

Berkeley Public Schools

Bi-Annual Report from the Berkeley Unified School District | Berkeley, CA | Fall 2012

Berkeley is the Place for...

EXCELLENCE

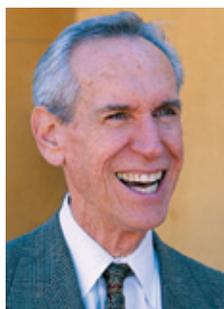
Yes, we can. Sí, se puede. The 2020 Vision is a community-wide initiative started in 2007 with the commitment of the Berkeley Unified School District, City of Berkeley, UC Berkeley, Berkeley City College, and other community partners to ensure that all children living in Berkeley receive a healthy start, are equally ready to learn, and are provided the opportunities and support necessary to thrive.

Studies have shown that collective impact — the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda — has proven highly effective for solving specific social problems.



Engaged Community, Great Schools

Dear Berkeley Resident,



Neil Smith

Great public schools are a benefit to all residents of Berkeley and an essential part of what makes our community strong. Our successes come from the fact that, in the face of challenges to public education, diverse sectors of our community have come together to do what is right for the children and youth of Berkeley. Whether the support comes from parents raising funds for special programs at their schools, city and community organizations increasing their involvement, or Berkeley voters overwhelmingly

supporting the Berkeley Schools Excellence Program (BSEP), maintenance, and construction bond measures, each of us is doing our part to contribute.

The broad community support empowers us to push forward. Together we can provide every student in Berkeley an excellent, equitable, engaging, and enriched education. Our skilled teachers and specialized staff make the education of Berkeley's children and youth their number one priority. We are fortunate that we still have quality preschools that extend learning opportunities for our youngest and an adult school that offers career and technical education and opportunities for lifelong learning. Our facilities are safe, secure, and welcoming settings, both inside and out, for children to learn and grow.

In this biannual report to Berkeley residents, we've included a range of our accomplishments from academics and enrichment to facilities and finances. Look inside for a list of *20 Things to Know* about the continuous improvement and commitment to academic success for all students in the Berkeley Unified School District.

Sincerely,
Neil Smith, *Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services*

Superintendent Search Update

In June 2012, Superintendent Bill Huyett retired after four plus years leading the Berkeley Unified School District (and 38 in public education). At this printing, the Board of Education is in the final stage of interviewing candidates for Superintendent and has appointed Assistant Superintendent Neil Smith and Deputy Superintendent Javetta Cleveland as joint Interim Superintendents until a final appointment is made.

20 THINGS TO KNOW
about Berkeley's Public Schools
see inside >>>

- Kindergarten Readiness
- Proficiency in Reading
- Attendance
- Completion of High School Math Standards
- Student Engagement
- College and Career Readiness

The common goals of the *2020 Vision* partners frame and strengthen the district's pursuit of excellence.

- Every child is ready for kindergarten.
- Every child reads proficiently by the end of the third grade.
- All students attend school regularly.
- All students successfully complete high school math standards.
- Each school is a place where all students are engaged and feel valued.
- Schools develop students who believe the college path is available and viable.

EQUITY

Education is the passport for the future. We've been following the leading research on best practices in public education and have embraced the nationally recognized *Response to Instruction and Intervention* (RTI²) model. This system of high quality teaching and differentiated interventions is being implemented in all of our K-8 schools with notable success. RTI² supports educational equity because it addresses each student's unique set of needs with an engaging core curriculum and increasingly intensive interventions as needed (i.e. small group instruction, tutoring, counseling, behavioral support, etc.).

To improve student achievement and engagement, teachers and other educators are examining how diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups are impacted by school and teaching practices. Diversifying a school's cultural norms enhances the school experience for all students. Offering behavioral supports that students deem fair and equitable, for example, has been effective at fostering student engagement in our middle schools and improving student achievement, particularly for our African-American students.

ENGAGEMENT

It takes a village. Engaging both students and their parents produces better educational outcomes. Building a community welcoming to all families in every school increases parent participation and access to the information and resources families need to support their child(ren). This year we are piloting the expansion of family engagement staff and outreach to the parent community at six of our elementary schools. Our long-term goal is for all schools to have dedicated family advocates that help parents support their children's education.

ENRICHMENT

Schools are alive with the sound of music. An enriched education is one that allows students access to creative, hands-on exploration and artistic expression. Our music program is one example. Elementary students take at least three years of music and instrument instruction. They have the option to continue into middle school taking band, orchestra, jazz, modern music or chorus during an extra period before or after school. The Visual and Performing Arts office loaned district instruments to over 2,200 students in 2011-12.

Student highlights from this past spring include:

- The sixth grade bands and high school band members playing *The National Anthem* at the opening of a Giants' game in May;
- All three middle school jazz bands each playing a set at Yoshi's in Oakland the same week, and;
- Elementary students co-performing with the Berkeley Symphony's professional musicians in a live school performance.

Although all students may not fully master an instrument, they have been taught note reading, music theory, creativity, and teamwork — all excellent building blocks in their education.

