President’s Message by Diana Abasta

A Glance In The Rear-View Mirror But Focused On The Road Ahead

Burbank teachers wore red on Monday, May 1st to show their support for public education and, more specifically, their opposition to new efforts by the current administration in Washington D.C. to privatize public education. I was pleased to be able to represent our teachers for the Day of Action at Washington Elementary School and speak to the importance of passing a state budget that makes students a priority. I called on “all Californians and the Burbank community to join us in pledging their support for a strong, inclusive, safe, adequately funded and innovative public education system.” Additionally, I emphasized the “need to continue to invest in our public schools and protect them from policies that threaten to dismantle public education.” The event ended with David Goldberg, CTA Sec.-Treasurer, acknowledging the teachers and staff. “Where our real power is, is at school sites,” Goldberg said. “You standing here today is a really nice, powerful thing to see.”

On the national level, with Betsy DeVos as the new Secretary of Education, we are seeing renewed attempts to promote vouchers and charter schools for profit that will drain essential funding from conventional public schools. Vouchers, which could be used for attending private schools, present the most serious threat. But, as we have seen in California, the rapid expansion of charter schools can also lead to a chaotic mix of school models, some excellent but others that have been terminated due to mismanagement and excessive administrative compensation. Here in California the State Department of Education admits they have inadequate resources to properly hold existing charter schools accountable for the use of public money, as well as educational outcomes.

One vital aspect of accountability is the oversight provided by teachers unions. In a typical balance of power school boards and administrations are required by our local unions to be transparent and accountable both at the bargaining table and in public meetings. But in the majority of charter schools unions have been kept out by charter school executives. Not surprisingly this has often led to a high turnover rate of teaching staff and complaints of heavy-handed employment policies.

Continued on Page 3
On Thursday, March 16, Bob Shaw attended the 3rd Annual Burbank Police Awards Luncheon as a representative of BTA. With over 200 people in attendance, he witnessed the Police Foundation distribute a variety of awards to over two dozen of Burbank's Finest. Along with many City of Burbank dignitaries and BUSD administrators including Matt Hill and Tom Kissinger, Bob was able to spread the goodwill of our union to other community members and local police officers.
President’s Message continued - The Road Ahead

A report in the May 3rd business section of the Los Angeles Times suggests this lack of teacher union oversight at charter schools may be about to change. Reporter Anna M. Phillips writes that, “Teachers at a network of Sacramento charter schools founded by former Mayor Kevin Johnson are trying to unionize, citing growing discontent over the schools’ management and high staff turnover.” According to John Borsos, Executive Director of the Sacramento City Teachers Association, “It would also mean that a majority of the 15 charter schools within the Sacramento City Unified School District would be unionized.” Kingsley Melton, a teacher at Sacramento High School which is a part of the charter network said that some teachers had decided to unionize after attempts to resolve disputes with the organization’s leadership failed. He said frequent turnover of teachers and administrators and a general “lack of transparency” had fueled the push. The union announced that more than half the teachers, psychologists, and school counselors at the charter network had signed a petition asking to be represented by the union, an affiliate of CTA.

From a personal perspective, this has been quite a year. Accepting the BTA presidency would have been challenging enough, but the loss of my mother and my dad’s illness has made the year a real trial. Nevertheless, I have endeavored to advocate for our members and our profession even when it seemed impossible to meet the needs of all. I continue to feel strongly that we must raise the level of awareness regarding the benefits of pursuing teaching as a career. Partly due to the relentless attacks on teachers by privatization proponents, enrollment in teacher preparation programs continues to remain at historic lows. Especially hard hit will be math and science teachers and we may be unprepared to meet the expected increase in demand for bilingual education teachers, even though schools continue to invest in dual immersion and bilingual programs.

In the future, my plan is to work with the District on adopting strategies to retain and recruit highly qualified teachers, counselors, nurses, and speech and language pathologists. I will continue to emphasize the need for development of teacher support systems that adequately address the challenging work conditions we face every day whether we are first-year teachers or seasoned veterans.

In a blog entitled, “Bold Teacher Leadership for Equity and Excellence in Public Education: Lessons for Administrators,” Barnett Berry posted this on 02/20/17: “Cultivating teacher leaders requires principals to orchestrate and broker talents of many, not just a few. It asks principals to lead dynamic organizational change, transforming school cultures …” It isn’t easy to do but in a shared style of leadership, we can find ways to leverage the collective impact that supports the learning of all students.

