRS retirement. (About 1 hour)

Why I Teach...

By Kristanna Quirin-Uribe

Jefferson Elementary

Proud Kindergarten Teacher



The reasons that we all became teachers are innumerable. Some of us may have had an inspirational teacher who made a great impression on us. Some of us may have had teachers who were uninspiring and have felt that teaching gave us a chance to right a wrong. Others may have entered teaching because of a love for a particular subject that they wished to share with the world. While all of these may be partially true for me, I would say that my greatest inspiration came from my loving parents. Teachers come in many forms but our first teachers are our parents. Each of my parents inspired me in different ways to enter the craft of teaching.

My dad was the product of divorced parents and was shuffled from household to household in the 1930's and 40's never truly having a stable home. In his youth he was an award winning craftsman and artist. He was a high school drop-out who left school just months shy of graduation due to boredom. His parents did not advocate for him. His teachers and advisors had no interest in knowing what interested him or even attempted to nurture his gifts. He entered the workforce at 17 working as a gifted draftsman and architect. He served in the military, had a lengthy career working for the movie studios, and celebrated 52 years of marriage. He is a loving father to 2 daughters and enjoys homeownership and now a nice pension. In the end, he has had a life well-lived despite the many strikes against him. Somehow he turned potential tragedy into personal success. My dad is one of the two most intelligent people I know. He is a true Renaissance man who can fix anything, build anything and grow anything. He knows loads of things about science, history, art and nature and he keeps on learning things every day that he graces this Earth. Perseverance, self-motivation, lifelong learner- all qualities of my dad who inspired me to be a teacher.

My mom is a first generation American. A daughter of immigrants for whom English was not her primary language. Her father was a coal miner in Johnstown,

Pennsylvania who was arrested on multiple occasions for being a union organizer. My mother was raised in poverty but in a home that was loving and nurturing. Struggle and hardship were daily visitors. My mother entered the work force at age 9 cleaning other people's houses. After high school graduation, the prospect of attending college was never an option for her. She secured various jobs to support herself and supplement the family income, but she always had hope she would get a college degree.

After 15 years of marriage and the birth of 2 daughters she decided to "go back to school" to be an early childhood teacher. She operated a successful preschool for years, was an advisor on a community college board and even ran for public office once. My mother is the other of the two most intelligent people I know. Her spunk and zest for life is a blessing to our family. Diligent, optimistic, determined- all qualities of my mother who inspired me to be a teacher.

The reason I teach is because what I have learned from these two remarkable parents, my first and always teachers. I have learned from them that a "hiccup" in life is no excuse to give up. They have taught me to cope with failure and move on. Create a plan and follow through. Be proactive and advocate for oneself. Get up each day and do something! I teach because it is my obligation to pay forward to the next generation of students the legacy of traits that my parents so graciously instilled in me: perseverance, self-motivation, life-long learning, diligence, optimism, and determination. The irony is that all of these qualities are precisely the qualities we try to foster in our students each and every day. So let's all get up each day and do something!

\$1000 Grant Available From California Retired Teachers Association



- Open to all K-12 Teachers
- Grant projects must target educational enrichment through the improvement of learning opportunities and/or learning environment for students e.g. technology, communications, models, science, math, reading, gardening, books, computer programs and more.
- Applications must be *postmarked by Friday, March 30, 2018*
- Grant project must be *completed by Friday, April 26, 2019*

Applications available from your administrator, on BTA website, or contact Grant Chairperson, Debbie Fleiner, 818 846-5389

BTA Relay For Life

by Nicole Drabecki, Team Captain

On May 5th - May 6th 2018, BTA will have its annual Relay For Life event at Robert Gross Park. This is a 24-hour event to help fight cancer and starts at 9 A.M. to 9 A.M. the next day. Currently we are in third place out of twenty seven teams with donations, having raised \$1,803 dollars to date. We have set a starting goal of \$3,000 but hope to exceed that with all of your help!

