

UPDATE

www.aalasd.com

Week of March 5, 2012

MORE QUESTIONS, DR. DEASY

On the front page of last week's *Update* (Week of February 27, 2012), we published the letter sent by **AAALA President Dr. Judith Perez** to the Superintendent in response to his letter to principals, dated February 15, 2012, in which he directed them to immediately review all working folders at their respective sites and determine whether all necessary reports were made to law enforcement and/or to the Department of Children and Family Services. They were to complete this and related tasks within 60 days and sign a Principal Responsibilities Confirmation Form stating that they had done so. AALA's letter cited numerous questions and concerns raised by the Superintendent's letter and confirmation form, including serious liability and workload issues.

AAALA received a response from **Dr. Deasy** on February 27, 2012, acknowledging our concerns. He stated, in part, "I want to start out by thanking you for your support of our recent efforts regarding student safety throughout the District. I know you share my view that every effort must be made to ensure that student safety remains a top priority in the daily work of all LAUSD employees, including AALA members." He further commented, "I have taken the liberty of sharing your letter and corresponding inquiries with the Office of Staff Relations which, along with Employee Relations and the Office of the General Counsel, is preparing a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the subject." Additionally, the "Confirmation Form" was relabeled "Confirmation of Completion Form."

The FAQ was supposed to have been e-mailed to principals on February 24. However, a technology glitch in the LAUSD system prevented it from going out until February 28. Here is the link to the FAQ: <https://bes7/schoolfiles/login.aspx>.

While AALA appreciates the clarifications provided by the FAQ, a number of our concerns remain unanswered. The FAQ actually raises additional issues, and the procedure to send information to the District is unbelievably onerous. **Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Superintendent's directive to review "all files regardless of date" is virtually impossible to accomplish within the timeline, given the daily realities of the principal's job and the potential number of files at the site. Where is the District's key strategy, "Support for All Employees"? Reactive directives do not support principals and certainly do not promote children's safety.** We wonder if the Superintendent is simply responding to the media's sensationalism without a clear understanding of the current workload placed on principals.

AAALA's Remaining Concerns:

1. The Superintendent directs principals "to properly maintain all site documents and working folders." The District has never established clear guidelines for what goes in working folders at schools. What plans does the District have to establish such guidelines?
2. What is the legal definition of "allegations of misconduct and/or any inappropriate behavior"? What is the legal definition of "inappropriate/unprofessional conduct"?
3. How does the District plan to ensure employees' rights to privacy and due process?

MORE QUESTIONS (Cont.)

Issues Raised by the FAQ List:

1. FAQ #2: What are the legal definitions of “inappropriate language,” “demeaning treatment” and “potential harm to children”?
2. FAQ #4: If principals are not allowed to delegate these tasks, what other legally-mandated responsibilities may they give up in order to complete the Superintendent’s directives within the given time? Supervision of instruction and teacher evaluation? Student supervision? Required paperwork? What extra compensation will be provided to principals who may have to complete the directives in the evening or during weekends?
3. FAQ #10: Employees’ personnel files are maintained at LAUSD offices, not individual schools. Per the Education Code, an employee has the right to review his/her own personnel file. The FAQ implies that employees have the right to view nonpersonnel files. Is this the District’s intent? If so, what legal authority gives them the right to view a principal’s confidential file?

The Process to Send Information to the District:

The faulty assumption that principals have the equipment and wherewithal to scan and upload files of documents to a website shows the extent to which some of our senior staff members are out-of-touch with those in the field. Is the District planning to purchase scanners for schools? Will the District train principals to use them? Local Districts will have to be prepared for an onslaught of requests for assistance. Will LD Superintendents have access to technical experts to avoid the glitches the District itself experienced in getting the FAQ List e-mailed to principals?

AALA eagerly awaits the District’s timely responses to these concerns and questions. We will keep you informed in future issues of *Update*.

WE GET LETTERS. . .

Among the enormous number of phone calls and e-mails that AALA has received regarding the Superintendent’s February 15 directive is the one below from an anonymous principal who expresses so vividly the concerns of many. We received this correspondence on February 28, 2012.

I had originally asked my APs to review the files in their offices. Our newest information today states that only the principal can review files. Therefore, I will have to re-review those files. This weekend, I reviewed over 100 files for TAs from the 1990s only.