In conclusion, we started the year with our “Why I Teach” campaign and I would like to end with my own reflections:

I teach to impart my love of learning to my students. I want to empower them to think critically and to find solutions creatively so they can make their way in the world. I also want them to believe in the power of one so they too will give back to their communities. I teach because I still believe in the future. I am proud to be in a profession where I know my colleagues share these goals.

I hope your year ends easily and well. Enjoy your time. Rest, relax, restore and when we return we will be ready to take on 2017-18 with passion, perseverance, and joy.

In unity,

Diana
We honor our colleagues who are retiring and those who have served in the District for twenty-five years.

Retiree:
Nancy Callahan ..........Roosevelt
Susan Casella...............Bret Harte
Fred Cook ..................Burbank HS
Leanne Foxman ..........Special Education
Emma Foy ..................Bret Harte CC
Donna Gibbons ............Roosevelt ATB
Michael Hammell ........Miller
Christine Harkins .......Health Services
Susan Martin .............Luther MS
Linda Matsumoto .........Adult School
Helen Quayle .............Jordan MS
Patricia Register ..........Special Education
Patricia Starks ..........Washington CC
Anneke Frouke Stoy.....Horace Mann CC

Retired Teachers Wanted For Docents At Autry Museum Of The American West

Former teachers make excellent docents and the Autry’s new docent class for 2017 will be held on Mondays, July 17–September 18, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.* This is a great volunteer opportunity to make new friends and expand your understanding of the American West! Autry docents provide guided tours of permanent galleries and special exhibitions to diverse audiences while gaining intimate knowledge of the museum and its collections.

As an Autry docent, you will enjoy many social and professional benefits, including Autry-sponsored parties and gatherings, monthly potlucks, field trips, and more.

• Autry docents conduct tours for schoolchildren one day during the week or twice a month on weekends for families and adult groups.

• No experience necessary. Training includes classes in Western history, art and art history, material culture, education, touring techniques, and more.

• Responsibilities include providing weekly tours, maintaining active Autry membership, and participating in continuing education both at the museum and throughout the region.

$50 program fee includes reading materials. Apply early, as class size is limited. Learn more at TheAutry.org/docents

Contact Susan DiCato at 323.495.4237 or sdicato@theautry.org for more information.

*Times may vary. No class on September 4.
Executive Director’s Message by Sonya Lowe

As the school year comes to a close we are anxiously awaiting the Governor’s May budget revision. We are hoping that Governor Brown will revise his January projection and give California schools a little more funding than he initially said he would. We have such amazing programs here in Burbank which, of course, would not be possible without the educators who make amazing things happen in our schools every day. We need continued funding increases to sustain the programs we have and to recruit and retain the incredible educators that work here in Burbank. As the news from the state comes in soon, we will see what that means for Burbank and for negotiations. You will be hearing from us here at BTA as the news comes in. As the year ends, I hope you are able to take a moment to reflect on the incredible work you do each day.

Enjoy your summer and your well-deserved break!

Congressman Adam Schiff promotes science with BTA President Diana Abasta (BHS) and CTA State Council representative Alexis Weiner (JBHS) at the Burbank Science March on the Chandler bike path. Burbank teachers know that science and critical thought/examination are necessary for a successful and thriving society.

Thank you, Congressman, Adam Schiff and the Burbank community for showing your support!
Helpful, friendly, and determined are three adjectives that describe BTA’s 2017 WHO nominee, Maggie Hess-Witucki. Maggie has been a BTA member for 30 years. She began as a middle school SPED teacher at John Muir in Burbank. After 6 years, she left and went to the elementary level as a Resource Teacher. No matter the grade level, Maggie always utilized her skills to meet the students’ needs. After a few years at an elementary site, Maggie decided to go to the high school to round out her career. Maggie found her niche at the high school and became more involved in BTA. She went to the Summer Institute two years ago, and the spark of advocacy was ignited. Maggie is now a high school director and is the chair of BTA’s Organizing Committee.

Maggie contributes greatly to the Burbank Teachers Organization. We are grateful to have her as a member.