Cancer has touched all of us in some way. Together we all can be a part of making a difference in this great cause. I ask that you join me and the Burbank community to honor the lives lost to cancer, celebrate survivors and work to help find cures for this disease. Your donations are used to fund cancer research, prevention, patient support services and treatment programs. All help in any shape or form is always greatly appreciated, not to be limited to monetary donations but also including volunteers on the day of the event, connections with local businesses that can donate to the cause (Gift in kind, hosting a fundraiser, or being corporate sponsor, to name a few), please have them contact me directly.

Thank you in advance!

If you are interested in joining the BTA Relay For Life team or making a donation go to www.relayforlife.org and follow the below steps:

- In the middle of the page go to:
- Search- Click on Team
- Type Burbank Teachers Association
- Select Burbank Teachers Association: You can either chose to join our team, donate or dedicate a luminaria



Our next restaurant fundraiser is: CHEVYS FRESH MEX

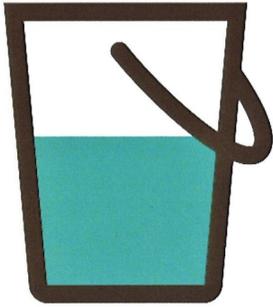
Chevys will donate 20% of total food sales generated by our supporters.

Date: Tuesday, February, 20th

Time: All Day

Location: 701 N. San Fernando Blvd. Burbank, 91502

You spend your time helping students prepare for a successful future—CTA wants to help you plan for yours.



New CTA Endorsed 403(b) Plan Now Available for Burbank Teachers

By Justin Riner, Muir Middle School

"Wherever you are in your career is the right time to think about retirement." This oft-repeated nugget of wisdom speaks even more truth for educators who are fortunate enough to have some extra free time during the summer months.

Regardless of where you are in your career or financial planning, I suggest setting aside a little time in the next few months to review where your retirement currently stands, read up on options, and consider ways to improve it. If, like I was, you are just beginning your career and keep putting retirement planning off, now is the time to get started. Just as

any time is good, any amount is a good start. Really! Even the minimum contribution will begin to gain compound interest while you take time to figure out your larger plan.

There is a great new option for educators at any level of their career or retirement planning: the CTA Retirement Savings Plan (product ID #214 on 403bcompare.com). It is a 403(b) designed with teachers in mind and the only one endorsed by CTA. It has high-quality investment options, very low flat fees, and is designed with an educator's best interests in mind using fiduciary standards. This ensures that plan decisions are made solely in the interest of plan participants.

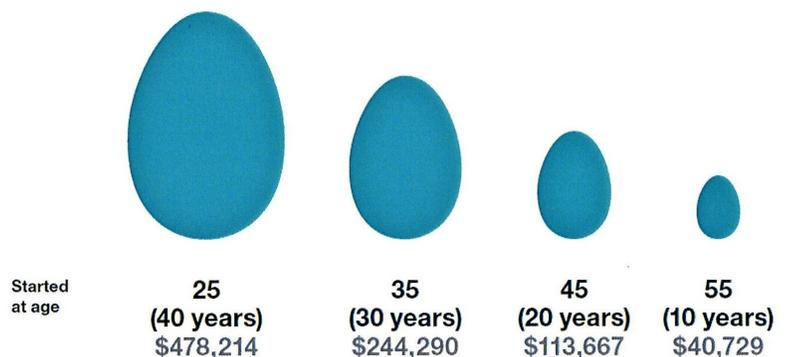
The factor that makes me the most comfortable, however, is the support provided by CTA to help make decisions and aid in understanding what it all means. CTA's Retirement Plan Center is staffed by salaried employees who don't make commission on sales or changes to accounts. Additionally, the people there are extremely knowledgeable and helpful especially when it comes to the needs and concerns of educators. They can provide resources and explanations that make the complex clear.

