

The Grapevine

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East Whittier Education Association

May 2020

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President's Perspective

By Kelly Sunada, Granada

Memorial Day Weekend usually signals a winding-down for us. But, of course, this year is different. While we are still collecting the last of the year's work, closing out gradebooks, and "packing up" until August, we also have an urgency to ramp up our focus. The far-reaching effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are forcing us to pay full attention because the future of our jobs depends on it. The two articles included in this edition of *The Grapevine*, serve as a wake-up call to us all. As an association, we have been through tough times before, but nothing like this. We will need to organize in the weeks and months ahead, and the first step of organizing is educating yourself on the issues. Use these articles as a stepping stone to learn more. Keep in touch with someone listed anywhere within this newsletter. Make sure your site representative has your personal email address. This is one summer we cannot afford to take off.

Pandemic Budget . . . It's Seeing Red

By Missy Michaud, Hillview

The Governor's proposed state budget for the following year comes out in January; in May the state budget revision is presented; in late June/early July the state budget is finalized. Once that information comes out, every year, the District projects doom and gloom. In the past, I've come to you to tell you: don't let the District fool you...there is money stashed in accounts...the state is not going to let the schools fail...it's not as bleak as they are presenting it to be. That's not the case this year.

There are huge cuts coming to schools unless some form of the HEROES Act is passed. If the schools portion of this act passes, the Governor will back fill the short fall...for this year. But if not, we are looking at just under 8% cut in our budget from the state...just over \$7 million for East Whittier City School District. That's bad. On top of the cut in funding, the state will be deferring payments to the schools---this means, the money we are owed in June won't come until July or August.. However the monies owed in August might not show up until ... well ... they'll get back to us on that.

Fortunately the District has Fund 17. The infamous Fund 17, which is now referred to as a savings account, will help to bail us out of the deferral periods. The monies will allow the District to borrow money from that account rather than having to go to the county for a loan or try for a TRANS loan, which is costly.

Every May, after the Governor's May Revise, School Services of California presents the budget to school districts so they can ensure fiduciary responsibility in the out years. This year they told the districts to: "cut the low hanging fruit". "Low hanging fruit"...hmmm. The District has to present the 20-21

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budget to the Board and the county before the end of June. They have to create a budget that is fiscally sound at least three years out. Usually the projections are calculated with a 'worse case scenario' in mind, just in case. The District's 'worse case scenario' for the 20-21 budget projects a staggering **-\$24,293,899** end balance in 22-23 with the projected cuts to funding and no cuts in spending.

Usually this is where I come in and say...well, ok, most of you know what I would say. However ... because times are so incredibly uncertain right now, they are projecting potentially realistic numbers. If there are no funding increases and no cuts in expenditures.

This is where the LOW HANGING FRUIT comes in. The District's idea of "low hanging fruit" is not quite the same as ours. In a panic, the District's first response will be to cut "easy outs:" temps and classified. They do have an opportunity to cut deeper into staffing when the Governor's final budget is passed. They have a two week window to RIF. (CTA is already working with us.) The District would like to raise class sizes, to the absolute state maximum, before accruing fines, to reduce costs. Can you imagine a kinder class with 33...yes, THIRTY THREE little people. Don't forget TK falls in there, too. Grades 1-3 at 32. Are you kidding me?!!! Classified cuts will affect how many IA's are in classes.

I get the "idea" of raising class sizes with this whole Distance Learning thing, because the people making those decisions are not in the classroom, virtual or otherwise. School is not going to be out forever. Can you imagine trying to corral 33 little people, let alone with minimal to no IAs?

We know that our kids have missed a lot of instruction and when they come back to school we are going to have to provide so many different kinds of interventions to help them; smaller classes and groupings are going to be necessary to do for our kids what we need to do to help them get back to some form of normal. We won't be out forever and raising class sizes, even for one year, is very short sighted.

The LOW HANGING FRUIT cuts should happen as absolutely far away from the classroom as possible. We are in the business of kids. They are our customers and we owe it to them to do the most we can to provide the caring and nurturing environment along with academics that will encourage a positive and healthy education and create life long learners.

The classroom is not LOW HANGING FRUIT.

The District is going to have to get creative. They are going to offer a Golden Handshake equivalent to \$50,000. Ten people must accept for it to go through and the parameters are: 60+ years old, 10+ years of service. If you are interested in this offer, please reach out to Personnel and let them know. This is a definite cost savings to the District, but we won't know how much until we see how many people accept the handshake. ESS has gotten very creative and has done a great job identifying almost \$3 million dollars in "low hanging fruit" that is part of the LCAP plan. That's pretty awesome. But it's not enough.

We need like twice that.

The District is going to schedule some Zoom budget presentations to let folks know what's going on, how things look, and how they plan on proceeding. Please remember they are presenting "worst case scenario." Watch for the emails. Attend at least one of those meetings. You are not too busy.

If the education portion of the HEROES Act passes the funding will be back filled for 20-21. We have no idea what's going to happen for the out years.

There is a Board study session on June 1 at 3 pm where they will discuss the budget and LCAP. The Zoom code info is on the District web site. Then, there is a Board meeting on June 8 to approve the budget and the LCAP. The Zoom info will be on the District site. Please attend these meetings. On June 1, the study session, you just listen. June 8 is an actual meeting. It's on Zoom...you don't have to get gussied up or speak, but you can if you'd like

Please check in with your Site Rep for constantly updated information. Please make sure the Association has your personal email so we can keep you informed (if not, send it to: melissaewea@gmail.com). Check out our Facebook page and our website: eweaonline.org for current information. Please stay safe, healthy and informed.

