

**BSEP PLANNING & OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES  
March 24, 2020**

**P&O Committee Members Present**

Tamara Perkins, *Early Childhood Education*  
Nicole Chabot, *Berkeley Arts Magnet*  
Ana Vasudeo, *Cragmont*  
Jonathan Weissglass, *Emerson*  
Pamela Hyde, *Emerson (Alt)*  
Vanessa Garza, *John Muir*  
Carla Bryant, *Oxford*  
Weldon Bradstreet, *Rosa Parks*

Heather Flett, *Washington*  
Terry Pastika, *King Middle School*  
Aaron Glimme, *Berkeley High*  
Esfandiar Imani, *Berkeley High School*  
Josh Irwin, *Berkeley High*  
Shauna Rabinowitz, *Berkeley High*  
Chelsea Toller, *Berkeley High (Alt)*  
Felicia Bellows, *Independent Study*

**P&O Committee Members Absent\*:**

Chris Wallace, *Jefferson*  
Jane Logan, *Malcolm X*  
Kate Jordan, *Sylvia Mendez*  
Jose Rodriguez, *Longfellow M.S.*

Jennifer Sitkin-Morgan, *Willard Middle School*  
Rita Gaber, *Willard Middle School*  
Evon Williams, *Berkeley Technology Academy*

*\*Alternates and co-reps are not marked absent if another rep is present. Currently there is no representation from Thousand Oaks elementary, and only one representative each from King Middle School and Longfellow Middle School.*

**Visitors, School Board Directors, Union Reps, and Guests:**

Judy Appel, *School Board President*  
Chloe Smith, *Teacher at Willard Middle School*

**BUSD Staff:**

Brent Stephens, *Superintendent of Schools*  
Natasha Beery, *Director of BSEP and Communications*  
Jay Nitschke, *Director of Technology*  
Jessica Lee, *Library Coordinator*  
Pete Gidlund, *Music/VAPA Supervisor*  
Danielle Perez, *BSEP Program Specialist*

**1. Call to Order and Introductions**

The meeting was held online via Zoom. At 4:00 p.m. Chairpersons Bradstreet and Pastika called the meeting to order. Members introduced themselves.

**2. Establish the Quorum/Approve the Agenda**

The quorum was established with 13 voting members present.

Chair Bradstreet asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Rep. Perkins moved to approve the agenda, Rep. Glimme seconded the motion; the agenda was approved unanimously.

**3. Chairperson's Comments**

Chair Bradstreet thanked members for taking the time to participate in the P&O committee process despite not being able to meet in person. He also expressed hope that committee

members' families and extended families are doing well in this crisis we're going through together. Chair Pastika asked members, when making comments, to please state their name before starting.

#### **4. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

#### **5. Approval of Minutes**

*March 10, 2020*

Ms. Perez informed the group that the meeting date in the headers has been corrected, as has the name of the Chairperson in items 1 and 8.

Rep. Bellows moved to approve the corrected 3.10.20 meeting minutes, Rep. Toller seconded; the minutes were approved unanimously.

#### **6. District Update**

*Dr. Brent Stephens, Superintendent of Schools and  
Natasha Beery, Director BSEP & Community Relations*

Director Beery spoke briefly about the agenda, which was kept as brief as possible. The action items have been reviewed in detail at previous meetings and contain only one small change, so each is allotted 5-10 minutes. Longer times are allotted later in the meeting to allow committee members to hear more about Technology, Libraries, and the Music/VAPA programs.

Dr. Stephens updated the committee on the Coronavirus situation. District staff are working under difficult circumstances. The most significant development is that LA Unified has preemptively closed all schools through April and will reassess the closure prior to May 1. This decision presages movement across the state for at least that period of time. Dr. Stephens will be communicating a closure for BUSD mirroring those LAUSD dates later this evening to the broader district community.

Regarding the development of a district plan for distance learning, it has been difficult to contemplate migrating coursework from 800 educators in an online environment. Staff have been conducting wellness checks and phone calls with vulnerable families to provide resources for food, mental health/counseling support, and technology needs. We know that 1,500 families need to receive Chromebooks from the district, and may also have internet access issues. He plans to outline components of a district-wide distance learning plan at tomorrow night's School Board meeting, providing specifics of the distance learning supports coming to all families after spring break.

He and the district are grateful for the overwhelming flood of offers for volunteers to support families and schools. The Berkeley Public Schools Fund has stepped into this breach to organize volunteers, assisting with laptop and meal distributions. The Schools Fund has already raised \$100,000 which is now being used to support vulnerable BUSD families.

