

**Berkeley Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent
2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Berkeley, CA 94704-1180
Phone: (510) 644-6206 Fax: (510) 540-5358**

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION – AGENDA*

Wednesday, March 22, 2006

Call to Order The Presiding Officer will call the Special Board of Education Meeting to order at **7:30 p.m.**

Roll Call

Members Present: President Terry S. Doran
Vice President Joaquin Rivera
Director Shirley Issel
Director John Selawsky
Director Nancy Riddle
Student Director Teal Miller

Administration: Superintendent Michele Lawrence, Secretary

Prior to Closed Session, as necessary, staff/employee comments are taken per Government Code Section 54957

Recess to Closed Session (Government Code Sections 3549, 1(d), 54956.9(a) and 54957) and Education Code Section 49819(c)

- a) Conference with Legal Counsel – Existing Litigation/Anticipated
- b) Consideration of Student Expulsions
- c) Collective Bargaining
- d) Public Employee Discipline/Dismissal /Release/Evaluation
- e) Public Employment /Appointment
- f) Liability Claims
- g) Property Acquisition

* Board agenda posted on District website: www.berkeley.k12.ca.us

** The Student Director does not attend Closed Session

The Berkeley Unified School District intends to provide reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If a special accommodation is desired, please call the Superintendent's Office 48 hours prior to the meeting at 510-644-6206

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

INFORMATION ITEMS

These items are intended to keep the Board informed on various District business matters, which do not require action, by the Board.

Item 1.1-I

Presentation from Paul Goodwin on results of the community survey

CONFERENCE ITEMS

These items are submitted for advance planning and to assist the Board in establishing future agenda items. The Board may, however, take action.

Item 1.1-CF

Planning Assumptions for a special tax measure

Open Public Hearing

Motion _____ **Second** _____ **Vote** _____

Public Hearing: Commentary on a proposed new tax measure

Close Public Hearing:

Motion _____ **Second** _____ **Vote** _____

BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

TO: Board of Education
FROM: Michele Lawrence, Superintendent
DATE: March 22, 2006
SUBJECT: Presentation of Findings from Voter Research

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Goodwin Simon Strategic Research conducted a telephone survey of voters living in the Berkeley Unified School District to poll the respondents' knowledge about the School District and to assist the District in assessing the community's support for reauthorizing the BSEP and Measure B of 2004 Special taxes which are expiring at the end of the 2006-07 school year. Mr. Paul Goodwin will present the findings of the survey to the Board and public.

POLICY/CODE

None

FISCAL IMPACT

None

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Receive the report of "Key Findings from the Voter Research" for information.



MEMORANDUM

March 15, 2006

**TO: BERKELEY SUPERINTENDENT MICHELE LAWRENCE
Berkeley Unified School District**

**FROM: PAUL GOODWIN
Goodwin Simon Strategic Research**

RE: Summary of Key Findings from Voter Research

At the request of the Berkeley Unified School District, Goodwin Simon Strategic Research conducted a telephone survey of 600 likely November, 2006 voters living in the Berkeley Unified School District. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish between March 4 and March 12, 2006. The margin of error for this study is plus or minus four percent at a 95 percent confidence level.

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the options available to the District as it approaches the expiration of the BSEP and Measure B special taxes. Specifically, the survey was commissioned to assess whether voters are likely to approve a new measure that would maintain or increase the BSEP and Measure B tax revenues. This brief memo provides an initial overview of the most important findings.

More than 75% Would Support A New Measure To Replace the Expiring Measures

Most importantly, we see in the survey findings that fully 78% would vote in favor of a measure to replace the expiring measures with a new measure that would retain the existing tax level. (A two-thirds vote in needed for approval.) Only 16% would oppose such a measure. Moreover, when we explain that this measure would not raise tax rates above the current level, support rises to 82% with just 13% opposed.

Nearly the Same Proportion Would Support a Measure that Would Increase District Revenues

Seventy-seven percent of voters would support a measure that increased taxes paid to the district by about \$63 per year for the average homeowner. Nineteen percent would oppose such a measure. Results are detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Initial Response to Special Taxes

	No Tax Increase (N = 301)	\$63 Tax Increase (N = 299)
Definitely Yes	50	48
Probably Yes	21	24
Undecided, Leaning Yes	7	5
Undecided, Leaning No	3	2
Probably No	6	5
Definitely No	7	12
Not Sure	6	5
TOTAL YES	78	77
TOTAL NO	16	19

A comparable survey conducted in 2004 by GSSR for Measure B showed it earning 75% of the support, when in fact it ended up with 72% support in the actual election.