Robyn Russon Appointed to State Health Education Curriculum Framework and Evaluation Criteria Committee

This past March, Robyn Russon, Health Teacher at John Burroughs High School, was appointed by the State Board of Education to serve on the Health Education Curriculum Framework and Evaluation Criteria Committee. She is one of 20 educators throughout the state that will work with framework writers and California Department of Education staff to develop a new framework for health education which will be adopted in 2018.
NEWS FROM THE TABLE

April 20, 2017
Session #7 District Office

BTA’s negotiating team, comprised of Lori Adams, Kim Anderson, Les Cohen, Sue Conway, Sonya Lowe, and Colleen Flores (absent) met with BUSD’s negotiating team Steve Andelson, Anita Schackmann, David Jaynes, Laura Flossi and David Guyer, with a visit from Tom Kissinger at the BUSD office.

A Tentative Agreement (TA) was signed for Article 9 - Hours with a change in 9.4.3.1 (3). Both sides agreed to remove the sentence, “However, if necessary to maintain continuity of program, the principal may consider the type of facility and school seniority.” BTA and the District agreed the sentence was unclear and no longer necessary or applicable.

Hot Topics –

5-year evaluation cycle – BTA encouraged BUSD to remind principals of the benefits of placing veteran employees with satisfactory evaluations on a 5-year evaluation cycle. BTA pointed out that the principal can still visit classrooms and provide advice at any time. If evaluators do not place eligible teachers on the 5 year cycle, they should explain the reasons for the denial and offer ideas for improvement.

BTA asked for clarification on the policy of asking teachers to attend IEPs to explain the expectations of a grade level, even if the teacher does not have the student.

Special Education Update – Tom Kissinger provided an update on the development of the Special Education Master Plan. A decision has been made to add an autism program at JBHS to accommodate students transitioning from Jordan Middle School. Also, Muir will be gaining a full time teacher to support students coming from Miller’s ED program. Luther’s SH program is decreasing from 3 to 2 classes and teachers are retiring so there will be no overall change in FTEs due to these changes.

There is a desire to decrease the use of agencies to provide both Speech Language Pathologists and Deaf and Hard of Hearing interpreters. The agencies are very expensive. BTA and the District will discuss possible modified pay scales or incentives to attract SLPs and interpreters to work for the District to reduce the cost of hiring private sector agencies. Also, the position of Director of Special Education is being flown and the window for applications will close in early May.

Paid Parental (Child Bonding) Leave – BUSD’s counter proposal contained language based on the California Family Rights Act (CFRA). The District added language that specified that the 12 workweeks of paid leave will be allocated per member so that married district employees will each be given 12 weeks of leave. In addition, it specified that the 12 weeks of half pay used for child bonding would not count against the leave entitlement set forth in Section 13.1.15.1.d. This section grants 100 half days as sick leave for employees who use their 10 sick days in one year. BTA’s team is pleased with these changes and will provide a counter proposal at the next bargaining session.

Budget Update- David Jaynes provided three articles from School Services, which discussed changes in the increases to the CalSTRS contributions. There will be no additions to proposed increases to the District (12.58% to 14.53% in 2017-18) or employee contributions (9.205%) but the state contribution increase will change from 6.328% to 6.828%.

Health insurance companies have shown changes in membership with Kaiser increasing by 26,000, United Healthcare increasing by 25,000 while Blue Shield Access decreasing by 15,000 and Blue Shield Net Value decreasing by 58,000.

Article 11 Class Size - BUSD did not provide a counter proposal and instead reiterated a desire to extend the 2 year old MOU. BUSD’s team does not want to tie the hands of future administrations should budget issues arise any time in the future. BTA insists that the MOU was signed to resolve a grievance and was intended to facilitate a clarification of faulty contract language. The current class size numbers are working well for both the District and BTA members. Specific items in the BTA proposal were discussed. BTA will provide another counter proposal in the next session.

Final Exam Schedule Changes – An MOU was drafted by BUSD to address the change in final exam schedules and deadlines to submit grades for seniors at JBHS and BHS. The Collective Bargaining Agreement clearly states in section 9.3.4 “In the two comprehensive high schools there shall be a practice of three (3) minimum days at the end of each semester for the purpose of administering final exams.” Since plans are underway, BTA’s team provided a counter MOU to address the issue immediately. BUSD’s team will confer with the administrators involved and since it is time sensitive, both teams will meet informally to discuss the MOU next week.

Articles 7: Wages, Article 8: Health and Welfare Benefits will be addressed in future bargaining sessions.

Dates for future negotiations were set for May 11th at the BTA office and May 26th at BUSD.
March CTA State Council Report  by Lori Adams and Alexis Weiner

CTA State Council representatives met on March 24-26 at the Westin Bonaventure in downtown Los Angeles. It was a busy weekend, with prominent guest speakers and lively discussion.

