Welcome 2018!

I hope everyone had time to refresh and recharge. As someone who has a hard time winding down, I know the value of it when I finally do. It makes me feel hopeful and it gives me a better perspective on school, work, and life.

Last year, 2017, seems like a bad dream; it’s gone but not over. There were so many things happening in the world and in our schools and although we know our work always changes due to added responsibilities, different curriculum, and new book adoptions, this past year’s additional demands without any additional compensation seemed to impact our morale more. Therefore, we need to take a good look at where we are as a union. Burbank Teachers Association is only as strong as our demonstrated unity. When colleagues talk to me and say, “the union” instead of “our union,” I often reflect why they seem to see it as a separate entity. Then I think of accountability. If we don’t see ourselves as part of the union, it is easier to put the onus on the leadership.

What causes lack of participation in our union? It isn’t for lack of movement or ideas, but perhaps it is movement not in the right area or movement that is perceived as being too slow. For example, when we have elections or surveys, why don’t more of our members use this as an opportunity to give feedback? On our last bargaining survey, we had under 200 people respond. This means the other 678 are surrendering all their power to just a quarter of the membership. This is not unique to just the participation in our union because we see it in the low voter turnout at election time. However, each of us must make a commitment to support each other by taking some ownership in our union.

We need individuals to reach out to colleagues at their sites. We need not just Reps to advocate for us, but we need individuals to reach out and participate. If you cannot attend a meeting, can you write the email to the BOE or can you volunteer to put flyers in the mailboxes or keep the BTA bulletin boards current? Can you come in and phone bank for an hour or 30 minutes? Can you serve on a committee that only meets quarterly? Yes, we all have obligations and I believe we all have tough jobs and limited time, but we must not let our

Continued on Page 3
Executive Director’s Message by Sonya Lowe

The Governor’s January budget proposal has been released, which is the first initial projection on education funding for the 2018-2019 school year. We finally have some good news, which is especially needed here in Burbank.

California saw increased state revenues and local property taxes this past year, so the Proposition 98 Guarantee for 2018-19 is at a new all-time high of $78.3 billion, which is a six percent increase in funding for K-14 education from the 2017 Budget Act levels. Governor Brown is planning on building upon the funding increases of the past five years by fully funding the Local Control Funding Formula two years early.

Governor Brown’s K-12 education proposal for 2018-19 provides $465 per pupil more in funding for 2018-19 than in 2017-18. That works out to be an increase in funding for school districts and charter schools by $3 billion over 2017-18 levels. The proposed cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) is 2.51% for 2018-19 and is included in the calculation for each district’s LCFF target. The $3 billion increase to LCFF funding that is proposed for 2018-19 is about four times the amount of new LCFF money that was provided in 2017-18 and will include COLA funding.

The Governor is also proposing $1.8 billion in one-time discretionary funds to use at local discretion. If school districts and charter schools receive funds on a per ADA basis as in the past, they can expect approximately $295 per ADA.

It should be noted that the Governor’s proposed budget does not reflect the recent federal tax bill and the fiscal implications it will have on California’s long-term fiscal health. We will have to wait and see how that plays out in the coming months.

As a reminder, the budget process is just at the beginning. We still have to wait for the May revision, and then the final budget will be approved in June. Stay tuned, as you will hear more on this, especially once we see how this is going to affect us at the BTA-BUSD bargaining table.

Time Is Running Out On This Special Enrollment Opportunity

CTA Endorsed Disability Insurance with NO HEALTH QUESTIONS

New Year. Fresh Start. Sweet Benefits! As a newly hired CTA member, you have an exclusive, limited-time opportunity to apply for CTA-endorsed Disability Insurance and up to $200,000 in Life Insurance without having to answer health questions from Standard Insurance Company (The Standard). How sweet is that!

Time is running out! Offer expires 180 days from your first day on the job.

