

BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Minutes, Regular Meeting

Wednesday, March 23, 2011

Berkeley Unified School District
2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Berkeley CA 94704

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Roll Call 6:00pm

Members Present:

Beatriz Leyva-Cutler, President
John T. Selawsky, Vice President /Clerk
Karen Hemphill, Director
Leah Wilson, Director
Josh Daniels, Director
Lias Djili, Student Director

Administration: Superintendent William Huyett, Secretary
Javetta Cleveland, Deputy Superintendent
Neil Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Educational
Services
Delia Ruiz, Assistant Superintendent of Human
Resources

President Leyva-Cutler called the meeting to order at 8:05 pm

Recognition

Berkeley High School girls basketball team are the Northern Californian champions. The Lady Jackets play in the state championship game this Saturday at Powerbar Pavilion in Sacramento. Principal Scuderi commended Coach Draper and the Lady Jackets for their hard work. BHS is the only public school left in the championship rounds. Coach Draper thanked the Board and the Superintendent for keeping girls basketball at all three levels. The team collectively has a 3.6 grade point average.

Public Comment

Representatives from REALM spoke about possible facility locations for the Charter school. The Neighborhood Association around the Hillside property spoke about their concerns about the sale of the property.

Report Closed Session Actions

Expulsion:

Student Case No. 1011-19 -082393

Selawsky/Wilson and approved on a vote of 5-0

Readmissions:

Student Case No. OD1011-28 -032296

Selawsky/Wilson and approved on a vote of 5-0

Student Case No. 0910-19-020795

Selawsky/Wilson and approved on a vote of 5-0

The Board gave direction to omit Willard Middle School from consideration for possible facilities for REALM charter school.

The Board gave direction to administration regarding the sale of the Hillside property.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR AGENDA

Selawsky/Hemphill and approved as amended on a vote of 5-0

3.2C Pulled by Wilson

4.1C Pulled by Wilson

4.7C Pulled by Wilson

4.8C Pulled by Selawsky

5.8C Pulled by Selawsky

5.1-I Facilities Plan does not need discussion

Public Testimony

Teachers, staff and parents from Willard made a statement against housing REALM charter school at Willard Middle School. The music, drama and arts programs would be negatively affected. The YSB program would also be displaced. The supervision of REALM students would also be a challenge. No REALM administrative oversight would be located on campus. REALM administrative staff would only be on site for half of the day. The group made comments about the support and positive leadership of Mr. Ithurnburn and Ms. Amos.

A teacher from King spoke in solidarity with Willard to make sure charters will not be located at any other BUSD school sites. A parent from Rosa Parks came to speak about the importance of the TWI program. She stated that it helps her children to learn English and to keep their native culture alive. Another parent from Rosa Parks commended the Board for holding a study session pertaining to English Language Learners. She urged the Board to review the national research in support of TWI programs.

APPROVE CONSENT CALENDAR

Selawsky/Hemphill and approved unanimously 5-0

3.2C

Director Wilson questioned what the policy is for students leaving school during a disaster. At the elementary and middle schools the process is very clear: elementary and middle school children will stay on campus at the school. At the high school, the hope is that students will stay at school, but we recognize that students will leave. We take note and are aware of our inability to contain the students. The teachers will keep track of which students have left. The process is very clear in the K-8 plans. Principal Scuderi is about to meet with the REMS consultant to address the fact that we have an open campus. A third of the students at BHS evacuate to the park.

Bernadette Cormier stated that they will bring the safety plans back to the Board once the REMS consultants review them. Neil Smith mentioned that they are “living documents.” We have made improvements and we now have REMS consultants working with our school sites. Supt. Huyett suggested that the Board approve the plans and review them again when they are brought back after they are reviewed by the consultants. Director Hemphill expressed concerns over the liability if students leaving campus.

Direction from the Board to review the Berkeley High safety plan and have the REMS consultant review it as well and bring it back at a later date.

Motion to approve

Wilson/Selawsky and approved unanimously 5-0

4.1C Item (7) Center for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning to provide consultant and professional development training services for the 2010-2011 school year for the Emerson and Willard schools. The cost will not exceed \$16,000. To be paid from BSEP Fund 04.