This is the first time in my eight years as principal that I truly feel I won’t be able to complete everything that needs to be done between February 15 and April 16: Complete child abuse training, peruse all personnel files and then act on them as needed, 100th Day of School, RTI2 meetings, Charette, reconfiguration meetings, textbook ordering, African American history program, SDES mandatory trainings, SSC meetings, Read Across America, pilot evaluation trainings and passing the calibration test for the pilot, California Writing Assessment, Coffee with the Principal, principals’ meetings, principal leader meetings, CEAC/ELAC meetings, complete the budget process in 10 working days, complete the informal and formal observations as well as pre- and post-conferences for the pilot teachers, complete the Stulls and conferences for the nonpilot teachers and support personnel, complete my own Individual Growth Plan activities, deal with the reconfiguration process, meet with teachers to discuss data, staff meetings, meetings with lead teachers, Leadership Team meetings, Consolidated Charitable Campaign, etc.

I can’t work over Spring Break because I am going back East to visit my son. I take everything I do very seriously. I am nervous about certifying that I completed the file review when I have no clue where more than half the files are. My school is very large and used to be even larger. We are looking at literally hundreds of files.

Any thoughts on how not to go crazy over this?

HEALTH BENEFITS FAQ

Topic: Dependent Child Coverage After Age 19

Why is there confusion about dependent coverage to age 26 and our LAUSD health plans?

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA 2010) extended coverage for dependent children up to age 26. However, the ACA does not apply to retiree plans. This means that the District’s Medicare Advantage plans are not covered by the ACA. The confusion arises because some medical plans include both active employees and retirees. Retirees in these plans receive dependent coverage to age 26.

How has the ACA coverage for dependents affected their coverage in the District’s health plans?

Prior to the ACA, dependent children were covered to age 25 only if they were full-time students carrying at least 8 units of coursework. The chart below shows dependent coverage extended by the ACA.

Subscriber	Dependent Child's Age	Medical Benefits	Dental Benefits	Vision Benefits
Active Employees	Under 19	Yes	Yes	Yes
	19 to 25	Yes	Yes, if student No, if not	Yes, if student No, if not
	25 to 26	Yes	No	No
Retirees Under 65	Up to 19	Yes	Yes	Yes
	19 to 25	Yes, if student No, if not	Yes, if student No, if not	Yes, if student No, if not
	25 to 26	Yes*	No	No
Retirees Over 65	Up to 19	Yes	Yes	Yes
	19 to 25	Yes, if student No, if not	Yes, if student No, if not	Yes, if student No, if not
	25 to 26	Yes**/No	No	No

*For retirees under age 65 - Dependent children up to age 26 are covered only in Anthem Blue Cross Select HMO, Anthem Blue Cross EPO, Health Net HMO, or Kaiser HMO plan.

**Only dependents of retirees over 65 in Anthem Blue Cross EPO are covered to age 26.

How do I add or remove dependent coverage?

Go to the LAUSD Benefits Administration website at <http://benefits.lausd.net> to download the form and click on *Publications/Forms*. Next, select active employee or retiree. Click on the *Health Plan Forms and Publications* link. Then click on *Change of Dependent Status Form*. Follow the instructions carefully and be sure to attach the required documentation. You can mail or fax your filled-out form and documentation to the District address or number shown.

When will dependent coverage or termination of coverage become effective?

Coverage will begin on the first day of the month after Health Benefits Administration receives your form and required verification. Termination of coverage becomes effective on the last day of the month in which the dependent becomes ineligible.

For additional information, go to the LAUSD Health Benefits website at <http://benefits.lausd.net> or call the Benefits Administration office at 213.241.4262.

MY JOURNEY WITH ADULT EDUCATION

*ALA thanks **Buu Vien**, Wilson-Lincoln Community Adult School teacher, for sharing this article.*

My name is **Buu Vien** and I am a computer teacher and an adviser at Wilson-Lincoln Community Adult School. In 1977, I was 18 years old and the youngest daughter in the family who escaped from Vietnam by boat together with six of my family members. The engine broke down and the boat drifted in the Gulf of Thailand. One of my brothers, 23, and four other children died of dehydration. We got picked up by a Norwegian ship that took us to a refugee camp in Malaysia. Living nearly two years in the camp, six of us finally arrived safely in the United States in search of our golden fortunes and the American dream. Like most immigrants, we started taking ESL classes at the local community adult school.