For costs and further details of the coverage and this enrollment opportunity, including exclusions, benefit waiting periods, any reductions or limitations and the terms under which the policy may be continued in force, call The Standard's CTA Customer Service Department at 800.522.0406, or visit www.standard.com/cta/newhire to apply online.
President’s Message Continued:

focus stray from the fact that together we can accomplish more. There is power in numbers and your participation is needed now. There cannot be ambiguity or mixed messages when it comes to the state of our union if we want to maintain parity with the District leadership.

As we move forward as a union we must not let the stress of the job wear us down or create divisiveness. We need to actively take ownership of our profession and our development as educators. In bargaining, it is true that no Board of Ed member has ever said we don’t deserve a raise. Instead, what they say is that they cannot afford a raise (even though there are ways to build raises into the budget). As I have often reminded the BOE and the District leadership, how an organization budgets for the salaries and benefits of its employees says a lot about their values. It is true that monies spent are for programs that benefit students, but even school services has said in the past that educators must be considered an essential program. Teachers, counselors, nurses, and speech and language pathologists are the number one program. If any one of these people is given a reasonable workload and class size or case load, more can be accomplished. Now is the time to let the BOE know that there are severe economics facing their employees and we stand to lose more teachers to other districts who see the value of compensating all instead of a few. As negotiations move forward, please read the News from the Table and give your Reps or me your feedback and remember a successful outcome depends on each member demonstrating some commitment to the effort.

A useful metaphor is found in “Lessons of the Geese.” As each goose flaps its wings, it creates an “uplift” for the ones who follow. By flying in a “V” formation, the entire flock adds more of a flying range than if each goose flew alone. When we share a common direction and sense of community, we can get to where we are going quicker and easier because we are traveling on the thrust of one another. I look forward to a year of hope and action with you.

In unity,

Diana

Second Annual Women’s March - Los Angeles

January 20, 2018

Some BTA members rode the Redline or Metrolink to L.A. to continue the year long resistance movement started on January 20, 2017 in Washington D.C. Many others chose to participate in local marches here in Burbank and other locations in So. California.

Last year I was fortunate enough to be a part of history along with BTA member Sue Conway and BTA Office manager Alice Holmes, joined by her daughter and daughter-in-law. It was one of the most life defining moments for me because it reaffirmed what democracy looks like.

This year the Los Angeles Women’s March reaffirmed the message that we all march as a community to support individual, women’s and human rights. All were invited to stand in solidarity for the protection of human and civil rights and in honor of our diversity and for the compassion of our shared humanity.

At CTA State Council, the officers and members ended their morning session at 10:00 to join the march. Alexis Weiner, her sister Elena Allen, Alice Holmes, Bonnie Shatun, retired teacher and her husband Alton, marched carrying our signs. Other members Sue Conway, Laurie Harmon, and Traci Fellman, Laura Messian, Kevin Dixon, Kelli Saunders, James Bentley, and many others were sharing pictures on Facebook.

Listening to the speakers was inspirational. There were too many to mention here but one thing resonated when it came to change and that was the power of our vote. I am asking all members to please make sure you are registered to vote. If any of you have moved, please make sure you make those changes and register.
State Council of the California Teachers Association converged on the Bonaventure Hotel in downtown Los Angeles for its quarterly meeting from January 19-21, 2018. BTA’s elected representatives are Alexis Weiner (JBHS) and Justin Riner (Muir MS). They joined BTA past president and former CTA board member Bonnie Shatun (CTA-Retired; Bret Harte).

