

Happy New Year BOTA Members!!

January 2012

I know it has been some time since I have put out a letter. This has been one busy marching season, coupled with the usual enjoyment and family time of the holiday season. Things have now slowed down for me and I thought it would be a great time to check in. I hope everyone enjoyed their time off and were able to recharge their batteries. I personally love spending this time with my family and readying myself to head into the last half of the year.

Over the last few months many things have happened. We had a visit from our State Senator and he absolutely loved the great things we are doing at Brea Olinda High School. While some of his policy choices may raise eyebrows with our members and the community, at least he can recognize good teaching when he sees it. While his visit might not have convinced him to change his policies or views, I think that a good impression was made for public education regardless.

More recently the December 15th deadline for the revised State budget has come and gone. Several months ago the legislature put together a budget predicated on "assumed" increased State revenues. While those revenues fell short of their assumptions, the lack of revenue was not as bad as some were forecasting. Public education once again dodged a bullet and will not have to endure as drastic of midyear cuts as was once thought. However, some cuts were still implemented. These cuts, as far as Brea is concerned, will mostly affect home to school transportation. The district is still working on the numbers, but they are in constant communication with the BOTA leadership as to how and if these cuts will affect us. As soon as more details become available we will be sure to pass them along.

As we make our way into the second half of the year there are many things on the horizon. The biggest is negotiations. Our entire contract is up for renegotiation this year and we are looking for you to give us some ideas on things you would like to see negotiated into, amended, or removed from our current contract. Each of our sites has very competent representatives. Please feel free to share your ideas with them so they can communicate them to the appropriate people. Your negotiating team will do its best to address your needs, but please understand that some things are not within our purview.

Coming up in the next couple of months we have several other visitors touring the schools of Brea. On February 23rd we will be hosting a member of the NEA Executive Committee, Greg Johnson. Greg is a choir director from Mustang, Oklahoma. He has served on the executive committee for the NEA since 2009. In March, Mikki Cichocki, Secretary/Treasurer for CTA, will also be coming to tour the schools of Brea. It is a great honor to have these leaders come to visit our schools and I hope you all are eager to share the great things you do in your classroom.

During the first few months of school I have started a communication program with our school board members. So far I have met, or have meetings scheduled, with five of our seven elected board members. I have enjoyed the conversations I was able to have with Mr. Hobby, Mrs. Lyons, and Mrs. Hampson. I am looking forward to meeting with Mr. Todd and Mr. Condiff in the next couple of weeks. These meetings are essential for our Association. It is the only way that we can fully and accurately communicate our message, our needs, and our feelings with the elected leaders of our district.

In closing, I want to wish you all the best for the second semester. I can't wait to see you all as I make my way around to each of your sites in the next few months.

In Solidarity,

Joseph A. Bartell
President, Brea Olinda Teachers Association
President@botaonline.org