Most of the committee work was dedicated to weighing in on proposed legislation and changing CTA policy so our legislative advocates could fight for our positions. A good deal of time was also dedicated to brainstorming activities for the May 1st “Day of Action”. At the previous State Council meeting in January, representatives were distraught over the November election and the threats to our students and school, so Council voted for a New Business Item to put this day of action into motion. This became a statewide effort to promote public schools and demonstrate the dedication of schools and school employees to protecting students and communities. If you are on social media, look up #CTADayOfAction for an overall look at the day across California. To see what was happening around Burbank Unified on the CTA Day of Action, look up #BurbankPublicEd or @BurbankTchrAssn on Twitter. If you haven’t done so already, take the pledge to protect public education at cta.org/ForAllStudents.

Among the legislation considered at council was AB 1478. We have since heard that the bill was passed out of the Assembly Education Committee and is headed to the Judiciary Committee. The bill will ensure charter school governance is transparent and that monitoring and oversight of charter schools are conducted to protect public education and be in the best interest of children. Also passing out of both the Education and Judiciary committees with bipartisan support was AB 699, which prohibits discrimination and provides protections based on a student’s immigration status or religious beliefs.

We've got a teacher shortage in California—especially when it comes to bilingual teachers. Since voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition 58 in November, bilingual teachers will be a hot commodity. CTA and Californians Together (californianstogether.org) are working together to create a policy agenda to tackle this issue.

California Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de Leon (a former CTA employee) thanked members for all they do for the children of California and promised that California will hold firm on our values. He strongly asserted, “In this state we celebrate diversity. We don't ban it. We don't wall it off.” Senator de Leon recognized California as “an exceptional example” to the rest of the nation in embracing diversity and everything that comes with it, leading to a stronger society.

We were also honored with a visit from NEA Secretary-Treasurer Princess Moss, who addressed State Council. Secretary-Treasurer Moss expressed gratitude for the work that CTA does to keep our union strong and recognized CTA as a leader for associations across the nation.

California Teacher of the Year Jenny Chien of Vista, CA, a TOSA specializing in STEM, spoke to Council about her experience of giving students skills to prepare them for future jobs that don't yet exist. Watch Ms. Chien’s speech at https://www.facebook.com/BurbankTeachersAssociation/videos/1373623289365844/.

If you wish to see more about the March 2017 State Council visit the CTA Storify (https://storify.com/wearecta/cta-state-council). BTA tries to live-tweet as much of State Council as possible, so follow us on Twitter at @BurbankTchrAssn and Facebook at @BurbankTeachersAssociation for the next State Council highlights from June 2-4, 2017.
Burbank Teachers join Burbank on Parade

A happy group of teachers and students turned out for a fun day at the annual Burbank on Parade, April 29th. It is always a great, community building event and our teachers walked the parade route handing out more than a thousand BTA pencils to the crowd.

BUSD loaned us a truck for the occasion which was decorated with banners and colorful paper leis. Everyone there enjoyed the light-hearted celebration of our community. Special thanks to Maggie Hess-Witucki for organizing the event.

The pre-march group

BTA on Parade

Anna Basinski & Kim Anderson

The BTA truck

Relay for Life was a success!

I would like to thank all of the teachers who donated, made baskets, worked the booth, walked the event, or ate at La Bamba for our restaurant fundraiser.

Chris and Angie, La Bamba’s owners, donated $500 (33% of sales that night) to the American Cancer Society in our name. Team Burbank Teacher’s Association 2017 had a goal of $3,000 this year and we almost met it with $2,599. It is still possible for us to meet our goal if anyone would like to still donate. Please make checks payable to the American Cancer Society and send them to me at Thomas Jefferson, ASAP. I am confident that because we participated in this annual event, we made a difference in the fight for cancer.

Thank you, Tracy Sorensen - Jefferson
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.

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 options 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 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 CTAreirementplan.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, CTAREIREMENTPLAN.ORG, and 403BCOMPAR.E.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.

---

Winners of the BTA Member scholarship for continuing education:

Kelli Chung — Edison
Toluca Rivers — Edison
Emily Pierce — JBHS
Jennifer Gallego — Edison
Join us on Facebook
@BurbankTeachersAssociation

And On Twitter
@BurbankTchrAssn

Even if Facebook is not your thing, here are a few compelling reasons to sign up and join our closed Facebook group:

• Staying Up-To-Date on Important BTA Information
• Sharing Photos and Celebrations of Events at Your School
• Giving and Receiving - Get or Give Classroom Items
• Building a Stronger, More Connected Union!