Saturday was an exciting day. The morning kicked off with a speech from Eric Heins, CTA president, and a powerful, uplifting, and exciting speech from California Assemblymember Tony Thurmond, who is running for California State Superintendent of Public Instruction and is endorsed by CTA. President Heins introduced Assemblymember Thurmond:

“Tony Thurmond may be lesser known right now, but his election as SPI is critically important. Tony knows the power of public education first-hand because he says it saved his life. After his single mother died when Tony was 6 years old, he and his 3 brothers were raised by a cousin who taught them that education could be the great equalizer. Tony was inspired to become a social worker to help at-risk kids and is now running for Superintendent to fight for all students and educators. As a lawmaker, Tony passed legislation to provide millions of dollars to school districts to keep kids in school and out of the criminal justice system. He recognizes the growing teacher shortage in California. He supports affordable housing and other incentives to attract and retain quality educators in our classrooms. More than just the right choice for SPI, Tony is a dynamic role model for our students — especially our boys of color.”

Mr. Thurmond’s speech did not disappoint. He addressed the challenges of his own childhood and how he could have been a victim of circumstance, but instead, with the support of public school educators, he has risen to a place of influence in state government. He is knowledgeable about schools, students, and educators, and has proven through his introduction of legislation and his voting record that he supports public education and unions. He is endorsed not only by CTA, but by the firefighters’ union, the California Nurses Association, and U.S. Senator Kamala Harris. Snippets of his speech at State Council are available on the California Teachers Association YouTube channel, and more information is available about Mr. Thurmond at his website, http://www.tonythurmond.com.

Continued next page:
State Council Continued:

CTA staff recognized that given the engaged activists that comprise State Council, it would have to adjourn for a few hours to join the Women’s March that was happening just blocks away. Please see the accompanying article regarding the march in this issue.

After the march, Council reconvened and committees met, and business continued as usual through Sunday. Recommendations for candidates for the June 2018 primary elections were passed, and incumbent Laura Friedman was recommended for AD43, the district covering Burbank, Glendale, and adjoining areas.

Much of the discussion throughout the weekend was concerning the Janus v. AFSCME case, scheduled to be argued before the Supreme Court on February 26th. CTA is making preparations for the loss of fair-share fees as this case attempts to defund and undercut public-sector unions, thereby weakening protections and bargaining power of workers. The case is paid for largely by the extreme-right-leaning State Policy Network, an umbrella network for organizations that work with ALEC and are linked to the Koch brothers’ group Americans for Prosperity. More information about the Janus case is at www.cta.org/janus. Since the case is scheduled to be heard on February 26th, workers’ and labor organizations, including CTA, are organizing a protest day in Los Angeles and select locations around the country on February 24th. Save the date; details will follow.***

Saturday evening, there were a few featured events: the African American Caucus presented a program in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that featured the original poetry of current LAUSD students, and the Special Education committee screened the film Bass Clef Bliss: Terrance’s Path, along with a discussion panel. The film shares the story of a young man with autism and the role of music in his development.

State Council will next meet April 6-8, 2018, at the Bonaventure Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. Any CTA member who is interested in seeing the process and visiting as a guest is welcome; if you decide to visit, let one of us know!

CTA News/Publications: Are you receiving the CTA Insider email, a digest of pertinent and critical CTA news? If not, sign up to receive it at https://www.cta.org/About-CTA/Forms/Insider-Enewsletter-form.aspx. Also, while you get hard copies of the CTA California Educator magazine, stay up-to-date with the online version, which posts information in between issues and is easy to share through email and social media: https://californiaeducator.org.

Testing: As testing starts to get closer, SBAC has provided the site testscoreguide.org/ca/ for understanding student score reports.

CTA Scholarships: Scholarships of up to $5000 are available for dependents of CTA members and up to $3000 for CTA members themselves. The deadline is coming up quickly on February 2, 2018. The deadline for the Martin Luther King scholarship, designed to encourage ethnic minority students to become educators, is also approaching rapidly, on February 16, 2018. Find information and applications at www.cta.org/scholarships.

California Reads: In time for Read Across America on March 2, the California Reads Committee puts together a quarterly list of teacher-recommended books for grade levels pre-K through 12. BTA has purchased copies of recommended books to bring to sites, and the full book list is available at www.cta.org/Parents-and-Community/California-Reads.aspx. Also on this page is a downloadable flyer of “6 Keys to Help a Child Become a Good Reader”, translated in eight languages and ready for printing.

