

BSEP/Measure A PLANNING & OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 6, 2012

Malcolm X School Library
1731 Prince St., Berkeley

P&O Committee Members Present:

Keira Armstrong, <i>Washington (Alt)</i>	Mariane Ferme, <i>Berkeley High</i>	Aaron Glimme, <i>Berkeley High</i>
Larry Gordon, <i>Berkeley High</i>	Patrick Hamill, <i>Thousand Oaks</i>	Elisabeth Hensley, <i>King (co-Chair)</i>
Diana Kuderna, <i>Berkeley High (Alt)</i>	John Lavine, <i>King</i>	Catherine Lazio, <i>Willard</i>
Chris Martin, <i>LeConte (co-Chair)</i>	Jay Nitschke, <i>King (Alt)</i>	Shauna Rabinowitz, <i>Jefferson</i>
Margot Reed, <i>Longfellow</i>	Abigail Surasky, <i>Longfellow (Alt)</i>	

P&O Committee Members Absent:

Marjorie Alvord, <i>Berkeley High (Alt)</i>	Lea Baechler-Brabo, <i>Oxford (Alt)</i>	Juliet Bashore, <i>Rosa Parks</i>
Nicole Bowen, <i>Arts Magnet</i>	Brett Cook, <i>Malcolm X</i>	Esther Hirsh, <i>Berkeley High</i>
Ruby Holder, <i>B-Tech</i>	Brittini Milam, <i>Washington</i>	Dialy Paulino, <i>Cragmont</i>
Dawn Paxson, <i>Emerson</i>	Ardel Thomas, <i>Pre-K</i>	Sara Tool, <i>John Muir</i>
Greg Wiberg, <i>Oxford</i>	Evon Williams, <i>Longfellow</i>	Representative, <i>Willard</i>
Representative, <i>Independent Study</i>		

Visitors, School Board Directors, District Advisory Committee Liaisons, Staff and Guests:

Judy Appel, *Oxford Parent* Julie Holcomb, *BHS Parent, former P&O Chair* Dan Lindheim, *former P&O Chair*

BSEP Staff:

Monica Thyberg, *Acting BSEP Manager* Mary Hurlbert, *Admin. Coord.* Mark Coplan, *PIO*

1. Call to Order & Introductions.

Co-chair Chris Martin called the meeting to order at 7:15 and invited representatives to introduce themselves.

2. Chair's Comments.

Chris Martin invited P&O members to contribute to the tea/coffee/cookie fund. He reminded attendees who were neither committee members nor alternates to hold their comments until the *Public Comment* portion of the meeting.

3. Monica Thyberg's Comments.

Thyberg thanked P&O members for emailing class-size-reductions questions to her. She clarified that while she welcomed queries by phone, in person, and via Google docs, an online, round-robin-style discussion of P&O Committee matters was a violation of the Brown Act's open committee law.

4. Public Comment.

Julie Holcomb, Visiting BHS Parent and former P&O co-chair.

Holcomb made the point that although community members were welcome to attend P&O meetings and to make statements during the public comment period, they should not be allowed to participate in general committee meeting discussions. She said that while some controversy existed in the

community around the planning role of this committee versus the planning role of BUSD's paid professionals, there was no controversy surrounding the P&O's role as an oversight working group.

5. BSEP Class Size Funds – A Historical Perspective and Analysis of the Administration's Recommendation for the expenditure of the BSEP Class Size Reduction Monies in FY 2012-13

Dan Lindheim, former P&O co-chair

Lindheim noted that when he was co-chair, he had always been acutely aware of the importance of adhering to the Measure so BUSD could return to the voters in good faith and ask them to renew it. He stated that Measure A of 2006 monies had become so integral to the District, that a failure to reaffirm the BSEP Measure would have disastrous consequences that could lead to huge class sizes and even bankruptcy. Lindheim said that although Berkeleyans had supported the Measure thus far, things could change. Then he cautioned the P&O to continuously look forward to the next election and to avoid situations that might give fodder to opponents. By way of example he said every single Berkeley neighborhood association had voted against the Measure when it was last on the ballot.

Analysis of Class Size Reduction Staffing Ratios in the 2012-13 School Year

Dan Lindheim, former P&O co-chair

Lindheim said that from his perspective the most critical thing for next year was whether or not there would be enough FTE to meet the BSEP Class Size Goals (20:1 K-3, 26:1 4-5, 28:1 6-12). He said he had looked at the BHS class-size data to see how BHS was adhering to or veering from the Measure's specifications. Having studied the Superintendent's recommendations for the expenditure of CSR monies, he said he wanted to determine what difference it would make if, as proposed, BUSD adjusted the BHS enrollment used for allocating FTE by staffing PE classes at a higher figure, and removing ROP classes, and pro-rating students who take less than a full class load.