2016-2017 BTA Faculty Representatives

ADULT SCHOOL — Linda Matsumoto, Julie Grair
BURBANK H.S. — Gina DiFrancesco, Bob Shaw, Bob Camacho, Natalie Setaghian
BURROUGHGS H.S. — Robyn Russon, David Hedin-Abreu, Maria Carman, Jeil Salem, Rex Bullington, Les Cohn, Patrick Carman
DISNEY ELEM. — Bridget Highfill
EDISON ELEM. — David Engel
EMERSON ELEM. — Samantha Robman, Robin Jankiewicz
INDEPENDENT LEARNING ACADEMY — Heather Good
JEFFERSON ELEM. — Anna Basinski
JORDAN M.S. — Dana Ragle, Amy Fuhr, Brian Kaloustian, Lori Pacino
LUTHER M.S. — Sue Conway, Nick Lundy, David Evans, Michael Concidine
HORACE MANN CHILDCARE — Rosalie Delgado, Jocelyn Garfiaz
MCKINLEY ELEM. — Amanda Pohlman, Monique Kalachi
MILLER ELEM. — Joan Becker, Brian Collins, Jason Ragle
MONTEREY H.S. — Todd Doty, Lisa Jo LaMere
MUIR M.S. — Barry Sarna, Brad Frank, Heidi Sasaki, Jessica Wertleib
PROVIDENCIA ELEM. — Kate Bailey, Lola Stewart
ROOSEVELT ELEM. — Kathy Wills-Sarna
STEVENSON ELEM. — Jasson Przebieda
TEACHERS ON SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT — Jenn Goldenberg
WASHINGTON ELEM. — Dorothy Hernandez, Chandra Collins

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 District’s Fraud Hotline.

Congratulations
Doug & Rene Grimshaw (BHS) on the birth of their daughter, Maya Rose
John (BHS) & Sarah Wells on the birth of their son, Landon David
**DATES TO REMEMBER**

- May 11  Bargaining BTA Office 9-3pm
- May 17  BTA Retirement Event - Castaway
- May 17  BHS Awards
- May 18  BOE Meeting 6:00pm
- May 19-21 CADem Convention
- May 22  JBHS Awards
- May 26  Bargaining BUSD 9-3 pm
- May 26  LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

---

**What To Do In An Employment Related Emergency**

It is extremely important that in the event of any adverse action affecting your employment status that you immediately contact the BTA office at (818) 846-1304. Examples of adverse actions are: notification of dismissal, suspension, child abuse, non-renewal, transfer, demotion, civil or criminal charges, or any contract violation.

Assert your rights: If an administrator wants to meet with you concerning any adverse action, the appropriate response for you to use is: "I am a BTA member and I am claiming my right to union representation for this meeting."

Until you are able to contact the BTA office:

**DO NOT:**
- Admit Anything; Sign Anything; Make Any Verbal or Written Statement; Resign or Be Insubordinate. The above includes not speaking to your colleagues, principal, administrators, parents, or the police about the incident.

**DO:**
- Remain calm and courteous.
- Immediately upon receiving notice of any adverse action, contact the Burbank Teachers Association at: (818) 846-1304. Keep copies of all papers relating to the situation.

**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:**
- Halt any conference already in progress if it becomes disciplinary. Reschedule when representation is available. Have the meeting at a time and date that is convenient for you and your BTA Faculty Representative.

---

**Election Results**

**BTA Board of Directors**

**2017 — 2018**

**President**
Diana Abasta - BHS

**Vice President**
Jessica Wertlieb - Muir MS

**Secretary**
Dahlia Dobbertin - Bret Harte

**Treasurer**
Jerry Mullady, Burroughs HS

**High School Directors**
Maggie Hess-Witucki - BHS
David Knatcal - Burroughs HS

**Middle School Director**
Barry Sarna - Muir MS

**Elementary Directors**
Theresa Landin-White - Washington

**At-Large Director**
Michele Dixon - Burroughs HS

**State Council Representatives**
Alexis Weiner - Burroughs HS
Justin Riner - Muir MS

*BTA Benchmark* is a monthly publication of Burbank Teachers Association 3021 W. Burbank Blvd. Burbank, CA 91506 (818) 846-1304 www.burbankteachers.org