CTA-Retired: Even once you retire, one can remain an active member of CTA. CTA-Retired offers one-year memberships for $60 a year, or one can buy lifetime membership for $450. One can pay the dues now and be a “pre-retired” life member, and have it all taken care of once that time comes around.
When I was a child, I used to enjoy playing school with my stuffed animals and dolls. Some of my fondest memories include going to elementary school and soaking up all the new information I could and reading books I was just able to access. I remember when I could finally read chapter books and worlds of imagination were opened. Before that I couldn’t have even dreamed about a mouse who could ride a motorcycle, a boy who could solve crimes (that I rarely could), and a boy who could inherit a candy factory.

Middle school and high school were clouded by peer issues, but I do still know the names of the few teachers who made a huge impact on my life. These teachers cared and not just about the subjects they were teaching, like Science, History, and German. They cared about their students’ learning and well-being. My well-being! These are also the teachers who assigned the best projects, the ones that we as students dreaded then but still remember decades later.

I also babysat as a teenager, and each consecutive job I held involved children. I taught swimming lessons, lifeguarded, worked at a summer camp, and then was a nanny. What should I do after college? It seemed obvious. I started the Credentialing Program at CSUN even before I had officially graduated from UCLA. In the meantime, I needed a job. I found an ad in the newspaper and interviewed at a non-public school down the street from where I was living. Besides the one Psychology class I had taken at UCLA with the infamous Ivar Lovaas, I had no idea what Autism was or how to teach these students. But, sure, I’d love to start as an aide in a Special Education Classroom with kids with Autism, Learning Disabilities, ADHD, Speech and Language Impairments, and Intellectual Disabilities.

When I was offered to teach a Language Enriched Autism Program class here at Washington in 2009, I naively, yet excitedly, said yes. That year I started with 2 students in my class and an aide. Within a few months I had 4 very unique students, all of whom taught me so much and prepared me for the coming years of growing classes. One of the best parts of that first Washington class was that my daughter was in an adjoining Kindergarten class. To this day, now in 8th grade, she is still friends with one of the boys from my class. That friendship reminds me daily that my students may be quiet, have difficulty with conversational skills, may have quirky behaviors, sometimes have tantrums, and struggle with their academics. Yet beyond the obvious, these students are just like us, struggling to fit in, trying to find peers that accept them, and doing their best.

Twenty years later, a decade each at a non-public school and a Burbank public elementary school, I wouldn’t look back. I almost had my Multiple Subject credential, but never did my student teaching. This world in which I work in each day is more puzzling, more motivating, and more inspiring than any general education classroom I ever could have had. Sure, it’s exhausting to differentiate curriculum, to find manipulatives that will help them learn skills that are easily mastered by other students, and to always be guiding them to make good choices and get along with their peers, but inevitably, they make me a better teacher. I have often heard that the best teachers are constantly learning from their students. No doubt! Organization, time management, engagement, patience, humor, forgiveness, compassion.

So, why I teach is a more of a conundrum than I had imagined. Simply, I teach, and especially those with Autism, so that I can try to make the world a bit more interesting to students who are often disengaged from school. When they start counting aloud because they get to count dinosaurs, when they write a sentence about their favorite cartoon, when they give a peer a high five and look them in the eyes, when they play a game on the playground, when they sing a song, when they giggle at a joke, and when they form friendships that will last a lifetime, I know I am in the right place, or specifically the right classroom.
**TAX INFORMATION: UNION DUES PAID 2017**

You can look on your December check stub as it gives CTA YTD paid (includes all union dues). Majority of members are Category 1/SS1 so dues paid are \[609.36 + 415.44 = \$1,024.80\]

Your check stub CTA YTD was calculated based on the tables below:

*Add together your appropriate category from chart A & B to determine the total amount paid for 2017.*

