

# Berkeley Public Schools

Bi-Annual Report from Berkeley Unified School District | Berkeley, CA | Spring 2014

## Partnerships Enhance Student STEM Skills

In order to be prepared for post-secondary education and careers, our students must have a strong background in STEM subjects: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. One way we have students develop these skills is by experiencing what it is like to be a real scientist.



Learning to be a scientist means adopting a way of questioning, thinking, and communicating about the world. Berkeley public schools are beginning to implement the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). These standards promote cross-disciplinary teaching that integrates rigorous

content with the practices scientists and engineers routinely use in their work, and this includes a strong command of mathematics.

In a new Partnership for STEM, UC Berkeley science faculty will work with 7th grade students as they design, conduct, and present a scientific investigation consistent with the new science standards. With special matching funds from the Chancellor's

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**STEM SKILLS:** Employment in STEM occupations is projected to grow almost two times faster than the average for all occupations.

All Occupations 10%	All STEM 19%	Life Science 27%	Computer and Math 22%	Physical Science 15%
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*Projected growth in the size of the US labor force 2008 – 2018 (percentage increase in employment)*

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections, 2010, as reported in Atkinson and Mayo, 2010.

## LOOKING FORWARD

### Dear Berkeley Resident,

There are many initiatives in our public schools that are designed to better prepare our students to thrive in a constantly changing world. The new Common Core Standards promote critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity in a setting that is collaborative and focused. Our teachers and staff work to foster a belief in the benefits of hard work, in a learning environment that is challenging, inspiring, and inclusive for all students.

With your investment in our schools through the Berkeley Schools Excellence Program (BSEP), facility construction bonds, and the maintenance of our schools and grounds, the state of our school district is strong. Through BSEP, we are able to fund a research and evaluation department to support the use of data to improve teaching and learning in every school, as well as provide professional development for our teachers and staff. Our students also benefit every day from class sizes smaller than what state funding alone could support, ensuring a setting conducive to relationship building and differentiated instruction.



Superintendent  
Donald Evans

Our school district has weathered the storm of cuts to public education because of the support of Berkeley taxpayers, and we are now seeing a slow return of the state monies through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). We are completing work on our three-year district-wide plan with very specific goals and actions that address issues of equity in education through the use of state funds targeted toward high-need students. With new state funds, more of our students will have access to effective support programs, the expertise of literacy coaches and intervention specialists, and mental health services at school. Additionally, our English learners will also benefit from skilled English language development teachers at every K-8 school.

Thanks to your support, we are better positioned than most school districts in California to continue improving programs and services to our students and families, while maintaining our commitment to educating the whole child. As you will read in this report, we are also fortunate to have community partners who expand our ability to engage students in science and technology, pursue a healthy lifestyle, and protect our environment.

I hope you enjoy the thoughts of college bound high school seniors that we share with you in this report, and in a video available on our website. These young people exemplify the results of excellence in public education.

On behalf of Berkeley's students, I thank you for your passion, commitment, and generous support of public education in Berkeley.

Sincerely,  
Donald Evans, Ed.D.

## Promoting Health and Sustainability in the Berkeley Public Schools

The Berkeley public schools are working on many fronts to promote the health and well-being of all of our students, and to meet higher standards of environmental sustainability.

### Students in all of our schools have access to healthy meals at breakfast and lunch, and enjoy garden education in all of our K-8 schools.

All processed food, hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oils, high fructose corn syrup, refined sugar, refined flour, chemicals, dyes, additives, nitrites, nitrates and the like have been eliminated from the menu. School meals are enhanced with regional organic milk at lunch, whole wheat or whole grains in all of our baked products, and local and/or organic fruits and vegetables as much as possible.

### Our students take an active role in thinking about the future of the planet, and acting in ways that contribute to the “greening” of our schools.

In two years of working with the Green Schools Initiative, our public schools went from diverting 36% of their waste to 58% by practicing the 4Rs – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rot (compost)! Teaching, raising awareness, and proper sorting reduced our waste by nearly 800 tons per year with the support of Green Teams in every school.



Longfellow’s “Green Tigers” help monitor waste sorting to improve composting.