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August Reopening

by Kelly Sunada. Granada

You may have heard bits and pieces of information regarding the start of school for the '20-'21 year: terms such as "20% option," 40% option," or "100% distance learning." **Right now, the only thing we know is that we will start the new school year on August 11th. Everything else, from distance learning to on-campus protocol, is still under review.** The district has developed a process where a series of sub-committees are meeting to learn the parameters of reopening and generate ideas of how best to do so. These committees are comprised of teachers, classified employees, and administrators. Every committee has at least one member from eWEa leadership. The subcommittees are listed below. I have included the names of teachers, nurses, psychologists, counselors, and social workers, as well as the eWEa-selected members who are serving on the committees. There are other members on the committees, but those listed below are members of our bargaining unit. **These people are valuable resources for you to stay on top of what is happening.**

Personnel, Health, and Safety: (Nurses: Teresa Eligio, Connie Lee, Michele Perez. Teachers: Christine Anderson, Rebecca French, Tonya Gunderson, Valeria Gutierrez, Michelle Hamilton, Elena Rubio, Mario Sanches. eWEa: Kim Fischer, Jenny Shelley) The stated focus of this committee is: develop practices and procedures to ensure that students, staff and community members' health and safety is a top priority; develop parameters to address the expectations for **social distancing, workplace cleanliness, and ongoing communication to all stakeholders to ensure sound hygiene practices are being implemented**; develop parameters to address **working conditions at home.**

Instructional Program: (Teachers: Rebekah Barrios, Andrea Carlson, Megan Carrillo, Danny Gonzalez, Brittany Guerra, Tamara Hardy, Karen Hernandez, Sean Jaramillo, Wendy Lessard-Clouston, Sheila Maldonado, Rebecca Mayernik, Chris Mendoza, Darren Meyer, Chris Muetzel, Nadia Najera, Doreen Peterson, Robert Placencia, Kimberly Salo, Jill Timothy. eWEa: Jose Del Rio, Suzanne Mohler, Almeda Rodriguez) The stated focus of this committee is to develop **expectations for a blended learning model** (distance Learning and on-campus instruction). They will make recommendations related to **grading parameters, professional learning and instructional materials.**

Special Education:(Teachers: Julie Aulisio, Sue Baer, Gabe Carrillo, Anne Mary Gilbert, Tonya Gundersen, Cheryl Kalagian, Charlene Martin, Beth Miller, Jason Reyes, Trena Varos, Ali Volen. Psychologists: Jasmine Chavez, Claudia Gonzalez. eWEa: Alisa Harley, Melinda Hidalgo-Carrillo, Patricia Magana-Perez, Missy Michaud, Donna Smith) The stated focus of this committee is: develop recommendations for **additional support to address "loss of learning"**; make recommendations related to the **IEP process and possible compensatory education claims.**

Intervention and Supports:(Intervention Specialists: Liana Cadena, Yesenia Castillo, Erica Contreras, Amy Cronin, Michelle Hamilton, Jennifer Lewis, Jennifer Lopez, Patty Montenegro, Carol Sanford, Mariana Sansone, Jenny Wargo. Social Worker: Jayna Dinwiddie. eWEa: Katie Grinsteinner, Jared Wycoff) The stated focus of this committee is: develop recommendations for additional **support to address "loss of learning" for all Unduplicated students, as well as students who were already attending Learning Center programs at the elementary level and intervention programs at the middle school**; make recommendations to **support the social-emotional needs of any student identified as being in need.**

Family Partnership: (School Social Workers: Yadira Renteria, Monica Cervantes. eWEa: Joyanna Sanchez, Melissa Torres) The stated focus of this committee is: develop recommendations for **before and after-school programming to meet the needs of our families** who do not have the ability to stay home if we implement a blended model; develop **parent education opportunities to support a blended learning model.**

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The subcommittees are large because the issues are many. Each subcommittee breaks into smaller groups to focus on specific target areas. As each committee puts together their recommendations, they will meet with other, related subcommittees to create clarity and consistency.

Once the subcommittees have their recommendations, a steering committee will meet to review them. The steering committee, comprised of **eWEa leadership** (Almeda Rodriguez, Jenny Shelley, and myself), CSEA leadership, and district cabinet, will determine what will go to the school board for approval, and what needs to go to the bargaining table.

Connected to all of this are **two upcoming school board meetings**. The first is a **study session on June 1st**. At this meeting the board will discuss the various issues around reopening our schools, as well budgetary issues brought on by the economic effects of the pandemic and subsequent stay-at-home order.

The June 1st meeting is not a regular school board meeting, so there will be no opportunity to hear citizen comments or concerns. The next regular school board meeting will be June 8th. At this meeting the school board may vote on items regarding reopening or budget. There will be the usual opportunity for citizen comments at this meeting. **I encourage all members to attend both school board meetings to hear first-hand how they plan to proceed.**

It is extremely difficult to undertake such an enormous endeavor under exigent circumstances. Like everything else we have done over the past two months, this is unprecedented. The district is doing the right thing by including all stakeholders in the process; however, **we must be vigilant to ensure that the work of these committees is implemented, (or, at least seriously considered), our contract is adhered to, and that members' rights are respected.**

**FIND
THE GRAPEVINE
ONLINE**
at
eweasonline.org

The Grapevine is published online, with a hard copy for posting at the sites. In an attempt to save paper and the subsequent costs. Eweasonline.org is accessible publicly and has many great links and articles as to what is going on in education today. Check it out if you haven't already.

Important Dates

Tuesday, May 26th
Open Enrollment Begins

Monday, June 1st at 3 pm
School Board Study Session
Zoom code available on District website

Monday, June 8th at 3 pm
School Board Meeting
Zoom code available on District website

Wednesday, June 10th
Open Enrollment Ends