President Appel expressed appreciation for the people in the district who are working very hard to bring the most equitable and quality education to kids during this closure. It is a positive that

this district has really been taking equity into account, making sure that we're not offering online learning in ways that will only benefit some students, we are working to not exacerbate the equity gap. The Board members welcome emails and questions from families.

Chair Pastika asked if distance learning would become mandatory at a point in the future, in which teachers are required to provide instruction and students are required to participate. Dr. Stephens replied that the district has been working on a foundation for all students and all teachers, though it's been relatively complicated. For example, 40% of our workforce is now also caregiving. Another challenge is to figure out how the district can support creation of academic content accessible from home, while still remaining connected to classroom teachers. We also haven't yet resolved technology access questions, and until we do that we can't permit teachers to grade or issue for-credit assignments.

President Appel added that the district has so far distributed Chromebooks to secondary students, and elementary students will receive them after spring break. We've also done a good job making meals available to families. These steps are especially important for families who have had a loss of income. Please spread the word to families who may need these resources.

Rep. Graves thanked staff for this work and for prioritizing equity and meals. She asked if there was an estimate of how many students don't have internet access at home. Director Beery responded that the most recent numbers show about 8% of targeted families have trouble with internet access. Dr. Stephens clarified that this is from contact focusing first on families who qualify for McKinney-Vento services and those who qualify for free and reduced lunch, roughly 30% of district. Also, regarding the meal distributions, the district is operating under special rules so that any family with children under 18 can pick up multiple meals at a time, and don't need to prove BUSD registration. Capacity has been manageable, Nutrition Services went from distributing 200 meals the previous Monday to around 600 meals this Monday. We expect that to continue to increase. Director Beery shared that the Berkeley Food Network will distribute groceries to adults at meal distributions as well. Ms. Lee shared that book distributions will also happen at those locations/times starting tomorrow. Mr. Gidlund added that his staff are also working on distributing musical instruments to students.

Dr. Stephens explained that the decision about quarter 3 grading is to extend the deadline for submitting grades by one week, allowing more time for students to turn in work. We are less certain about semester 2 grading. Looking to other districts and even universities, many are opting to make all courses Pass/No Pass, which may be our best solution.

## **7. Recommendation for BSEP Funds 2020-21: Support for Teaching: Professional Development**

*Brent Stephens, Superintendent of Schools*

Dr. Stephens distributed the following documents:

- 2020-21 BSEP Student Support Cover Memo
- Appendix B: Professional Development

Director Beery reminded the committee that we have already approved the TT and that this is the second presentation of the PD plan. The revised cover memo includes any updates in the PD and Evaluation budgets, and the only change is small, to PD, which Dr. Stephens will speak to. Dr. Stephens explained that there is a \$75,000 reduction, because the district has found an alternative funding source for the Literacy Program.

Chair Pastika asked if the committee will be seeing any BSEP updates about costs associated with PD to support implementing distance learning. Dr. Stephens doubted that would be the case. Under shelter in place, everyone is confined to homes. We spend when we bring people in for extended hours, and to pay consultants and substitutes. The PD we'll be offering to learn platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, etc. will be provided remotely during regular working hours. We have TSAs also working remotely doing tech coaching. We do expect costs coming in for facilities cleaning, for Technology to either purchase more or replenish inventory for next year, and costs as some teacher stipends to take on leadership roles to create grade level work. These costs won't be from PD. We may see cost savings in PD because certain anticipated plans can't be implemented, though we are nowhere near that kind of reckoning or level of detail yet. It's possible we could suspend some plans and implement new ones.

Chair Bradstreet asked for a motion to approve the 2020-21 Professional Development Plan. Rep. Chabot moved, Rep. Glimme seconded; the motion was approved with 10 votes in favor.

### **8. Recommendation for BSEP Funds 2020-21: Support for Teaching: Program Evaluation**

*Brent Stephens, Superintendent of Schools*

Dr. Stephens distributed the following documents:

- 2020-21 BSEP Appendix C: Program Evaluation

Dr. Stephens explained that Associate Superintendent Thiara would typically be present for this plan's presentation, but is currently focusing all energy on the district's distance learning plan. There have been no changes to this document from the previous presentation two weeks ago.