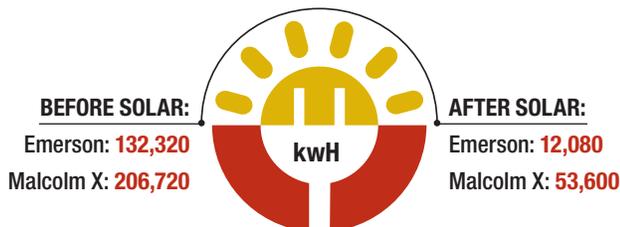
**The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions due to diverting and reducing waste in our schools is comparable to taking 400 cars off the road for a year!**

### Solar energy and green building practices reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

The results from our first solar projects are paying dividends: Our PG&E bill at the five solar schools has been reduced by 82% since going solar! School construction bonds, supported by Berkeley voters, as well as other available incentive funding made this move to clean energy possible.

**Coming soon:** Solar installations at Cragmont Elementary School and the BHS Donahue Gym.

### SOLAR SAVINGS: PG&E generated kilowatt hours (kWh) consumed in one year before and after solar



**ONE YEAR, FIVE SCHOOLS = \$120,000 ENERGY SAVINGS**

## Bonds Fund Safe, Modernized Facilities

Three general obligation bonds – Measure A (1992), Measure AA (2000), and Measure I (2010) – support new construction projects, facility modernization, and district property upgrades. Bond funds also pay for renewable energy projects, new roofs, boilers, floors, paint, and other building safety needs in the schools, and computer network and Wifi infrastructure improvements.

### In the Works: Longfellow Middle School Cafeteria —

A new Longfellow Cafeteria will provide a comfortable and inviting dining space, a kitchen, nutrition teaching facilities, outdoor spaces and small garden areas. Completion is expected in late 2015.



### Construction Projects Completed in 2013-14:

**West Campus Rehabilitation —** Once home to Berkeley High ninth grade students, and later the Berkeley Adult School, the modernization of the West Campus as the district’s educational and operational center is just about complete. School Board meetings are now held in the Board Room located on Addison Street at Browning, one block off University Avenue. Ample parking is available in an adjacent lot.

The conversion of an unused space into a more accessible Board Room is the final step in moving staff, the school community and the Board of Education out of the Maudelle Shirek Building (Old City Hall), a building designated unsafe in the event of an earthquake.

### BHS Classroom Building at Bancroft and Milvia Streets

— Replacing the Old Gym at the intersection of Bancroft and Milvia Streets, the new Berkeley High School classroom building (pictured below) completes a 14-year span of modernizing and rebuilding most of the campus south of Bancroft. The classroom building includes 16 classrooms, now home to the World Language Department and the Arts and Humanities Academy, and physical education and fitness facilities. Next school year, the Lady Jackets Softball Team will be on the new field that is underway on the southeast corner of campus.



Join us for an Open House on Saturday, November 8, 2014 at Berkeley High. Check our website for more details this fall!

**The Construction Bond Oversight Committee** provides citizen oversight, meeting monthly to monitor finances, projects, and performance and financial audits.

# CLASS OF 2014: Thoughts from College-Bound Seniors

This is a special time in the life of our high school seniors, who will be moving on to new challenges in new places. The voices of these students, many of whom are first in their family to be going to college, provide a window into the future.



**Refugio "Kuka" Gonzalez**  
Barnard College

"To me the fact that my parents could leave their lives in Mexico, and come to a new country where they did not know the language or the people, and make a life for themselves is something to me that is just remarkable....Having them as my parents made me realize that I could do anything that I wanted to as long as I got an education."



**Ben Barcklay**  
Stanford University

"I feel that having to keep up with a certain set of standards has definitely helped me come to where I am today. I've played a sport every year at BHS, and I've been involved in a series of clubs, and I think that the sum of all of that has made me who I am."



**Monte Metal**  
Columbia University

"The first thing I realized about Columbia was how expensive it was, and that deterred me. Then Ms. Price (BHS College and Career Counselor) opened my eyes to the fact that these colleges can be very generous, and are focused on my achievements, which is what is making Columbia possible. When I told my mother, she started crying."



