

# Maintaining an Excellent Education in the Berkeley Unified School District

Get to know the Berkeley Schools Excellence Program (BSEP) and the Plan to Renew BSEP Funding Before It Expires

Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) serves more than 9,100 students in 11 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, a comprehensive high school, a continuation high school, and an independent study program. The District also has three preschool facilities as well as an adult school that serves several thousand students per year. Berkeley Unified is proud to provide our students with a high-quality education thanks to a notable array of programs supported by the local special tax funding known as BSEP. Community members note that the high-quality local schools are an essential part of what makes Berkeley a uniquely great place to live.

## **A Community Tradition of Supporting Berkeley Schools With Locally Controlled Funding**

Our community is proud to invest in public education. Since 1986, Berkeley has supported its local schools through the Berkeley Schools Excellence Program (BSEP). BSEP is a voter-approved source of locally controlled funding that BUSD counts on to keep our class sizes small, attract and retain highly qualified teachers, keep school libraries fully staffed with books and resources, and ensure all of our students have access to arts and music programming, all in support of student success.



BSEP allows the District to provide enriching academic programs and support a well-rounded education that enables and inspires our diverse student body to achieve academic excellence and make positive contributions to our world.

***Here's how BSEP plays a leading role in maintaining excellent education in Berkeley schools:***



### **High-Quality Instruction — Attracting and Retaining the Highest Quality Teachers**

Teachers are at the heart of providing a quality education and ensuring that students are prepared for future success. BSEP funding has long supported the quality teachers and small class sizes that set Berkeley schools apart. As a result, Berkeley schools have some of the smallest class sizes in the State and our teachers are recognized for their innovative instruction.



### **Essentials for Excellence — Keeping School Libraries Open & Promoting the Arts**

BSEP funding helps Berkeley schools support the essentials for academic excellence, such as supporting instructional technology and ensuring that every student has access to a school library every school day. It also supports a well-rounded education through music and visual and performing arts programming, and provides every elementary and middle school student the opportunity to learn an instrument, express their creativity, or explore their artistic talents.



### **Effective Student Support — Promoting Mental Health & Supporting Struggling Students**

BSEP has helped fund student counseling, mental health services, and tailored student achievement strategies to ensure that every child is getting the specific help they need. By supporting the whole student, BUSD aims to graduate young people ready to thrive in college, careers, or wherever else life may take them.

**To learn more, visit:**

# BSEP Funding Set to Expire, Leading to \$37 Million in Academic Cuts Unless Renewed



BSEP funding was most recently renewed by voters as Measure E1 in 2016 and is set to expire in 2024. Without this dedicated source of local funding for our schools — which accounts for nearly 20% of the District budget — BUSD is facing \$37 million in cuts to academic staff and programs. These cuts would likely lead to teacher layoffs, increased class sizes, and the loss of enriching academic curriculum.

## **A Plan to Renew Locally Controlled BSEP Funding to Maintain Excellent Education**

BUSD is preparing to place a measure on the March 2024 ballot to renew BSEP funding. If approved, BSEP funds would continue to support:

### **High-Quality Instruction**

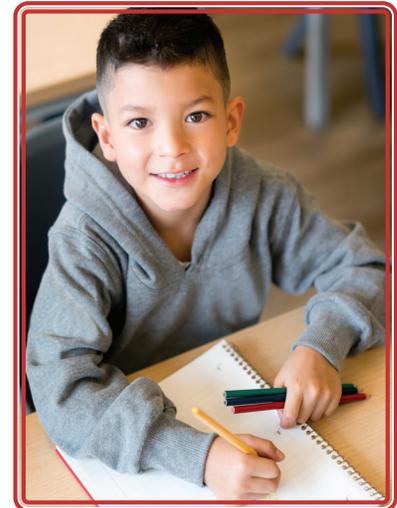
- Supporting innovative instruction
- Attracting and retaining highly-qualified teachers
- Maintaining small class sizes
- Supporting innovative instruction and core academic programs

### **Essentials for Excellence**

- Keeping school libraries open
- Supporting instruction in music, arts, and drama
- Providing modern classroom technology

### **Effective Student Support**

- Providing support for struggling students
- Expanding mental health counseling for students
- Preparing students for college and careers



## **Fiscal Accountability Provisions Keep All BSEP Funds in Berkeley Schools**

A BSEP renewal measure will include the same strict fiscal accountability protections already built into the existing measure:

- Oversight from the independent Planning and Oversight Committee, and outside financial audits to ensure funds are spent as promised
- By law, all funds remain under local control and may only support BUSD schools in the manner described in the measure language
- No funds may be taken by the State
- Exemptions would continue to be available for low-income seniors

## **We Want to Hear from You!**

As BUSD evaluates options to maintain excellence in our local schools, we value your input. To learn more or to ask questions, please contact [bsep@berkeley.net](mailto:bsep@berkeley.net)