(January - June (6 mos) CTA dues were based on Salary strand while NEA/BTA were based on percentage of teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEA/BTA Cat. (see below)</th>
<th>CTA Salary Strand</th>
<th>Dues Paid Jan - June (6 mos)</th>
<th>NEA/BTA Cat.</th>
<th>CTA Salary Strand</th>
<th>Dues Paid Jan - June (6 mos)</th>
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(To determine salary strand)

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<table>
<thead>
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<th>NEA/BTA Category</th>
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<th>Total dues paid Sept - Dec (4 mos)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>For those faculty whose teaching assignment is more than 60% of a normal assignment, except for faculty employed as pre-school, head start, child care, adult education, and substitute teachers whose salaries are less than the minimum teacher salary for the district in which they are employed.</td>
<td>415.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2A</td>
<td>For those faculty whose teaching assignment is greater than 1/3 but not more than 50% of a normal assignment.</td>
<td>216.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2B</td>
<td>For those faculty whose teaching assignment is greater than 50% but not more than 60% of a normal assignment. or For those faculty employed as pre-school, head start, child care, adult education, and substitute teachers whose salary in the district in which they are employed is less than the minimum salary paid regular teachers in such district.</td>
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</tr>
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<td>3A</td>
<td>For those faculty or substitutes whose teaching assignment is 25% or less than a normal assignment, including faculty on unpaid leave.</td>
<td>116.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>For those faculty whose teaching assignment is greater than 25% but not more than 1/3 of a normal assignment.</td>
<td>133.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>For those adult education and community college employees employed only on a part-time/ hourly basis.</td>
<td>77.44</td>
</tr>
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</table>
These concerns were raised at our State of our Union meeting on January 18, 2018. I wanted to go over what was said. First, we have asked Matt Hill and the Safety Committee to explore the criteria needed to decide as to whether a school closes in the event of a fire. When a school is granted permission to close, it is usually because the state has agreed to keep ADA in place by issuing a waiver. In addition, to be given money in the form of days would be a violation, so this is why the District can not reimburse your days. We will continue to investigate this because it is important to our members.

"In determining whether an expenditure is considered a “gift” within the meaning of the gift clause, the primary question is whether the funds are used for a public or private purpose. If the expenditure is primarily for a public purpose, it will generally not be a gift. If the expenditure is for a private purpose, however, such as for the benefit of a single employee or student, it will likely be an unlawful gift of public funds."

**When Does An Expenditure Serve A Public Purpose?**

In the context of public education, an expenditure serves a legitimate public purpose when it will directly and tangibly benefit the education of students within the district. Examples of appropriate school expenditures typically include payments for:

- School furniture, supplies, and equipment;
- Teacher and faculty salaries;
- Uniforms and regalia for school bands, choirs, or athletic teams;
- Caps and gowns for graduation ceremonies;
- Instructional materials and textbooks;
- Maintenance of buildings and facilities;
- Research and promotional activities to advance public education;
- Awards to high school students for excellence;
- Flowers or decorations for a district awards ceremony or commemorative event;
- Transportation for high school students living in outlying parts of the district.

On the other hand, expenditures driven by personal motives or moral obligations, such as a desire to convey compassion, sympathy, joy, or gratitude, generally do not serve a primary public purpose and, thus, are likely unlawful gifts of public funds. Districts and public officials can face potential legal liability, including taxpayer lawsuits, civil and criminal penalties, and the loss of public confidence, for the misuse or improper expenditure of public monies. (See, e.g., Gov. Code, § 8314; Pen. Code, § 424.)
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STATE OF OUR UNION
GENERAL MEETING

Justin Riner

After working a full day in their respective classrooms, 235 Burbank teachers headed to the auditorium at JBHS to participate in the first BTA State of Our Union event. Led by President Diana Abasta, the January 18th meeting served to bring members up-to-date on the challenges facing teachers and encouraged them to be more active participants in the association.