We only had a simple desire: to seek a better life—a chance for education, a chance to work and raise a family in peace. The life challenges we battled were not that much different from the struggles all other immigrants face when they first arrive in a new country. I suppose most immigrants, regardless of origin, would have to deal with obstacles such as the language barrier and the unfamiliar customs. However, we've really appreciated the adult school education which provided the elementary basic skills, vocational subjects, and English to all of us who had arrived. The positive classroom environment encouraged the learners to participate in the use of English because there was no fear of criticism in a joyful and non-threatening environment; it effectively reduced anxiety and increased motivation in the classroom for optimal learning.

I considered myself to be one of the luckiest among all my family members. With my teacher's recommendation, I was hired as an educational aide at the adult school. As I continued my studies, I was able to pass the exam to become an Office Assistant. In order to advance in my career, I continued for twenty years earning my A.A. degree, BS degree, and recently completing my Master's Degree in Educational Counseling, as well as my Pupil Personnel Services credential.

Since I am working with adult education, I have close contact with new immigrants who reflect my past. I have seen students struggle to learn a new language, and at the same time work at low-paying jobs. Many of them are earning just a few dollars a day at the sewing factory doing menial labor. They leave class early to catch the bus to work or take care of other family obligations. One common mission is to provide food on the table and/or support the families in their own countries. They understand that they must continue their studies if they want a better job or to pass the US citizenship exam in order to sponsor their family members to reunite in America. Many of the parents need to improve their English if they want to communicate successfully with their children. As we all know, talking and listening play major roles in children's school success. They may not know enough about the subject to help the child with a specific assignment, but they can help nonetheless by showing that they are interested and monitoring their work for completion and praising their efforts. Over the years, I've assisted so many adult students by writing brief notes to their children's teachers. With their continuing studies, they gradually feel comfortable in volunteering for classroom activities and attending school events which have created great settings for parents and teachers to get to know each other.

As an adult educator, I cherish the opportunity to teach because I believe that I can make a difference in students' lives. I perceive that teaching is a noble profession that allows me to share my knowledge and expertise. I also feel very grateful that I am able to counsel these students and help them to strive and succeed through this difficult period. Not everyone has many opportunities to live a better life and make the most of their blessings. I have appreciated adult education like a treasure; it has made the difference in my life and countless others. In fact, adult education has helped me not only to survive here in America, but it has given me the tools to flourish!

NEW HOMEWORK POLICY

Three committees made up of District staff, members from UTLA and AALA, as well as LAUSD parents have been actively working on recommendations regarding LAUSD policies on homework, A-G graduation requirements and standards-based promotion since October 2011. Opportunities were provided for parental input at four locations on February 23, 2012, and March 1, 2012.

After reviewing and discussing articles and research on homework and gathering input from their stakeholders, the committee made four major recommendations which will be presented to the Board in March 2012.

1. Homework assignments will comprise no more than 20% of a student's academic letter grade.
2. A distinction must be made between routine daily homework and projects/long-term assignments.
3. Schools may establish local guidelines with input from all stakeholders.
4. There are maximum time allocations for homework per grade level.

The District intends on reaching out and encouraging more input from all stakeholders through the distribution of a brief online survey on Monday, March 5. Stakeholders will be allowed to anonymously complete the online survey and the results will be shared with the committees. Please note that there are some questions that are specific to teachers and parents that will only be shown to those who identify themselves as such. To access the survey go to www.surveymonkey.com/s/HMWK_A-G_SBP.

DO WE HAVE NO OPTION?

AALA thanks an anonymous Continuation High School principal for contributing to this article.

Encroachment is a term that has been used lately in reference to the Options Schools Program. It is a word that has several synonyms: infringement, violation, advance, intrusion. It is interesting that our District leaders choose to use this term in reference to the programs that serve our most at-risk students. It is as if these programs, and the students who are supported and encouraged by them, are foreign invaders, infringing on the rights of the children on our traditional campuses.

In reality, the Options Schools are more like the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of a hospital. Patients in an ICU cost many times more than the average; they require more medical specialists and more support staff; they need sophisticated equipment not used by the typical patient; yet, their treatment is never seen as an encroachment—something that needs to be eliminated. The ICU, instead, is where patients receive extra care and support. It is a place for extreme cases and for a last chance at life. Yes, some patients in the ICU are there because of their own poor choices (obesity, addiction, etc.), while many are there due to diseases over which they had no control or accidents.