The CTA plan even contains options for any type of investor. Educators looking for a hands-off investing approach will appreciate the target-date funds and those who prefer to be a bit more involved can work with core funds. All options are, again, provided with the support and guidance of knowledgeable CTA employees. They can even assist educators who have retirement funds from other jobs easily roll those accounts over.

As of April 2017, the CTA Retirement Savings Plan is available to employees of the Burbank School District. I was able to enroll via CTAretirementplan.org, submit my new BUSD Salary Deduction Form, and see my first deduction by the next paycheck. Additionally, the Burbank Teachers Association will set up opportunities for our members to meet with representatives and learn about our options. That said, you've already got access to guidance through your CTA membership!

So, this summer, set aside some time to take a peek at the library of resources at CTAinvest.org, CTAretirementplan.org, and 403bcompare.com; request a copy of "The CTA Educator's Retirement Planning Guide;" or just call up the CTA Benefits Center (650-552-5200) and they can point you in the right direction.

Did you know that investing early can really pay off in the long run?





ALWAYS HERE TO SUPPORT EXISTING AND FUTURE RESIDENTS OF BURBANK

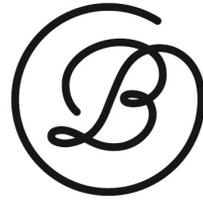
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A VARIETY OF COMMERCIAL SPACES



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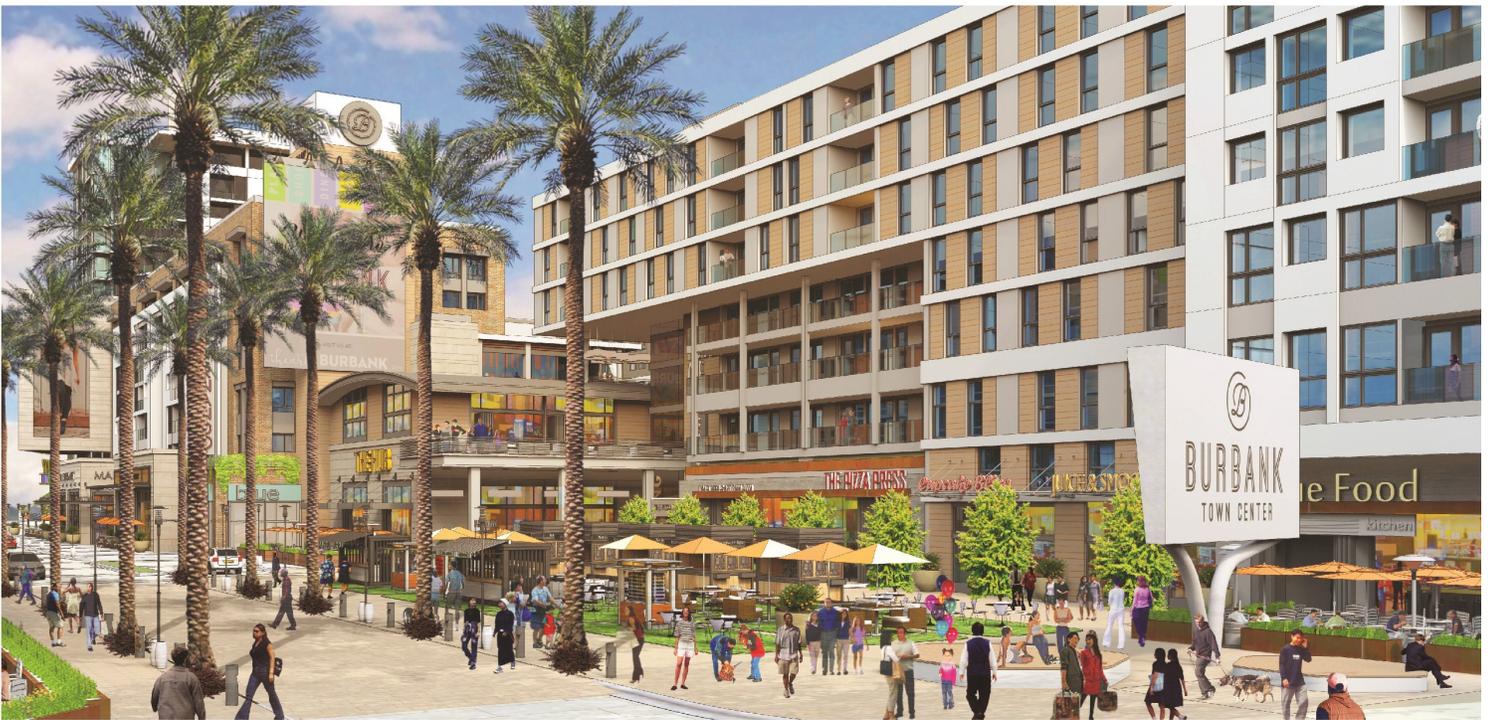
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iheart **BURBANK**.COM

