



Edison Bethune Charter Academy

LEADING THE CHANGE

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June 6, 2025

Re: Teachers Union Letter and Union Activities

Dear EBCA Families,

I hope this letter finds you and your family happy and well! Let me be the first to thank you for another excellent school year.

I am reaching out on behalf of the Board and Administration of Edison-Bethune Charter Academy to address a recent letter you may have received from the EBCA Teacher's Union, also known as the Fresno Teachers Association (FTA) and their parent organization California Teachers Association (CTA). You may be wondering why you were brought into discussions between FTA and CTA and the School. We apologize if their letter caught you off guard. Please know that there is no major upset or upheaval happening at EBCA. Letters to families about union business are a common practice of CTA this time of year, which is when unions such as CTA and the United Teachers Los Angeles travel to schools across California to negotiate revised union contracts. EBCA is simply participating in this process right now. As you may know, this is only the third year EBCA has had a teacher's union, and FTAs practices are new to us too.

In these confusing times, we would like to take this opportunity to reassure you that every decision we make, and every dollar we spend, is guided by what we believe will best serve our students. Like many schools throughout California, EBCA is facing significant challenges, including declining enrollment, the loss of one-time COVID-19 program funding, and increased costs, particularly in staffing. Some of our classrooms had as few as fourteen students, which is not how our program is intended to operate. These budgetary cuts have forced us to make difficult decisions to remain fiscally sound for future years. In response, the administration is actively increasing enrollment efforts through community outreach, improved marketing, and partnerships with local organizations to ensure long-term sustainability and growth.

As a charter school, we are responsible and accountable to you and to the State of California for maintaining a balanced budget, which means we are not always in a position to grant every request we may receive from the Union. With this in mind, we would like to share some facts about our programs and negotiations with FTA:

1. EBCA teachers are among the highest paid in Fresno. We review the salary schedules for neighboring school districts at least annually so that we can be assured we are maintaining competitive salary schedules for our staff. We believe this reflects our commitment to attracting and retaining excellent educators.
2. Since 2021, our teachers have received a cumulative pay increase of 24.5% on the salary schedule and an 8.5% one-time bonus. They will continue to have growth opportunities with the existing salary schedule. In contrast, many schools and districts across California have experienced stagnating or declining teacher salaries.
3. Union membership is optional, and only a minority of our employees have chosen to be represented by a union.



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4. The views expressed by FTA do not reflect the opinions of all EBCA staff and we believe they are not representative of our small Fresno community or of a non-traditional charter school program.
5. CTA uses membership dues to fund anti-charter efforts, including a bill to stop new charters from opening: <https://www.cta.org/press-release/legislative-leaders-joined-by-parents-educators-school-boards-and-labor-partners-announce-a-bill-calling-for-a-5-year-moratorium-on-new-charter-schools-in-california>
6. Our class sizes will remain small next school year. No changes have been made to our target class size. All of our classes will remain at or below the maximum number of students that was agreed upon with the union to assure we will have space for increased enrollment.

We also want to clarify some facts about the ongoing discussions with the Union. You may have been led to believe that the Union and the School are in disagreement regarding the resources being dedicated to your child. **Please know that the Union has not made any requests specifically for students.** There have been no proposals from FTA to increase spending on student field trips or educational programs, nor any requests for new textbooks, materials, or smaller class sizes. Despite repeated requests from Administration for specific proposals, there are currently **no formal requests from the Union at all on these or any other issues.**

The only topics the Union has expressed interest in are relaxing the teacher dress code, releasing teachers from yard duty, which would result in less supervision for students at recess, and reducing the number of assessments for students. Assessments are essential for measuring student learning, identifying areas for improvement, guiding effective instruction to support academic growth, and are required by the State of California. We do not believe the Union's proposals are essential to the education and well-being of your children, and we hope you agree.

Thank you for your continued trust in us to put the needs of your children first. Please rest assured EBCA is doing everything it can to conclude union bargaining quickly and for the benefit of all staff and students. Have a wonderful summer break!

Sincerely,

Jere Runciman, Board Chair

On behalf of the Board and Administration of EBCA