After Diana’s opening comments, teacher David Cohen passionately spoke of his recent dive into union activism. He recalled spending most of his career feeling separated from and frustrated by the union before he realized that, as a union member, he could be the solution he was looking for. He spoke of finding ways to be involved that utilized his strengths and also addressed his concerns. He shared his story with the hope that others would do the same.

CTA staff member Sonya Lowe addressed the audience regarding the possible effects of the upcoming Supreme Court decision in the Janus v. AFSCME case. This case is the latest challenge to the collection of “fair-share” dues and will create huge obstacles for local unions to overcome. Possible fallout from the decision will affect not only what dues are collected, but the way that membership is maintained. Almost any decision by the Court will be costly in time as well as money as locals adjust to any new regulations.

Bargaining Committee member Lori Adams provided insight into the early stages of negotiations. Citing member survey responses as well as reflecting upon the most recent contract agreement, the team is able to see what priorities and concerns teachers have to bring to the table. She allowed the members in attendance to understand what guides the team as they head back into negotiations so soon after the disappointing results of the previous contract.

Organizing leader Maggie Hess-Witucki emphasized the importance of each member’s participation as a way to support Lori and the rest of the bargaining team. For members to have their demands heard, they will be gearing up to participate in actions through the school year. She encouraged members to start by taking some easy steps: wear black on Thursdays, talk to community members, and find at least one school board meeting to attend.

State Senator Portantino stopped by to show support and discuss state legislation that he has been working on to create better schools. One specific example he shared is a bill that addresses the effects of early start times on teenagers. He further emphasized the importance of what teachers do in the classroom as well as in their roles as union members in making our community a better place.

BTA members left the event better informed about their union and the state of education at the local and national level. This insight and the involvement of our members are vital parts of the fight for better Burbank schools and fair compensation. As BTA members begin the second half of the school year, face an important Supreme Court decision, and enter into new local negotiations, the participation of teachers in the State of Our Union served as a reminder of where the BTA’s strength lies: the unity of Burbank’s teachers and the care that they have for their students.

Thank you to everyone that attended BTA’s first State of Our Union address. It was a good turnout and hopefully everyone left with questions answered and new knowledge to share with colleagues.

Now, it’s your turn! We need to hear from you!

Please take the following survey to help BTA flourish:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QFK93CT
DATES TO REMEMBER

Jan. 30 Relay for Life Fundraiser Shakey’s 4-7 p.m.
Feb. 1 Wear BTA Black t-shirt and photo day
Feb. 1 BOE Meeting City Hall 7:00 p.m.
  LCAP meets at 5:45 p.m.
Feb. 2 Negotiations District Office 9-3 p.m.
Feb. 5 GBU BTA Office 4:00 p.m.
Feb. 6 Organizing Committee BTA Office 3:30 p.m.
Feb. 7 Eboard Meeting BTA Office 3:30 p.m.
Feb. 12 BTA Office closed
Feb. 14 School Site Visit TBD
Feb. 15 BOE meeting City Hall 7:00 p.m.
  LCAP meets at 5:45 p.m.
Feb. 16, 17 ILC Diana in San Jose
Feb. 17 Walk with BOE President Steve Ferguson
  Chandler Path 9:00 a.m.
Feb. 19 BTA Office closed
Feb. 20 Task Force meeting
Feb. 21 Rep. Council Place TBD 3:30 p.m.
Feb. 22 Negotiations BTA Office 9-3 p.m.
Feb. 22 Bay Valley President’s Day
Feb. 22 CALSTRS Workshop Educators 3-5 years
  from retirement. STRS Office Glendale
Feb. 22 PAC meet with BOE
Feb. 23 New Educators Conference
Feb. 23-25 CADEM Convention San Diego: Diana
  delegate for Congressman Adam Schiff
Feb. 28 Organizing Team BTA Office 3:30 p.m.
Feb. 28 Site Visit TBD

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