Indeed, we can liken our Options Programs to an ICU. Options Schools also work with some students who, in their youth and inexperience or their lack of parental guidance, have not made wise decisions. Perhaps they did not attend school regularly, failed to complete coursework or were just too disruptive. Many are there through no fault of their own. Some may be wards of the court, in foster care, parents, caregivers for siblings, have medical conditions or are too emotionally fragile for a large campus.

NO OPTION (Cont.)

Yes, like school districts, hospitals are also trying to rein in costs. However, they are doing so by stressing preventive care, not eliminating their ICUs. People who get regular checkups and live a healthy life style are less likely to be hospitalized and less likely to need the ICU when they are admitted. Over time, this preventive care will be reflected in lower costs for hospitals. Likewise the same is true for our students. Those who learn to read by fourth grade, who establish good attendance patterns and come from stable homes, are less likely to need the Options Programs in secondary school. Strengthening the traditional school program will eventually reduce the need for options programs. However, in the interim, we cannot leave our most vulnerable students with no safety net and **NO OPTION** to complete their high school education. Is this what we, as a District, have become?

KINDERGARTEN READINESS—THE CASE FOR PRESCHOOL

There has been much discussion this past decade on the age when a student is ready for kindergarten. As the kindergarten curriculum has been strengthened and has become more demanding, the age for enrollment is slowly increasing across the country. This is to give young children more time to develop the social, physical, emotional and intellectual skills necessary to achieve in our standards-based kindergarten classrooms. During this dialogue, one thing has remained crystal clear: the preschool experience helps prepare children for the rigors of elementary school. In fact, research continues to provide irrefutable evidence that children who attend a quality preschool program have higher test scores and graduation rates, better social skills, less grade repetition, lower enrollment in Special Education, increased earnings, less criminal convictions and decreased rates of smoking. These advantages apply to all socioeconomic groups, not just those children who come from a poor family; however, students from very wealthy backgrounds and more stimulating environments who do not go to preschool tend to achieve, as a group, as well as those who do.

As part of his budget development, the Superintendent has suggested reducing or eliminating the Early Childhood Education Division. The six programs offered by the Division (Early Education, Cal-Safe Infant Centers, State Preschool, School Readiness Language Development, Ready for School and Preschool Collaborative Classroom) serve more than 30,000 students at 473 sites throughout the LAUSD. It is the largest early childhood education program in the State of California and provides health screenings and periodic assessments, health education for parents and nutrition. If the ECE Division is eliminated, what will happen to these children, many of whose parents cannot afford private preschool? By eliminating our preschool programs, sadly, we will be wasting the most formative years in the development of a child's brain; the time when the foundation for the capacity for learning is developed. Children without a quality preschool experience enter kindergarten at a disadvantage and almost never catch up, leading to a life of underachievement.

We ask the Superintendent to seriously consider the ramifications of this proposed budget cut. Does he really want to **eliminate the bridge that leads children to success in kindergarten and beyond?**

Explore AALA's Website at www.aalausd.com – 2012 AALA Elections

Did you know that 2012 is a major election year for AALA? Elections will be held in April for President, Adult Director, Elementary Vice President, Secondary Vice President, and Supervisory Director? Check out the election calendar on the left side of the home page under the *Calendar* menu. If you're thinking about running for office, you can even access a self-nomination form.

OVERPAYMENT LETTERS MAILED!

As of February 27, 2012, some LAUSD current and past employees (including retirees) will be receiving letters from payroll requesting reimbursement for overpayment that occurred in past years. The letters are customized and will contain information on the reason for the overpayment. Back-up documentation is being sent with the notification to clarify the nature of the overpayment and when it occurred. Three manners in which reimbursement can be made are listed below and explained in the notification:

1. If the overpayment is \$200 or less for ACTIVE employees, auto-collection will be made on the next pay check.
2. If the overpayment is more than \$200 for either ACTIVE or SEPARATED employees, three options will be given for repayment.
 - a. Payment in full
 - b. District proposed repayment plan
 - c. Employee proposed alternative repayment plan
3. In the case of most substitute or part-time workers, the employee will be given two options for repayment.
 - a. Payment in full
 - b. Employee proposed alternative repayment plan

Letters will be sent in priority order based on the overpayment amounts. Letters for employees with overpayments greater than \$10,000 were sent out February 27, 2012. For questions, call 213.241.6670.

