

November 26, 2014

**In this issue: New Employee Assistance Program Provider, Kaiser Healthy Living Classes, CFT Convention Nominations, News from the Executive Board, Upcoming Deadlines for Leaves of Absence, Sabbaticals, Retirement Bonuses, and more...**

**As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, BUSD Switching to New Employee Assistance Program Provider**

Due to ongoing reports of problems and poor customer service at ComPsych, BUSD will be changing to a new Employee Assistance Program provider as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. The new provider, MHN, will provide access to significantly more mental health professionals than ComPsych and should be much easier for BUSD employees to access. Note that this is a **free, confidential** service available to all BUSD employees and their family members. Much more information coming from about how to access services from MHN in late December and early January!

**Kaiser Healthy Living Classes Coming Up!**

There are three Healthy Living classes offered by Kaiser coming up in the next several weeks: “Healthy Eating”—Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, and “Stress Management—Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>. All three classes are located at BUSD Transportation, 1314 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Attendees are welcome to park in the parking lot on 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

**A HUGE Thank You to All BFT Members Who Volunteered in the Fall Election**

BFT members made a significant contribution to passing the nation’s first-ever tax on Big Soda this November. Thank you to everyone who came out!

**CFT Convention Nominations Open in December!**

Are you interested in getting more involved in your union? Are you interested to see what our statewide union, the California Federation of Teachers, is up to? Would you like to represent BFT at the 2015 CFT convention, learning about important issues affecting teachers across the state and advocating on how CFT should support strong public education in California? Nominate yourself to be a BFT delegate for the CFT convention! The convention is in Manhattan Beach (near LA) on March 20-22, 2015. Nominations are due by **December 17<sup>th</sup>**.

**From the Executive Board: Salary & Benefits, Supporting the MLK Jr. Breakfast**

At the October 30<sup>th</sup> Executive Board meeting, BFT Site Reps had extensive discussion about how salary increases and the cost of benefits interact with each other in contract negotiations. Site Reps will be giving the same highly informative presentation at schools all across BUSD—talk to your Site Rep for details. The Executive Board also voted to donate \$250 to the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Breakfast at HS Lordships on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015. This year’s theme is “Beyond the Dream—Working Together.” This event honors BUSD students and their vision for Dr. King’s work.

**College Scholarships Available—Deadline to Apply Is January 10th**

The AFT and CFT offer several college scholarship opportunities for children of union members (both high school seniors and continuing college students). The CFT Raoul Teilhet scholarship applications for high school seniors are **due January 10, 2015**. Applications can be found at [www.cft.org](http://www.cft.org).

**Are You Planning to Take Courses Next Semester? Course Approval Needed**

In order to receive credit for salary schedule advancement, teachers MUST submit requests for prior course approval to the BUSD Human Resources Department on the required form, including for courses related to earning a Master's degree. This form is available under "Schedules" on the BFT website, [berkeleyfederationofteachers.org](http://berkeleyfederationofteachers.org).

**Get FREE Access to the UC Berkeley Library!**

Any full-time public school teacher can get a free library card, good for all libraries on campus. All you need to do is bring a letter on school/department/district letterhead affirming your full-time teaching status at a public school, along with your California Driver's License or ID, to the "Privileges Desk" at the main library. Your card will be active immediately through June 30, 2015. Go use this incredible resource!

**Do You Plan to Retire Next Year? \$1000 Bonus Available for Early Notification**

Teachers who formally notify BUSD in writing prior to February 7, 2015, that they plan to retire at the end of the current school year will receive a \$1000 bonus. To notify BUSD, teachers should use the separation form available on the BFT website and scan it into an email to Evelyn Bradley at [evelynbradley@berkeley.net](mailto:evelynbradley@berkeley.net).

**Veteran Teachers: Mark Your Calendar for STRS Workshop on January 22<sup>nd</sup>**

This workshop is designed for educators approaching retirement. This is not a sales pitch or a gimmick. STRS counselors will explain the basics of STRS retirement, the three decisions to make when retiring, and what you should be doing to prepare for retirement. The meeting will take place January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 4:00 p.m. in the Multipurpose Room at the Berkeley Adult School, 1701 San Pablo Ave. (at Virginia).

**Request to Extend Current Leave of Absence Due February 1st**

If you are currently working part-time and have a part-time leave of absence arrangement which you wish to continue for next year, or if you are currently on a full-time leave of absence and wish to continue the full-time leave of absence next year, you need to submit the BUSD Leave of Absence form and a cover letter explaining your request by February 1<sup>st</sup>. BUSD is not required to grant extensions, but may do so. If you intend to return to full-time teaching next year, you must notify BUSD by February 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Is Your Sick Leave Balance Correct?**

All full-time BFT members receive 11 sick days each year; part-time teachers receive a pro-rated balance. Additionally, if you worked in another district before coming to BUSD your sick leave balance should have transferred with you. Add up the sick leave days you've received each year in BUSD plus any days that transferred with you, subtract a rough count of days you've used and check that against the balance on your November paystub. If it seems like there is a discrepancy, contact the BFT office for assistance at [bft4tchr@lmi.net](mailto:bft4tchr@lmi.net).

**Calendar of Coming Events**

December 9	"Stress Management" Wellness Class @ BUSD Transportation
December 17	CFT Convention Nominations Due
December 20-January 4	Winter Break
January 10	Deadline for CFT Raoul Teilhet Scholarship Applications
January 22	STRS Workshop for Veteran Teachers, 4:00PM @ Adult School