Lindheim said he was surprised to find that current class size average at BHS, excluding PE and ROP is actually lower than last year, 26.7:1 compared to 28.7 last year. Saying that there were fewer large outlier classes and much more compression around the 28:1 class-size this year, Lindheim asked the P&O to consider whether BUSD was in compliance with the Measure's terms with a 28:1 class size, a 28:1 average class size, or a 28:1 median class-size. Lindheim said that this year if you eliminated all BHS classes below 23:1, BUSD would still meet the required 28:1. He said this was not only remarkable but might also explain why the administration had reviewed the numbers and had concluded that BHS was overstaffed. However, Lindheim warned that if BHS lost 6 FTE, the student teacher ratios might not look so good in the future and class-size spread would quickly grow.

The Administration's Proposal to Staff PE Classes at a 38:1 Ratio

Lindheim said he had no problem with this plan because the Measure explicitly excludes PE from the Class Size Goals. As an aside, he pointed out that PE had never been clearly defined in the Measure's language and that begged the question as to whether dance, for example, should fall under PE, under art, or even, in certain cases, under anthropology. He cautioned P&O members that they should be clear about what classes actually fell under this PE umbrella.

Regional Occupational Program (ROP)

Lindheim said that at first he had been confused as to why the administration wanted to subtract ROP classes from the total BHS enrollment when calculating 28:1 staffing requirements. He said he then realized that what the administration was saying was that ROP classes are already funded by ROP.

Providing BSEP staffing for ROP class sections is double-funding. He noted that, since there are so few ROP classes, removing the ROP classes would make very little impact.

Proposal to add FTE to the Universal Learning Support Systems Program (ULSS)

Lindheim said that if the administration had concluded that the ULSS program was important for students' success, he questioned the P&O Committee's legitimacy to contradict or to override the District on that issue.

6. Discussion of Administration's Recommendation for BSEP Class Size Funds in FY 2012-13

Issue: The proposed change in the way the secondary enrollment would be counted for purposes of class size staffing (adjusting for PE, ROP, students taking only 5 periods).

Q Worried about the effect of fewer FTE at BHS on class sizes in the Academic Choice (AC) program.

A Academic Choice's current class size average is 28.3. Two years ago a mistake was made, whereby all mid-year transfer students were assigned to AC, which made class sizes balloon. That is no longer happening.

Q Worried about the loss of FTE at BHS. What if enrollment grows next year, and class sizes become huge? This feels like an over-correction.

A Enrollment projections are done now, again in June, and again during the first 10 day of school. If there is a dramatic shift upwards, teaching staff can be increased.

Q Could FTE be reapportioned within Berkeley High? It doesn't feel equitable now.

A Berkeley High, like all schools, makes its own internal decisions about how to allocate classroom teachers. Many times what looks like inequity is a school or department decision, to deliberately keep classes lower in some classes (often those with struggling students), and let honors and AP classes be larger.

Q Regional Occupational Program (ROP) funds can't be guaranteed. What if they go away?

A ROP funds are given to the district on a contract. That contract will be known in June.

Q Why not leave the BHS enrollment alone (i.e. don't make these changes—ROP, PE, students who take 5 classes) and just be more conservative in projecting BHS enrollment?

A BSEP has traditionally over-allocated FTE to BHS, by 1) allocating FTE for classes that are taught by ROP-funded teachers, 2) allocating FTE as if PE classes were 28:1 when they are much higher, and 3) treating students who take less than a full load (6 periods) as if they did take a full load, and allocating full FTE for them.

Q What is the unadjusted secondary enrollment that is projected for next year?

A Thyberg will provide the unadjusted projected enrollment and Teacher Template to the Committee.

Q Why are we being asked to make these changes?

- A These changes are needed in order for the General Fund to cut its portion of classroom teacher cost, as part of its Cut Target of \$1.4 million from next year's budget, due to the dire state of the California budget.

