



February, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

I'm happy to share with you the Executive Summary of the report prepared by Dr. Linda Wing. Dr. Wing sought to illuminate the history, needs, and aspirations of data and assessment use in Berkeley Unified. Given the change in BREA staff over the summer, and the challenge of successful mid-year hiring for these specialized positions, this year was an ideal opportunity to step back to invite reflection about this important topic.

For me, as the new Superintendent, I recognize the powerful potential for our district of a variety of types of data — whether this is formative assessment information, common benchmarks that can serve as the foundation of teacher teams' shared instructional problem-solving; or program evaluation. As a long-time educator in urban settings, where supporting equitable outcomes is an ever present concern, I hold standards - and especially the Common Core Standards - as a positive, foundational aspect of our professional work. Our constant use of the standards as a touchstone in our work should serve to mitigate against the challenge of low or inconsistent expectations, and the lost opportunities for students when teaching doesn't progress coherently from grade to grade. Using assessments aligned with the Common Core Standards is one important means of gauging our progress towards equitable outcomes.

It's no wonder that [John Hattie has found that it is teachers' "collective efficacy" that is the single most powerful intervention in education](#), with effect sizes far larger than other more well-known initiatives. "The primary (factor in teachers' effective collaboration) is *evidence of impact*. When instructional improvement efforts result in improved student outcomes that are validated through sources of student learning data, educators' collective efficacy is strengthened. Evidence of collective impact, in turn, reinforces proactive collective behaviors, feelings, thoughts, and motivations.¹

¹ The Power of Collective Efficacy, Jenni Donohoo, John Hattie and Rachel Eells; March 2018 | Volume 75 | Number 6, *Leading the Energized School* Pages 40-44.

Dr. Wing spoke with 74 BUSD teachers, administrators, parents, students, union leaders, and community partners to gather a wide view of the current practices and future desires of educators as they relate to research, assessment, and evaluation. Her Executive Summary, which summarizes her recommendations, can be viewed at this [link](#). Her recommendations address the collection, analysis, and use of data, including formative, benchmark, and summative assessment data — and ways to understand and improve our current work together.

In the coming week, Associate Superintendent Bajé Thiara will share plans to work from Dr. Wing's recommendations to strengthen BUSD's commitment to English Learners. This will include a project to create process maps for EL services, as well as preliminary work to make digital student profiles, class profiles, and watch lists that feature graphic displays and longitudinal data

I am very grateful to all the individuals who spent time with Dr. Wing over the last few months. Your insights contributed to these recommendations and will serve as a valuable guide as we restaff the BREA team for next year and build on the department's strong work.

Best -

Brent Stephens

**Executive Summary
of the
Report Submitted by Linda Wing to Brent Stephens and Bajé Thiara
January 14, 2020**

The start of the 2019-20 school year marked the beginning of Superintendent Brent Stephens' tenure at the helm of the Berkeley Unified School District. As an essential component of his entry to the district, Dr. Stephens engaged in a listening campaign. His goal was to learn about the district's assets and aspirations directly from parents, students, staff, and community stakeholders so as to craft a long-range plan for moving the district forward with equity and justice for all. As one means of extending his reach, the superintendent hired Dr. Linda Wing as a consultant to interview principals, district office administrators, union officials, parent organizations, community partners, and student leaders about the data they currently use and the data they ideally want to use to advance their work on behalf of students. The theory is that if the district enables insightful use of the right data at the right time by the right people, then it will realize more coherent, consistent, and sustainable improvements at scale. Progress of this magnitude will in turn more powerfully impact children's academic learning, human development, and life prospects for the better.

Dr. Wing met with 74 individuals between October 7, 2019 and December 17, 2019.ⁱ The vast majority of individuals were interviewed in one-on-one settings for one hour or more. In a few instances, conversations with pairs or quartets took place. Dr. Wing also attended PCAD and DELAC meetings and a presentation by Vision 2020 to the Berkeley City Council.ⁱⁱ As the frame for conversation, data was broadly defined. Indicators related to customer service tended to be the focus of individuals responsible for facilities, human resources, libraries, enrollment, and finances whereas student assessment data, student demographic data, student attendance data, and/or student engagement data were discussed by nearly all other interviewees.

The full report tells seven data stories that emerged from the interviews. They focus on: 1) the Star Early Literacy Assessment for K-2 and the Star Reading Assessment for G3-5; 2) The TCRWP Literacy Program; 3) Smarter Balanced Assessments; 4) Parent Leadership; 5) English Learners; 6) High School Students; and 7) BREA. The stories are illustrative of the key dimensions of the district's data culture and include recommendations that might help to prompt cultural development and organizational growth.

A summary of the recommendations is as follows:

- 1) Provide professional development on formative and interim assessments to increase the capacity of teachers, site and district administrators, TSAs, and staff to make informed decisions about why and which of these types of assessments to use in the future and increase understanding of why and how to better employ formative and interim assessments currently in place.
- 2) Conduct statistical analyses to answer critical questions about TCRWP, Star 360, and SBA assessment data.

- 3) As needed, enrich the district’s TCRWP curriculum and assessment materials with TCRWP products such as its phonics units, English language development toolkit, culturally responsive read-alouds, intervention program, supports for students with dyslexia, and/or performance assessments.
- 4) Organize a “home grown” TCRWP professional development institute that develops teachers’ capacity to implement the new TCRWP materials.
- 5) Document #3 and 4 above, study implementation of the new curriculum, and identify early outcomes
- 6) Offer professional development on SBA: its scientific underpinnings, political context, and usefulness as a summative assessment in the state accountability system.
- 7) For audiences of parent leaders, prepare annual state of the district data reports with special editions that focus on specific student groups such as African Americans.
- 8) Offer parent education on FERPA and student data privacy. Conduct workshops on the same topics for district and school site staff.
- 9) Develop process maps to guide teachers, administrators, and staff in educating English Learners in a coordinated and effective manner. Apply lessons learned to the development of process maps about the education of special education students, homeless students, and foster youth.
- 10) For progress monitoring, invest in creating digital student profiles, class profiles, and watch lists that feature graphic displays and longitudinal data. Priority should be given to developing student profiles of English learners. Relatedly, strengthen data integrity, create a data governance team, and add to the capacity of the data infrastructure with data fellows and consultants to work on one-time projects.
- 11) Evaluate U9 at BHS. Revise the annual student survey as one means of collecting data and include the review of historical documents related to previous efforts to cocoon 9th graders in the 1990s and in earlier decades at West Campus. Include student leaders as evaluation researchers.
- 12) Give BREa breathing space to reinvent its vision, mission, theory of action, and name – orienting all to the use of data to advance equitable and excellent learning opportunities and to track progress towards closing gaps in student growth and achievement. Position BREa to lead project-based teams consisting of members from different departments and schools in order to: a) engage principals and teachers in professional development to increase their assessment literacy, particularly as related to the use of assessment data to inform decisions about instructional improvements; and b) orchestrate studies of the data practices of schools and programs that are narrowing the achievement gap and sharing lessons learned

ⁱ In addition to conducting interviews, Linda Wing reviewed the District’s LCAP, Dashboard ratings, CAASPP data, research applications, assessment calendar, BREa personnel and budget materials, RFEP guidelines, parent-student handbook, and sections of the BFT contract. She watched videos of selected Board of Education meetings and did research on the district’s elementary reading curriculum, new state and federal regulations protecting the privacy of student data, as well as the assessment, evaluation, and research structures of selected Bay Area school districts.

ⁱⁱ Appendix I lists the names and affiliations of all those interviewed and the meetings attended.