

# LVEA TODAY



## COVID-19

After experiencing wind, fire and smoke for these past two school years, we thought we'd get a break! Now it's COVID-19 and we're being asked to respond in a manner that is way beyond the call of duty! But that's what we do. While none of us anticipated these crises, we'll face this latest challenge and help our students in the best way possible.

Yes, there have been changing sets of directions from the district...sometimes on an hourly basis. A lot of that is because this COVID-19 situation has rapidly changed and guidance from LA County, our state and the feds has been all over the place. Here's the best that we can decipher: Last Friday, March 13, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-26-20 which stated the following (among many things):

- Schools are critical to the daily lives of many Californians
- School Districts (LEA) will continue to receive state funding
- LEAs will continue to pay its employees
- LEAs will continue delivering high-quality educational opportunities to students to the extent feasible through, among other options, distance learning and/or independent study

We have received some updated information this week from the state but it builds upon the Newsom's preference to offer distance learning.

**Special Education:** On March 18, LVEA became increasingly concerned about the expectations and workload placed on our SpEd teachers and support staff and issued a Demand-To-Bargain to resolve these concerns. Your Bargaining Team was already scheduled to meet on March 25 and the District has agreed to discuss these concerns. In the meantime, the District has also agreed to reassess these expectations placed on our SpEd professionals. On March 25, we will work on a Memorandum of Understanding for all employees during this COVID-19 crisis.

This is a huge change in the way we educate our students. We all need to find creative ways to meet the needs of our students now in a distance learning format. The vast majority of us were not trained to do this. Please be patient with yourself. You'll probably stumble (multiple times), pick yourself up and figure out how to improve over the next few weeks.

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You are being asked to do your best, so take a deep breath, try to relax and do the best you can for your students while maintaining sanity. How long will this last? As I write this, Ventura County just closed its schools through May 4. The District has told us to prepare for two weeks of this but it'll probably be longer – i.e. through spring break or possibly the end of this school year. Hang in there, keep yourself and your family physically and mentally healthy and we'll all get through this together!

## Measure V

LA County is still counting votes for Measure V and it's too close to call! Recall that a 55% affirmative vote is needed to pass. As of Tuesday night, March 18, we're at 54.78% for LA County but that drops to 54.47% overall when Ventura County votes from Bell Canyon are factored in - only 44% of their voters supported Measure V. So we're at 54.47% with 55% needed (no rounding) to pass this important bond measure. The next scheduled update is this Friday, March 20 but we're not sure if the vote count will continue since the county is now closed because of COVID-19. Stay tuned for more updates - we really need this source of facilities money!

## District Ed Services Staffing Do We Really Need This High Level?

The District recently announced that Steve Scifres will become the new Assistant Superintendent of Personnel starting this July, replacing Rose Dunn who is retiring. Congrats to both! The District has also announced its desire to replace Steve in Ed Services with a new director that will focus primarily on elementary curriculum. With all the new elementary adoptions over the past years, there is no doubt that our elementary teachers need educational support. Even though the Go Math, CCC, Social Science and Next Generation Science curricula (along with a new report card) have been adopted, our teachers definitely need help to ensure these are all implemented effectively.

LVEA does question the need to add another manager to Ed Services. At the moment, we have five: Assistant Superintendent, three Directors and one coordinator. Going back 10-20 years, we typically had 2-3 managers in Ed Services and our enrollment was higher! This staffing has increased lately based on one-time funding and many curriculum adoptions. With Next Gen Science curricula selected for next year, we'll have a break for a few years in terms of major adoptions. We're not convinced that this high level of managerial oversight is necessary.

For most of the past 30 years, we have been told that the district would go broke within the next few years. With the exception of the recession ten years ago, we've ended up in very good shape financially. Now we're being told that we have to make major cuts and the vast majority of them will take place in the classroom - are you feeling the class size squeeze? We've been told (once again) to prepare for a difficult financial road over the next few years. Are these latest concerns real? If so, why are we keeping Ed Services staffed at such a robust level while classrooms, students and employees are getting cut? Shouldn't we cut "away" from the classroom?

All of our teachers, counselors, psychologists and other certificated staff need support but why can't we trim Ed Services management back to past levels while providing support for elementary and secondary employees? We've done this for years. The District counters that we now have EdX and the importance of numerical accountability. We simply contend that inspiring, safe and manageable classroom settings are more important than more managerial oversight!

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