Chair Pastika asked, with state testing not happening due to the closures, and because this narrative talks a lot about using state testing data as a focus for teachers, how the BREA Office's work will be impacted. Dr. Stephens answered that the lack of testing won't impact what BREA does, but will impact the data available to do that work. State testing data is a portion of what we use to evaluate school learning. However, we have a rich set of internal formative measures, from Pre-K to Adult Ed, and there is still a large body of work for the team to perform. This work includes supporting teachers in using incoming formative assessments to improve teaching and learning. State testing is not an ongoing live indicator, though some of BREA's tools will be a bit limited.

Rep. Babitt asked if anything has changed with the teachers union contract requiring teachers to use district assessment and data collection methods, giving the district more control over those needed data measures. Dr. Stephens responded that there haven't been any changes to the teacher contract this year with respect to mandatory assessments; the district has guidelines and a relatively good rate with assessments. It is better at the elementary level where the academic

calendar is more clear; at upper levels there are more courses, and so less consistent data to use.

Chair Bradstreet asked for a motion to approve the 2020-21 Program Evaluation Plan. Rep. Bellows moved, Rep. Glimme seconded; the motion was approved with 11 votes in favor.

### **9. Recommendation for BSEP Funds 2020-21: Instructional Technology Program**

*Jay Nitschke, Director of Technology*

Director Nitschke explained that this budget looks similar to what it has been in past years. The goal is supporting instructional efforts in schools, with a large chunk of the budget going to support 6.2 FTE of school computer Technicians, and .75 FTE of the Technology Supervisor to supervise those school Techs. This budget had been supporting half of the FTE of the Instructional Technology TSA. One caution is that this draft plan is fresh off the presses, and they may be able to fund the Instructional Tech TSA wholly out of this budget; this position is partially funded by a grant that will expire next year, but it is too valuable to our efforts to let this position be reduced by half. We are hoping to fit that into this budget as well.

Chair Pastika asked if this proposal has changed in the last couple of weeks from what would otherwise have been presented. Director Nitschke responded that it hasn't really changed; there may have been more time to examine budget numbers if times were normal, but it's very similar to what we saw last year. The perspective is that our current situation will lead to some interesting times going forward, though we can't say what the impact will be on instruction in the 2020-21 school year. It would be well for the district to invest some money in people who know about instructional technology. The district had a coordinator paid from one-time funds a couple of years ago, and it is because of that work that we have the majority of our grades 3-8 teachers Google Certified now. Chair Pastika asked if there are any additional needs for this current academic year. Director Nitschke responded that there are a lot of needs right now, the staff are all in the process of evaluating what we can do and where we need to allocate resources. This change has been too quick, it's only been 10 days and we're focusing on staunching immediate needs in getting technology to students, assessing how many don't have internet, and whether free/low cost offers from providers are a way to deal with that or not.

Rep. Rabinowitz asked if there need to be any adjustments in thinking about instructional technology moving forward, in case a situation like this or otherwise comes up again. Director Nitschke responded that we're in a situation in California where our budgets aren't built to sustain the situation we're in now or even that we were in 5 months ago. It's not currently sustainable and so being able to prepare for earthquakes, health emergencies, or similar is really difficult. BSEP budgets can't absorb what's needed, the GF probably can't either given the general lack of funding in our state. Rep. Rabinowitz noted that corporations are out there offering support, and asked if there are any that could help improve our district's situation. Director Nitschke answered that some companies are offering cloud-based solutions and software through July, and the district is taking advantage of some of those things which can augment our educational program. We are turning down others to have a program that we're able to support for the majority of our educators at least. The biggest need is for broadband WiFi across Berkeley, about which he had talked to City's Tech Director several years ago. More innovative communities than ours have made that happen. Berkeley worked to get it available up and down

commercial corridors, and that wasn't an answer meant to serve families and students. He would appreciate the support of BUSD community members when there are open City Council meetings about bringing 5G internet access to Berkeley, which would be amazing for families. Kids have phones but not broadband, but if they could tether a school Chromebook to a phone with a 5G connection to access Google Classroom, that would be a really powerful learning tool for our students. In Berkeley this is contentious and people are opposing it.

Rep. Irwin asked if it had been considered whether the district could safely open up any school sites, for example limited access to a portion of BHS, where there's better technology infrastructure for kids who most need that assistance, to get kids into a learning environment on par with the homes of more fortunate students. Director Nitschke answered that there are other inherent issues, like the shared bathrooms where contact and germ sharing would still be a problem. Dr. Stephens added that he has been exploring the prospect of small-scale openings with the City Health Manager, for small drop-in centers like tutoring centers which may be able to increase offerings to students with IEPs. However, as long as we are under shelter in place order we can't, and there will always be criticism of bringing any folks together as long as this situation persists.