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Feb. 19 BTA Office Closed**
- Feb. 20 Relay For Life Fundraiser – Chevy’s (All Day)**
- Feb. 20 Communications Task Force**
- Feb. 21 Rep. Council**
- Feb. 22 CalSTRS workshop (Members 3-5 years from retirement)**
- Feb. 22 Bay Valley President’s Day**
- Feb. 23 NEA RA Declaration of Candidacy due**
- Feb. 23-25 Diana CADEM**
- Feb. 23-25 New Educator Weekend**
- Feb. 28 Muir Site Visit**
- Feb. 28 Organizing - BTA Office 3:30**
- Mar. 1 BOE (JBHS & Disney)**
- Mar. 2 Read Across America**
- Mar. 7 Open House HS**
- Mar. 12-14 NEA RA election**
- Mar. 13 Open House Middle School**
- Mar. 14 Open House Elementary (May 2 too)**
- Mar. 12 Debt. Forgiveness workshop BHS 3:30**
- Mar. 14 Eboard BTA Office 3:30**
- Mar. 16-18 Good Teaching Conference**
- Mar. 16 Meeting Matt Hill**
- Mar. 19-23 BTA Office Closed**
- Mar. 28 Rep Council**
- Mar. 29 Bay Valley Service Dinner**



Because Congress was still in session until late December, Congressman Adam Schiff postponed his holiday gathering and food drive to January 24, 2018. The event was held at the Deluxe Banquet Hall and was open to all. BTA members collected non-perishable goods and were delivered by Providencia teachers Natalie Ort, Kelli Ort, Kate Bailey, and BTA President Diana Abasta. Congressman Schiff welcomed everyone and spoke so eloquently on the state of issues in Washington D.C. Despite the difficult times and issues, Congressman Schiff used his sense of humor to leave us feeling hopeful and proud of his strong leadership. At the end of the night it was estimated that about 2000 pounds of food was collected.



Tatev Tovmasyan, Luther counseling intern; Diana Abasta, BTA President; Laurie Harmon, Luther counselor; Lisa Chung, JBHS counselor

On Friday February 9, 2018 Luther Burbank Middle School held its annual Career Day. Eighth grade students participated in mock job interviews. Students, dressed in professional attire, came prepared with a resume and members of the community and district conducted mini interviews with the students. The students also had access to talking to a variety of college and career representatives. It was a very successful day for all.





Wine Room TGIF a Big Hit

BTA held its second Happy Hour of the school year on Friday, January 26, 2018 at the D'Argenzio Wine Room. We set a BTA Happy Hour record, with over 80 in attendance, making it an overwhelming success! It was wonderful to see members from Elementary, Middle School and High School, all mingling while enjoying fresh pizza, tasty meatballs, and cheese platters. A variety of beverages were also savored, including cold beer and zesty D'Argenzio wine from the D'Argenzio Winery in Santa Rosa. BTA Happy Hours are fantastic events that offer an ideal setting for camaraderie between members who don't normally interact, so please stay tuned for info on our next one and let's try to make it an even bigger success! See you all there!



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