Director Wilson asked the following question: What does the organization do? How does their work differ from that of our in house staff? Why are only two schools receiving the services?

Neil Smith responded that the work supplements the work of our in house staff. It fits into our goals and professional development plan. The work is focused on two schools so they can act as flagships for the rest of the schools to observe.

Hemphill/Selawsky and approved unanimously 5-0

4.7C

Director Wilson had questions about the contract with the Children’s Learning Center. “Is the amount for only one student?” Javetta

Cleveland responded, “No. This is a non public day school and the amount is for adding one additional student to the contract.”

Selawsky/Wilson and approved unanimously 5-0

4.8C

Director Selawsky questioned where the money from the sale of district items goes. Javetta Cleveland responded, “the money goes back to the department the item came from.”

Selawsky/Leyva-Cutler and approved unanimously 5-0

5.8C

Director Selawsky questioned if there was a timeline for the bid. Lew Jones will establish a timeline.

Selawsky/Hemphill and approved unanimously 5-0

ACTION ITEMS

2.1-A

Approval of District’s Initial Proposal for a Successor Agreement with the International Union of Operating Engineers, Stationary Engineers, Local 39

Staff Recommendation: Allow public to review, approve the request to negotiate, and direct staff to establish parameters to negotiate.

No objection

Daniels/Hemphill and approved unanimously 5-0

2.2-A

Initial Proposal for a Successor Agreement from the International Union of Operating Engineers, Stationary Engineers, Local 39

Staff Recommendation:

Acknowledge receipt of Initial Proposal for a Successor Agreement from The International Union of Operating Engineers, Stationary Engineers, Local 39

No objection

Daniels/Hemphill and approved unanimously 5-0

INFORMATION ITEMS

3.1-I

IEP Compliance Report
Received for Information

Director Wilson requested that staff comments be included with future reports. The report will come back to the Board in June.

3.2-I

Truancy and Student Attendance Report

Received for Information

Presented by: Dr. Susan Craig, Pasquale Scuderi, Ardarius McDonald, Merlin Edwards and Ms. Teri Goodman.

There is a direct correlation between absenteeism and student success rates. Absenteeism also has a negative financial impact on the District's ADA. Our attendance rate should be around 96%. Our current rate at the high school is 92%.

Our average attendance at our elementary schools is 93% to 95%

Middle schools 94% to 97%

Berkeley High School averages 92%

Berkeley Technology Academy 52%

Students that have over 5 unexcused absences this year

577 elementary school students

364 middle school students

1283 Berkeley High School students (1/3 of BHS students)

159 BTech students (3/4 of BTech students)

A truancy letter is sent home after 3 unexcused absences. A second letter is sent for an additional unexcused absence. A Student Attendance Review Team (SART) is scheduled, as a result of the second letter.

A third truancy letter is sent home after an additional unexcused absence. Another SART meeting is scheduled and intervention strategies are reviewed, evaluated and revised.

Director Selawsky asked if the SARTS are successful. Merlin Edwards responded, "the first letter clears up most of the issues. The first SART is done at the school site in the form of an SST meeting. The second SART is when we explain the rest of the process." Mr. McDonald stated they sent letters after a student misses 76 periods (14 days). There were 85 families invited to the first SART meeting. Half of the families attended. Twenty-five of the families have since left the District.

Director Hemphill asked what the resources are for the parents that have middle school and high school students that are not attending school. Dr. Craig responded, "The SART meetings are making major improvements. We can provide the student and family with mental health services. We explain there are two types of truanancies, parent and child truanancies. We try to determine what type of services we can offer

during the first SART meeting. Once parents see that the process is escalating, they are usually responsive. There are additional consequences for older students. We can refuse to issue them work permits or communicate with the DMV to not allow them to be issued a drivers permit.”

Director Wilson requested to have the data broken down by race. Principal Scuderi stated, “Counselors are working their case loads. There are some good faith efforts going on. We are trying to formalize our process. We would need a full time staff just to track truant students and follow the process.” Mr. Huyett stated “BHS is behind in a truancy response. It is not because the staff does not care or is not working hard. We don’t have the staff. We need to build the structure and look at staffing. The District loses money because we do not have this system in place.”