#### **10. Recommendation for BSEP Funds 2020-21: Library Program**

*Jessica Lee, Library Coordinator*

Ms. Lee explained that this plan was mostly developed before the crisis, and subsequently some items have since been toned down to keep a bit more money in reserve. In response to our current situation: BUSD libraries typically check out around 1,500 books per day, but on the Friday before schools close to 14,000 books were checked out. Staff focused on students who were identified by Lit Coaches as needing books at home. Some students took home 10-15 books or more. The projected impact on this budget is that not all those books will be returned when schools reopen. We will probably lose a lot of textbooks as well. A significant chunk of the budget will be used replacing lost books, and the Schools Fund has also offered funds for this purpose. Rather than increasing site library budgets in '20-21, we will be holding a larger reserve to fill in holes where they show up.

Ms. Lee shared that she inherited a solid program and staffing in her first year heading the Library program, and so any changes for the coming year are just adding to the edges. The most significant change is around the Pre-K bookbag program. The staffing up to this year has been filled by hourly employees, steadily decreasing from three to one person moving from site to site. In creating a salaried position for this purpose it will create stability for the Pre-K program. Preschoolers deserve a quality program and the position warrants the security of a part-time salary. This will be a .5 FTE position across 3 preschool sites, providing story time and checking out books to students.

The other change for the coming year is to increase the hours of the Library Tech at Willard middle school. Each middle school has a full-time Teacher Librarian and a part-time Library Tech doing the "back-room" side of the job while the Teacher Librarian does lessons. They've been staffed in relation to size of the student body, and Willard's student body has grown over the last several years. This plan includes an adjustment from 4 to 5 hours per day to

accommodate the school's growth. The rest of the budget is pretty much as it has been in previous years; sites will still receive annual budgets for book and supply purchases and we are buying most of same databases.

Rep. Graves asked if librarians and parent volunteers could organize drives to replace unreturned books via donation drives. Ms. Lee answered that we will be trying to fill very specific titles in the collections, down to the types of binding and barcoding on the covers. Most often book donations are passed on to classrooms or other organizations and not used in BUSD libraries.

Rep. Rabinowitz asked about how allocations are made to each site for collection and resource development. Ms. Lee answered that the initial distribution is by Average Daily Attendance (ADA), at \$8 per student, so larger schools receive more. Then there are a few adjustments, for example schools with TWI programs get an additional \$4 per student for books in Spanish. Then particularly small schools get a small boost to get them to at least \$3,000 each. BHS gets the lion's share. A portion is saved for central office purchasing of books, the majority of which goes to elementary schools. Library circulation at the elementary level is significantly higher than at middle schools due to the structure and nature of reading at different levels (picture books versus novels, etc.). While the initial distribution is equal, there are also ways for additional books to be purchased for elementary schools that secondary don't have.

Rep. Bryant thanked Ms. Lee for ensuring that we have staff at the Preschools. At a later date, she would like to have a conversation about how the program can provide children who are at risk (which is most of BUSD's Pre-K students) ways to receive and keep books. Ms. Lee responded that before the school closures, she and her staff were planning to write a grant to get more books into Pre-K classrooms. While the book rooms at our three preschool sites have an ongoing funding stream, individual classrooms don't. We want to get more and updated books into these classrooms. She loves the idea of sending books home to keep, and her first reaction to the closure was to buy books specifically to be distributed to and kept by students. These will be distributed to schools tomorrow.

Rep. Irwin asked if we need to commit to the plan to spend the \$80,000-plus to replace books now, as opposed to for 2020-21. Given that funding is so up in the air currently, and that the actual amount needed could vary quite widely. Ms. Lee answered that the initial plan was to use these funds to increase technology in libraries, but at this time there are more important needs than projectors and screens in the libraries. She tried to keep the plan's phrasing vague so that it could apply to either books, or for online resources if the closure goes into next year and we may need to purchase a lot more online services for students. She isn't yet sure what mitigations we'll need, but it makes sense to have these reserves set aside; if it's not needed then we can purchase additional technology for libraries.