IMPORTANT DUE DATE—MARCH 7, 2012

The completed **AALA scholarship applications** of seniors from traditional high schools and options schools and adults completing their high school requirements are due Wednesday, March 7, 2012. Encourage your students to submit their applications by the deadline so that they can be considered for one of this year's scholarships.

Community award nomination forms are also due on Wednesday, March 7, 2012. Don't miss out on this opportunity to nominate a deserving community volunteer (individual or group) for one of the 2012 awards. The nomination form is available on the website. Just go to <http://www.aala.us/aala-initiatives/community-recognition/>, click on Community Volunteer Nomination Form, complete and submit for consideration. Should you have questions about either of these items, please contact **Gema Pivaral** in the AALA office at 213.484.2226 or gpivaral@aala.us.

PHI DELTA KAPPA INVITATION

The USC chapter of Phi Delta Kappa invites all LAUSD administrators to its dinner meeting on March 9, 2012, which will take place at the USC Davidson Center Vineyard Room at 5:30 p.m. The guest speaker will be **Dr. Julie Marsh**, who will discuss her research on data-driven decision-making and pay for performance. For further information, please contact **Guillermina Jauregui** at 323.633.3010 or gjauregu@lausd.net.

RETIREMENT CELEBRATION

Congratulations to **Odessa Taylor**, who will be celebrating her retirement on Saturday, April 14, 2012, from 7:00 p.m. – Midnight, at the Marina del Rey Hotel, 13534 Bali Way, Marina del Rey, CA. Odessa retired February 3, 2012, as a Coordinator in the Leadership Academy after 33 years in the District. She previously served as principal of Virginia Road Elementary School. For more information, contact **Bunny Withers** at bunnywithers@gmail.com.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Minimum Qualifications: Candidates are responsible for making sure all the District requirements have been met. Please do not contact AALA for information regarding positions; use the contact phone number provided in the announcement. To view the following positions, go to http://certificated.lausd.k12.ca.us/admin_vacancies. Select School-Based or Non-School-Based positions and click on any position to view the specific flyer.

CERTIFICATED POSITIONS

Instructional Specialist

John H. Polytechnic High School, MST 40G, Temporary Adviser, B Basis. For information and application procedures contact **Ari Bennett**, Principal, at 818.394.3600. **Filing deadline is Friday, March 9, 2012.**

Coordinator, Instructional Data

Local Educational Service Center (5 positions), MST 41G, Temporary Adviser, B Basis. For information and application procedures call 213.241.6886. **Filing deadline is Monday, March 12, 2012.**

Coordinator, Literacy/English-Language Arts (ELA)

Local Educational Service Center (10 positions—5 elementary, 5 secondary), MST 41G, Temporary Adviser, B Basis. For information and application procedures call 213.241.6886. **Filing deadline is Monday, March 12, 2012.**

Coordinator, Mathematics Program

Local Educational Service Center (10 positions—5 elementary, 5 secondary), MST 41G, Temporary Adviser, B Basis. For information and application procedures call 213.241.6886. **Filing deadline is Monday, March 12, 2012.**

Coordinator, Title I

Local Educational Service Center (10 positions—5 elementary, 5 secondary), MST 41G, Temporary Adviser, B Basis. For information and application procedures call 213.241.6886. **Filing deadline is Monday, March 12, 2012.**

PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED POSITIONS

POSITION	LOCATION	CONTACT	DEADLINE
<i>INSPECTOR GENERAL</i> , Classified Senior Management Position	Administrative Offices Beaudry Building	213.241.5549 Katie.wong@lausd.net Anna.forsberg@lausd.net	Until filled
<i>COORDINATOR, ELD- COMPLIANCE</i> , 5 positions, MST 41G, B Basis	Local Educational Service Center	Administrative Assignments 213.241.6886	5:00 p.m. Monday March 12, 2012
<i>COORDINATOR, ELD- INSTRUCTION</i> , 5 positions, MST 41G, B Basis	Local Educational Service Center	Administrative Assignments 213.241.6886	5:00 p.m. Monday March 12, 2012
<i>SPECIALIST, INST. TECH.</i> , 5 positions, MST 38G, B Basis	Local Educational Service Center	Administrative Assignments 213.241.6886	5:00 p.m. Monday March 12, 2012