Other Comments:

- The effect of the Superintendent's recommendation is likely to be an additional 1-2 students in each (non-P.E.) class at BHS.
- BHS class size varies significantly, depending on the time of year it is measured. Fall enrollment is highest. In spring, class size typically drops between .7 and 1.
- BHS enrollment is harder to project than Kindergarten enrollment.
- Doesn't see the necessity of making these changes, but what is the problem with doing so?
- Concerned about voter perception. Why change the staffing formula now? Voters could see it as a violation of the Measure.

Issue: The Superintendent's CSR Recommendation would reduce classroom teachers at Berkeley High by approximately 5.5 FTE, while at the same time increasing BSEP funding for 5.5 ULSS FTE at the middle schools.

Q It doesn't feel right to take from BHS to give to the middle schools.

- A The Superintendent's proposal does not "take from BHS and give to the middle schools." The fact that the FTE is identical is coincidental. Two points:
- The refinement of secondary enrollment is proposed in order to allow the General Fund to pay for fewer teachers. The Superintendent could instead have simply recommended that the GF fund class sizes of 40:1. BSEP would have had to "buy down" from that figure to achieve the BSEP CS goals.
 - The proposal that BSEP fund 5.5 middle school ULSS teachers is not an increase of ULSS FTE at the middle schools. It is shifting the funding from the GF to BSEP, again, so the GF can save money.

Q Class size should not be sacrificed for ULSS/RtI. Class Size Reduction is the most important thing.

A The Superintendent's proposal does not reduce class size. The proposal maintains the district-wide class size averages (20:1 for K-3, 26:1 for 4-5, 28:1 for 7-12).

Q ULSS/RtI seems like a basic service, not Program Support.

A If ULSS/RtI is important, does that mean BSEP shouldn't fund it? ULSS FTE is "above and beyond" the regular classroom teacher allocation.

Other Comments:

- Berkeley High needs ULSS/RtI. Why not expand this program to the high school?
- Concerned about how ULSS is implemented across the district. Not all schools have an exemplary ULSS program.
- How effective is ULSS/RtI without additional site funds for coordination?

Thyberg referred to the questions that had been submitted prior to the meeting, beginning with a clarification of the ULSS/RtI program. She noted that:

- ULSS is not a Special Ed program.
- The goal of ULSS is to help all students overcome whatever barriers they may have to learning. It serves the entire range of BUSD students, not simply identified Special Ed students.
- Two years ago, when it was first suggested that ULSS/RtI be funded (partially) by BSEP Program Support, Thyberg had reservations about it, and her successor, Nancy Hoeffler, also had reservations. However now, having listened to descriptions of the program and its effectiveness, including a major improvement in BUSD's STAR test results which has been attributed to ULSS, she has changed her mind. Much research says that early intervention is the best, and she sees the benefit of this approach.
- She believes that ULSS/RtI does meet the criteria for Program Support in the Class Size portion of the BSEP Measure.
- The total ULSS FTE is 22 FTE for the K-8 program: 11 FTE @ K-5 and 11 FTE @ 6-8. The Superintendent's recommendation that BSEP CSR fund half of that FTE (5.5 at each level = 11.0 FTE). Other teachers participate in the ULSS/RtI program as well.

Regarding the Special Ed budget, Thyberg noted that Special Ed revenue covers only about half of what BUSD spends on the Special Ed program. The other half of the cost (approximately \$13 million) is paid by the district's General Fund.

Jay Nitschke distributed a document showing the effect of lower class sizes on middle school math scores from 2007 through 2011. Eighth grade math classes were lowered to 20:1 beginning in 2006-07; 7th grade math classes were lowered to 20:1 in 2007-08. (Honors classes are larger.) The number of eighth graders scoring Proficient on the California Standards Test (CST) increased from 30% in 2007 to 55% in 2011. For 7th graders the change was 50% in 2007 to over 70% in 2011. (All 8th graders now take Algebra, except for a few who take Geometry.)

A straw poll was taken.

- 6 were in favor of the Superintendent's recommendation,
- 7 were opposed to the Superintendent's recommendation.

When asked, 4 Reps said they had problems with the refinement of secondary enrollment for BSEP CSR purposes, and 2 Reps said they had problems with increasing BSEP funding for ULSS FTE at the middle schools, from CSR Program Support.

Thyberg noted that the P&O Committee could respond to the Superintendent's recommendation by making its own recommendation, for example, that additional funds from CSR should be allocated for Lit Coaches, or middle school Counseling, or ULSS coordination. She added that the role of the P&O Committee is to ask "Is this an appropriate use of BSEP funds, as we interpret the Measure?"

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 9:55 p.m.