Rep. Irwin added that because the state and district budgets have been so rough this year, and in light of the May Revise likely coming in even lower given the current state economic picture, he wondered if we should keep more aside for staffing if things go very badly. Ms. Lee answered that the district budget has been strained over the years, but with BSEP funding we're lucky enough that when other parts struggle it doesn't impact this particular budget. This saves us from choosing between classroom teachers and library staff, due to the structure of BSEP. The funding

for Pre-K staff has floated back and forth between Pre-K site funds and Library funds, and with their cuts in Title 1 funding next year this removes one pressure from their budget. Similarly, Ed Services used to pay for online services that we're taking on, again in recognition that the rest of district is struggling and to bring costs into this budget.

### **11. Recommendation for BSEP Funds 2020-21: Music/VAPA**

*Pete Gidlund, Music/VAPA Supervisor*

Mr. Gidlund began by stating that the main parts of the plan are basically the same as in previous years. This budget will fund the same staff positions from the last few years and continues to pay for deferred maintenance from Measure A carryover funds. The new addition of after-school programs from the last few years continue as well. The exception is an addition of focused equity initiatives using the fund balance built up over the last few years. This is also a response to this committee's feedback, he is hoping to honor those here with these additions.

Equity measures are in place throughout this budget, from programs themselves to how we recruit and hire staff, and these have been there for years. But in the coming year there are targeted lines with dollar amounts behind them to support this purpose. This plan proposes hiring a Family Liaison specifically supervised in and serving the music program. It will provide 10 hours/week to connect with families of color and low-income families. The liaison will help handle free one-on-one lessons, managing connecting students with teachers/tutors. They will make phone calls to keep students bringing instruments to school for classes. This will be similar to OFEE liaisons but in a music program context.

The '19-20 VAPA plan added a BHS drama budget of \$4,000; this year BHS had new leaders for the African American Studies program who reached out with requests for funding for their dance presentations. In response to that request, this '20-21 plan includes funding to support that program. An example of how these funds would be used is to send the Afro-Haitian dance students to present at Longfellow, both as a celebration of African American history month and also to recruit freshmen enrollment in the next school year. These new funds could also supply materials for that department's classes.

The next addition to the '20-21 budget is digital music lab funding. This has been in plans for years, and now with the new A Building construction underway at BHS, we hope to have an empty room in a year or two for this class. This funding would provide materials like computers, musical keyboards, and microphones. Including funding in the '20-21 plan is a way to earmark this funding so that when this class becomes available we can stock that lab. Additionally, Wyn Skeels, the CTE Coordinator, has floated the idea of hosting an after-school class in an empty lab space even sooner, so this funding would also help stock that temporary digital music lab while A Building construction is completed.

Rep. Bryant expressed gratitude for the program updates, and added her concern that through her own informal survey of parents with students who seem to be doing well in music, it seems that most to all of them had private lessons, and earlier than 3rd grade. It's hard for children to begin music in 3rd grade when their peers started in kindergarten. Mr. Gidlund agreed, and explained that there are free lessons available through the VAPA program for students who need a leg up,

the issue has been the management of those and connecting the right kids with those lessons, making sure the teachers show up, and facilitating payments. The proposed liaison position will address this issue and manage those relationships to get students connected to needed resources and help.

Rep. Babitt also appreciated the additions, and offered assistance with any grant writing committee or group.

Chair Pastika asked why the liaison position is part-time rather than full-time, and wondered if 10 hours per week would be enough time. Mr. Gidlund responded that part of the logic is that OFEE liaisons are only half-time at any given site, but further the time allocation was agreed upon in his Music Diversity committee (made up of parents, students, teachers and himself). He had already secured a grant from the Schools Fund to finish the '19-20 school year with a 10 hour/week liaison, but with school closures this may obviously not happen this year. Rep. Irwin asked if VAPA already has someone willing to take on the work at this level. Mr. Gidlund answered that the part-time nature of the position fits the qualifications the committee asked to see (person of color, someone with musical knowledge, etc.), which is to say: a musician who is gigging and who is looking for part-time work during the day. So this is a realistic position that candidates would be interested in.

### **12. For the Good of the Order**

Director Beery thanked everyone for attending. The committee is not slated to meet again until 4/14, but she would like to convene the Steering Committee to revise the P&O Committee Bylaws. At that meeting she also hopes to bring initial plans for the "5% budget" from BERRA funds for staff recruitment, retention, and development to begin in the 2020-21 school year. These would also be presented at the 4/14 meeting, and the 1% of BERRA resources for oversight will be presented at a later meeting. BSEP staff will send out a survey of interest and will announce the schedule.

### **13. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 5:38 p.m.