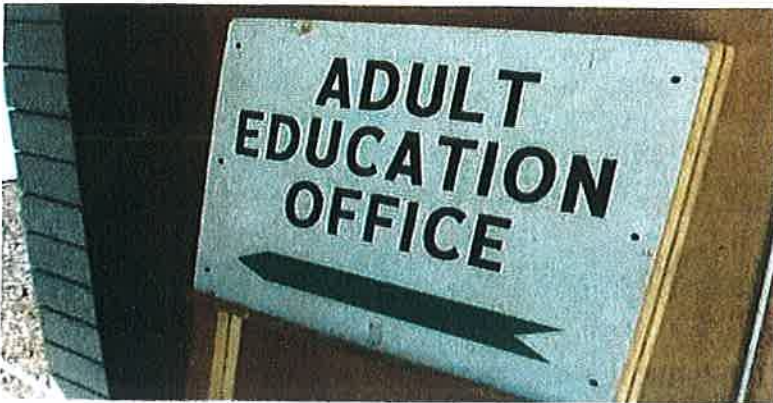


BHUSD Ending Adult School, Teachers Not Informed

Though the district has decided to end most adult education courses, it has yet to inform adult school instructors.



Beverly Hills, CA

By Laurie Lande (Open Post) - April 26, 2011 7:34 am ET

Beverly Hills Adult School instructors have not been formally notified of the Board of Education's April 12 decision to disband most of the district's adult school program.

Keith Johnson, who has taught photography classes at the school for six years, is one of two instructors who contacted Patch to say that teachers have not been told that aside from the limited English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, the adult school will close after the current term.

"From your story in Patch I was aware of the proposal [to end the adult school program], but it wasn't until a student informed me during a field trip that we were closing for sure," Johnson said. "I emailed the HR department and a board member but did not get a reply."

As Patch reported last month, the Beverly Hills Unified School District on its adult school last year and has projected an even greater loss this year.

In an effort to end those losses at a time of reduced state funding, board members voted to end the program. The ESL program was spared partly because it is taught by two credentialed teachers; state law requires that credentialed staff be notified by March 15 of a potential layoff, with actual layoffs by May 15.

Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Dawnalyn Murakawa-Leopard told Patch that her department has prioritized meeting "legal and statutory timelines" in notifying district employees affected by layoffs.

"Our adult school teachers, who are hired on an hourly as-needed basis, fall under different timelines and requirements [than credentialed instructors]," she said. "We will take steps to provide them with the appropriate notifications in as efficient and timely a manner as possible."

The board still has to make a final determination on the status of Director of Adult Education Pat Escalante. The board voted to include her on the list of credentialed employees that may be cut.

As the adult school has lost money under Escalante's leadership, it seems appropriate that she be cut along with the adult school instructors. Moreover, teachers such as Johnson say that marketing efforts for adult school programming have lagged since Escalante took over a year ago.

His columnist also suggests that district staff post a notice on the adult school website informing potential students—and their teachers—that this is the last term for classes. The site's main page has a section for "District News and Announcements," but there is nothing there pertaining to the adult school's closure.