Director Hemphill stated, “Almost a third of our BHS students have at least five unexcused absences already this year. Then I see that grades can be lowered due to five or more absences. The inconsistency of marking the grades down is concerning. We do not notify parents at the time that their grade could be affected by absences. This may be a policy that the Board needs to review. The policy is very punitive.”

Principal Scuderi commented, “Attendance tends to be higher in classes that are interesting and engaging.” He would rather see a focus on instruction and curriculum to draw students into the classroom.

Director Wilson suggested we refocus around the District and 2020 Vision goals regarding attendance. Focusing on the goals will help us when working with our limited resources. “We need to get a handle on why parents are not sending their children to school and why the older students are not choosing to come to school.”

Director Daniels commended Principal Scuderi for starting the truancy sweeps. He supported the use of the work permit and DMV consequences. The student court has not dealt with truancy, but they may want to consider it.

3.3-I
2009-2010 School Accountability Report Cards (SARC)
Received for Information

The reports have been published to the website. Hard copies will also be delivered to the sites. BHS is not up yet, but will be up soon.

4.1-I

Monthly School Enrollment and Average Daily Attendance Summaries
Received for Information

Director Wilson requested staff analysis with future reports.

5.1-I

Facilities Plan Update
Received for Information
Discussion was not requested

Board's Report

Student Director Djili: The incident at BHS is very troubling. We have had four incidents since January. Having an actual discharge of a gun was extremely troubling. We are talking about why it is happening. We need to begin to understand the motivation of bringing guns on campus. We may need to look at it as a social problem and not a criminal problem.

Director Daniels: Invited people to the Board meeting next week. Please email your comments and concerns to Board members. All other comments are online. He spent his day at LeConte elementary school. Thank you to Cheryl Wilson for the support. There is a town hall meeting at LeConte this weekend with food and child care provided.

Director Hemphill: Last Saturday there was part two of Black Youth in Crisis series. There was a youth panel at this forum. Violence and safety was addressed by the panel. We need to work closely with our public agency partners. The students are concerned about their safety off campus as well. They are responding to what is happening in their community.

Director Hemphill appointed Luis Daniel Rueda to the Peace and Justice Commission.

Director Wilson: Commended the District and BHS staff for the handling of the situation on campus involving a gun. She was appreciative that we are not overly reactionary. "There are many racial undertones to this. Many are assuming that these are boys of color that are bringing the weapons onto campus. It will be interesting to see who attends the events. Many of the vocal parents at BHS are not part of the community that needs to be addressed." She also wanted to commend Irma Parker for her work on the Black Youth in Crisis event. She also spent time at the King staff meeting to introduce herself.

Vice-President Selawsky: He is very troubled by the incidents at BHS and BTech. He welcomes comments, strategies and possible program suggestions.

President Leyva-Cutler: “We are never as quick as our students in their response.” She acknowledged the teachers and the classified that had to contain their classrooms during the situation. “There is no real training for this.” She is looking forward to the conversations around this topic. She suggested using some advisory time to talk with and education the students. “We are celebrating International Women’s month and are in the Caesar Chavez commemorative period. There is an essay contest for k-8 student. We will be sharing the plans for the community day school with the community. Most students have received their school assignment. Thank you to Cragmont for the invitation to talk about resiliency.”

Superintendent’s Report

“We had a disruptive day yesterday at the BHS campus. The staff handled the situation well. Many of us are concerned about the safety of our students and about the presence of weapons on campus. We have implemented a reporting hotline. We are looking at having a special Board meeting next week to discuss budget reductions and a follow up to the weapon issues on the high school campus. We are currently soliciting suggestions. We are holding a parent forum on Monday evening. We need to get the student voice involved in this. We have improved the level of supervision on campus. We have brought on two additional safety officers. We have to review our supervision plan of students. We have brought on another administrator. One of our retired VP from the school will come back part time. Administrators are going out to social studies classes to talk to students. We also want to have some focal group meetings with groups of students. The parent and community response has been supportive of our response. We are going to be vigilant in this matter. Student safety is of the utmost importance.”

EXTENDED PUBLIC TESTIMONY

None

President Leyva-Cutler adjourned the meeting at 10:53 pm.

John T. Selawsky, Clerk
Board of Education