

First of all, thank you so much for accepting a position with BVUSD and becoming a part of our small, tight-knit teacher family and educational community. You are eligible to join us as part of our local union, Bear Valley Education Association (BVEA). When you join our local union, you also join our state and national unions, CTA and NEA, respectively.

If you're wondering what you "get" by being in the union, here are the most important benefits:

1) **Collective Bargaining Power:** The three unions work at the local, state, and national levels to protect your rights against unfair labor practices, improve your work conditions and benefits, and increase salaries. Since 2021, our current negotiating team has worked hard to close the gap between certificated salaries and the sometimes high costs of living in our mountain community. By participating in the union, you support us and the momentum we've worked so hard to build. We've secured 18.83% in on-schedule raises, an additional 3% in off-schedule raises since that time (1% in 21-22 and 2% in 23-24), and \$3,000 in increases to the health and welfare cap, as well as various improvements to our contract's language and over \$50,000 of increases to our Schedule C stipends (coaches, etc). Without a union, the only voice you have is your own, and we all know how much power one person has when going up against a corporation or large financial entity, such as a school district. Without union members willing to serve, we are also underrepresented. If you decide to join, please get involved in any way you can!

2) **Voting Power:** One of the most important ways you can get involved is to vote! By paying dues, you are allowed to vote in all BVEA elections such as cabinet elections (which you can also run for), calendar approval votes, and contractual language issues including MOUs (Memorandums of Understanding) that impact the greater membership. The membership also votes to ratify all proposed changes to the salary schedule, as well as Health and Welfare benefits. Although your "side" or candidate might not always win, it's important that you remain a part of the democratic process at the most basic, local level. This is crucial to having a voice in your profession!

3) **Having a Voice:** As a member, you will be invited to participate in surveys, as well as all general membership meetings, where you have the right to have your voice heard about various workplace issues. In addition to these twice per year meetings, you are also able to email or call me, your site rep, or other members of the cabinet. If you have a concern and need someone to listen, or a legal **grievance** that needs to be filed with CTA, we're here to help, even if you're probationary. Members have access to a general directory with the contact information of the executive board and their site rep(s). Please remember that our primary function as a union is **upholding the contract**. If you aren't sure that an issue you have is contractual, please search/review this document: [2022-25 BVEA Contract Final](#). If you aren't sure about a particular topic after reviewing the contract, please ask me, and if I don't know, I will find out for you. Just remember that site issues that are **non-contractual** should be taken to your direct supervisor (principal) first.

4) **Access to Member Events:** We have member only events and are looking at continuing to increase informal membership engagement at other times than the "End of the Year Party." Last year, we had a mixer at Nottingham's, a field trip to the "Getty Center" in LA, a bowling party at "The Bowling Barn," a paint party at "Big Bear Board and Brush," and our end of the year bash at the beautiful Shay Meadows Ranch. These events are provided either for free or at a severely discounted rate to BVEA members.

5) **Access to Information:** Please feel free to visit our new website: <https://www.bearvalleyeducationassociation.com/> for all of the most recent and updated information, as well as past updates (since 2021).

6) **Access to Legal Representation:** Most importantly, if anything were to happen with a disciplinary issue with the district, BVEA would represent you in all meetings with your site and/or district administrator. Beyond that, CTA provides legal representation if you were to ever be in a situation where you were being unfairly sued by a parent/guardian of a student, etc. For more information about legal protections, representations, and services, please see: <https://www.cta.org/for-educators/member-benefits/legal-services>

7) **Access to CTA (and NEA) Member Benefits and Discounts:** <https://www.ctamemberbenefits.org/>
Please see this page for an extensive list of perks such as discounted (and sometimes free) insurance policies, life-events coverage, discounted or free financial services, discounts on hotels, airfare, rental cars, theme parks and more, as well as a plethora of resources at your fingertips in regards to multiple topics including how to access affordable long-term elder care (for yourself) through NEA, as well as student loan forgiveness.

8) **Access to Dependent Scholarships:** Union members who have children or other dependents graduating from BBHS or CT are eligible to apply for a Liston Caldwell Memorial Scholarship in the Spring of their senior year. Students receive their scholarship once they can show proof of enrollment in higher education. We give out this scholarship to ALL eligible children/dependents of members, as long as they complete the scholarship application process and fulfill the basic requirements.

9) **Access to CTA Grants:** If you are a brand new teacher and new to CTA, you are eligible to apply for a \$300 grant to help you with setting up your classroom! CTA also offers many other grant opportunities. See the link below for application information: <https://www.ctamemberbenefits.org/en/Life-Events/Classroom-Setup-Grant>

10) **Support and Unity:** If you're on probation (temporary or P1/P2 contract) and you're struggling with your teaching practice or working relationships with colleagues or admin at your site, please know that you can reach out to us and ask for help. If you feel you need assistance beyond the district-provided mentor program, we can provide you with additional support. We'll do our best to get you what you need to be successful; we want to retain our new hires! Remember, **we are a TEAM**, and as cliché as it is, TOGETHER EVERYONE ACHIEVES MORE. We have more bargaining power in ALL regards when we work together.

We sincerely hope that as a new member of the BVUSD certificated family, you will consider being a part of BVEA, CTA, and NEA. BVEA Member dues go towards paying for cabinet stipends, union conferences, dependent scholarships and a variety of other costs, such as our member engagement activities. We provide a detailed budget during quarter 1 of each school year for membership approval. If you have questions about how CTA and NEA apply member dues, please let me know and I'm happy to provide you with this information.

If you ever have any questions, feel free to contact me. We are attempting to move all sensitive union correspondence to personal email, so please make sure to provide yours when prompted, as well as check it regularly. CTA does all correspondence through personal email. If you do not provide yours, you may not be included in important communications, surveys, and conversations.

As you begin this new journey, I'd like to extend my grateful thanks in advance for everything you will do for the students, parents/guardians, staff and other members of our community on a daily basis. YOU help keep our district moving forward. I truly look forward to meeting you!

Most sincerely--

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