Voter Priorities for the Use of the Funds

In Table 2, we see the proportion of voters who ranked each possible use of the funds as a 6 or 7 on a 1-7 scale, where 1 meant they would be much less inclined to support the tax if the funds were spent for this purpose, and a 7 meant they would be much more inclined to support the tax if the funds were used for that purpose.

At the top of the list are items most closely related to teachers and classrooms: class size reduction, teacher training, academic tutoring and enrichment, and teacher salaries. At the bottom of the list are landscaping, longer school days and years, free school lunches, and playgrounds.

Table 2: Percent More Inclined to Support Measure if Funds Used for...

	6,7 Rating
Class size reduction	58
Teacher training	58
Academic enrich for high-achievers	58
Academic tutoring	58
Increasing teacher salaries	57
School libraries	54
Before/after school academic programs	53
Nutritious school lunches	53
Reading teachers	53
Textbooks	52
Preschool for all	52
Instrumental music	51
School counselors	50
School safety/security	48
Program evaluation	45
Computers	45
Parental involvement	44
Emergency preparedness	40
Athletics	37
Playgrounds	33
Longer school year	26
Free school lunches	26
Longer school day	24
Landscaping	16

Conclusion

The survey results certainly suggest that the BUSD should move forward with an effort to renew the expiring special taxes.

The survey findings do suggest that voters are open to a small increase in the amount of the tax over current levels. However, without the ability to say that the measure does not increase taxes, the task of passing a measure may be more difficult.

BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

TO: Board of Education
FROM: Michele Lawrence, Superintendent
DATE: March 22, 2006
SUBJECT: Planning Assumptions for a Special Tax Measure under consideration to reauthorize Measure B of 1994 (BSEP) and Measure B of 2004.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As we are all aware, Measure B of 1994 (BSEP) and Measure B of 2004 will both expire at the end of the 2006-2007 school year. These two Measures bring approximately \$19 million to the district each year. Currently these revenues provide for lower class sizes by funding almost one-third of the classroom teachers K-12. They also support quality school libraries in every school, an instrumental music program for 4-8 grades students, some professional development and some program evaluation, playground and landscape improvements, and site-determined "enrichment" programs at every school such as visual and performing arts teachers, school counselors, academic tutors, athletics and a variety of other programs. Through these funds there are also personnel to help with parent outreach and public information.

Since so many of these activities and programs have been a critical part of our District services to students, the preparations for an anticipated new measure must be done with deliberate thought and planning so that we can maintain those components the community believes are valuable and must be sustained, or add those we feel may also further the achievement of students. Thus, in order for the staff to begin the work to develop recommendations for a new measure certain financial assumptions must be established to be used as the base for calculating the costs and revenues required to provide program models.

Therefore, presented for the Board's review and approval are proposed assumptions to be used for planning purposes:

- 1) The tax base shall be the square foot costs of improvements on residential and commercial properties, and a fixed rate on unimproved parcels in the City of Berkeley.
- 2) At a base rate \$0.2280 per square foot of Residential Improvements and \$0.3436 per square foot of Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional Buildings Improvements; and \$50

per Unimproved Parcel; base year revenues of approximately \$19.5 million are projected from this Measure for the identified programs. This is equivalent to the combined rates of BSEP and Measure B of 2004 in FY 2007. The presumption is that a new measure will not call for a tax increase.

- 3) The yearly cost-of-living index increase applied to the Measure shall inflate at same level as the State statutory COLA.
- 4) This Fund shall maintain a proportional share of the District's required 3% "Reserve for Economic Uncertainties
- 5) Indirect costs shall be charged to the expenditure budget(s) for programs funded by the Measure in accordance with the State approved guidelines for such charges.
- 6) There shall be financial oversight by an impartial community committee.
- 7) The State's contribution to K-3 Class size reduction shall be presumed to continue and not be lowered.
- 8) The term of the Measure shall be ten years and allow for a "low income senior" exemption.

POLICY/CODE

Government Code section 50075 et seq.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Discuss and approve the planning assumptions on which program models will be developed.