

**Statement from 3/23/21 P&O Meeting
BUSD BOD 3/24/21 Meeting
Terry Pastika, Alt BHS**

Good evening, my name is Terry Pastika and I am here on behalf of the Planning and Oversight Committee. The P&O is an advisory body comprised of representatives of every school in the District that makes recommendations to the School Board on two special tax measures passed by Berkeley voters that supplement funding: BSEP and BERRA.

- BSEP is a tax measure that generates an additional \$32 million for the District over the baseline property tax, with majority of funds going towards supporting smaller class sizes and teaching.
- BERRA is a tax measure that supports teacher and staff recruitment and retention.

I'm here to provide an overview of the kinds of questions and comments P&O members asked of BSEP and BUSD staff at last night's meeting.

The Superintendent provided a District budget overview that highlighted the additional \$16M in one time State funds recently made available for Covid relief and the numerous spending options being evaluated. Also discussed was the various spending options related to District priorities as outlined by the School Board. General questions were:

- Given that it looks like most of the \$16M is proposed to be spent on staffing and creating new programs, but recognizing that it's only one year funding, will the District then have to find additional funding next year to sustain those new positions or program, and if so what would that amount will that look like. Also, how does adding programs and staff comport with the District's projected \$9M "funding cliff" in 2022-2023 that has been discussed due to declined student enrollment?
- The P&O has been asking ongoing questions about how the District assess effectiveness and success for various programs and comments were made asking that these baseline questions be reviewed and resolved before making significant investments in current or new programs.

Next, given the infusion of the state funding and the unusual funding year, the P&O received a brief and dense outline of proposed changes to the High Quality Instruction Budget that includes Professional Development, Program Evaluation, Classroom Support and Expanded Course Offerings – as well as an update on the budget for Student Support and costs associated with Student Achievement Strategies and Counseling. In recognition of the volume of information the P&O was provided and the time allotted to review, we discussed that proposed budgets were going to come back to the P&O for further review and a vote at the April 13th meeting.

Then, in response to the P&O questions about monitoring income and expenditures in the short term and against the remaining three years of the Measure, we reviewed projections that highlighted that under expected income and current expenditures, the BSEP Measure would end on the positive fund side, however, significantly below fiscal goals. Questions focused on what was the process and when does decision-making happen around when to reassess spending so as to meet end of Measure's fiscal goals.

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We then heard updates from the program managers for the Library, Music and VAPA, and Instructional Technology. For libraries, questions and comments focused on how to replace individual teacher classroom libraries that have been decimated during distance learning and it was highlighted that PTA book fairs at individual schools had been very successful in the past in supporting individual teacher libraries. For Music/ VAPA, the question focused on their fund balance and if it would last the full three years of the Measure under current spending.

As we closed the meeting under for the Good of the Order, commentary was offered on wanting to see continued math support for the Latinx student body, and generally EDL students, as well as encouraging the District to consider different kinds of metrics of evaluations outside of traditional test scores and grades, as those metrics tend to benefit only one segment of the student population. The last point was regarding the concerns about the shortfall in PTA funding and that often PTA funds often go towards salary positions – and the concern about what is going to happen to those staffing positions if the PTA does not meet their funding goals.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide this brief recap. P&O meetings are open to the public and we invite any of you, as well as members of the public, to attend.

Thanks.