**Derek Spears**  
University of California, Davis

"We worked on the issue of food justice, and that is where my life plan really finds its home. I plan to develop a farm institution, where I grow organic produce, and I can sell my produce to low income areas. I want to be all over the country, but I'm probably going to start in Oakland. I want to employ re-entering convicts. I want to teach them, I want it to be a learning environment where I have workshops and classes."



**Chloe Yee**  
Yale University

"My parents reinforced this idea that anything was possible for me as long as I set my mind to it and dedicated myself to what I wanted. I tell other students they should make the most of all of the resources that are available at Berkeley High. Whether it's connecting with a counselor, or your teachers, SAT prep, things like that. These are the many small steps that you can take yourself, that are available to you for really no cost at all."



## High School Graduation Rates Higher than County and State

2012-13	All Students	African-American	Hispanic or Latino	White
California	80.2%	67.9%	75.4%	87.6%
Alameda County	80.4%	66.6%	73.7%	89.9%
<b>BHS</b>	<b>88.8%</b>	<b>87.9%</b>	<b>88.8%</b>	<b>91.4%</b>

The students share more of their stories in a recently released online video:  
[www.berkeley.net](http://www.berkeley.net)

## Partnerships for Student STEM Skills

*Continued from front page*

Community Partnership Fund and the Berkeley Public Schools Fund, Cal professors will team with our teachers to show students what real research looks like, describe opportunities for careers in the sciences, and talk about the positive impact that each student can have on the world.

Partnership for STEM is an expansion of other fruitful collaborations with community partners, including the Lawrence Hall of Science, Community Resources for Science, and the Berkeley Lab, all with funding from the Berkeley Public Schools Fund. One such collaboration extends learning beyond the school day for elementary-age students who were invited to school on Saturdays to work with science educators and engage in hands-on activities provided by the Lawrence Hall of Science. Another ensures that every fifth grade student spends a day at the Berkeley Lab learning to "be a scientist" as they investigate properties of matter through hands-on science activities with the Lab scientists.



*Photo courtesy of Berkeley Public Schools Fund*

To support some of the funding for these STEM projects, go to [www.berkeleypublicschoolsfund.org](http://www.berkeleypublicschoolsfund.org).



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## DigiTech Team at Work: Infusion of Technology Propels Berkeley Schools



As technology and the digital world move and morph faster than a first grader can read *Green Eggs and Ham*, it is essential that our teachers, staff, and most importantly, our students, are able to take full advantage of all the digital tools available.

The DigiTech team members have been very busy this year. They've worked with students and teachers to bring more than 5,000 student Google accounts to interactive life, introduced online tools and unlimited access ebooks

via our libraries, and brought almost 2,000 Chromebooks into daily classroom use. Some teachers have piloted blended learning classrooms where students independently follow an online curriculum with teacher guidance, and keyboarding instruction has sprung to life at all elementary schools.

Efforts in the coming school year include expanding the use of technology in teaching the Common Core Standards, increasing collaboration both between teachers, and teachers and students, using online tools, and improving the wireless network infrastructure.

We will also be building on our successes with an update to our three-year instructional technology plan in the coming school year. Teachers, staff, parents and community members will contribute to the vision and the reality of integrating technology tools with standards for teaching, learning, and student engagement throughout our schools.

*Digitech Team of teachers, librarians, and technophiles (from left): Matt Albinson, Wally Gutierrez, Allison Krasnow, Becca Todd, Robin Harley, Jay Nitschke, Mary Ann Scheuer*



## Engaged Community, Strong Schools

Our public schools are made stronger through the support and engagement of members of our community. This year many individuals and organizations provided input for a new state Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) that directs new state funding for high-need students, building on previous work on the *2020 Vision*.

With active representatives from every school, the Berkeley Schools Excellence Program (BSEP) Planning and Oversight Committee ensures that local parcel tax funds are directed to schools in accordance with the 2006 tax measure.

**BSEP Renewal:** The BSEP measure will be up for renewal in 2016, and community engagement will be a crucial part of planning the next BSEP measure as we continue to support our schools in being the best they can be for all our students.

**To receive updates on BSEP Renewal, send us an email: [BSEP@berkeley.net](mailto:BSEP@berkeley.net)**