Find us online at...

www.berkeleyschools.net

20 THINGS



In the Berkeley Public Schools we've:

Improved student achievement in all of our schools.

Each of our eleven elementary schools achieved close to or above the state goal of 800 on the Academic Performance Index (API). All three middle schools have surpassed an API of 800.

Increased the graduation rate for Berkeley High School to 86.1%. This has been helped by the fact that Latino and African-American students are graduating at higher rates and dropping out at lower rates than their county and statewide counterparts.

Improved the academic performance of African-American students in our middle schools by 92 API points. This climb in African-American student achievement, between 2008 and 2011, reflects improvements in both Mathematics and English Language Arts. Student engagement has improved through equity-based and culturally relevant practices.

Increased student attendance to 95.3% this past spring. More students in school each day means more time spent learning. It has also resulted in an increase in revenue reducing the extent of budget cuts.

Improved English fluency for students learning English.

Berkeley is among only 14% of California school districts that met the state's achievement objectives for English Learners. This year we recognized 170 students who achieved English fluency as measured by the state. In addition, we have increased translation and interpretation services for our families speaking other languages.

Aligned district, city, and community initiatives and resources. Berkeley's 2020 Vision for Children and Youth is a partnership between district, city, and community partners focused on improved attendance, kindergarten readiness, third grade literacy, positive behavior, completion of high school math standards, and college and career readiness.

Implemented the Teacher's College Reading and Writing Program in every elementary school.

Our elementary teachers have embraced this research-based instructional program supported with leveled books, small group teaching, literacy specialists, and professional development in every elementary school. All significant student groups in third grade are showing gains in literacy.



Note: Much of the data noted is from the 2010-11 school year because state data from 2011-12 is not currently available.

TO KNOW about Berkeley's Public Schools

Trained BUILD tutors from Cal in teaching literacy skills to students in our after school and summer school programs. With specialized literacy training from our teachers, Berkeley United in Literacy Development (BUILD) tutors use common language and strategies from our elementary school reading program in their work with students.

Prioritized middle school counseling and access to mental health services. A portion of Berkeley's education tax dollars is dedicated each year to guide middle school students through their academic choices and support their social and emotional well-being. This means our middle schools have about three times more counselors than the state average (945:1) as well as interns and access to outside mental health services.

Hired a more diverse faculty.

Teachers are role models to our students and families. Ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity in our faculty contributes to our welcoming schools and the engagement of all of our students and their families.

Made transitional kindergarten available for our young five year olds. With the minimum age for kindergarten changing over the next two years to five years old by September 1, a two-year

kindergarten is now available for our students turning five in the fall. We call it "High Fives."

Reduced the number of suspensions and expulsions over the last three years. A concerted effort has been made to improve school climate and offer positive behavioral support systems in our schools. Ask one of our students what it means to "be safe, be responsible, and be respectful" at school.

Prioritized education in the arts. Our teachers and staff work to integrate arts into the curriculum while students learn using all of their senses. Course offerings are expanded with Berkeley Schools Excellence Program (BSEP) and other locally raised funds to include music, drama, dance, and other visual and performing arts education.

Circulated 207,914 library books in one academic year. The Berkeley Schools Excellence Program funds \$147,000 to purchase about 9,000 new books for school libraries each year.

Received federal funding to maintain garden and nutrition programs in eleven schools and all three preschools. These funds allow for hands-on garden and cooking-based nutrition education classes. Students learn where their food comes from and how to cook healthy meals and sometimes parents join in too.



Reduced tax liabilities to Berkeley property tax payers.

The cost of voter-approved education taxes and construction bonds has been reduced by lowering Cost of Living Adjustments, accessing improved loan conditions, and refinancing construction bonds.

Submitted a balanced budget for the next three years.

The state budget crisis and difficult economic climate have cut resources to our schools, but a combination of efforts by teachers and staff, parents, voters, and community supporters has provided the people power, creativity, and funding to ensure critical community priorities that strengthen our schools.

Made school and district buildings safer for students and staff.

The relocation of the district office and the demolition of Berkeley High School's (BHS) seismically unsafe Old Gym on Milvia Street are good examples. The change at BHS makes way for a multi-purpose gym and 15 classrooms that will allow the removal of the portables and the return of a softball field for the Lady Jackets.

Installed solar panels at four schools as part of the multi-year Solar Master Plan. Generating solar energy means more dollars for instruction and less on operating expenses.

Built a new stadium for Berkeley High Athletic programs and have broken ground on a multi-sport complex at Tim Moellering Field on Derby Street.

BHS students enjoy new athletic program facilities on campus with the opening of the 2012-13 school year — there are 28 sports offered at Berkeley High School with over one-third of the high school's 3,300+ students participating. By Spring 2013, BHS and Berkeley Technology Academy students will have expanded athletic space for baseball, basketball, and soccer at Tim Moellering Field.



You can find out more about our accomplishments by visiting the "Twenty Things to Know" webpage: www.berkeleyschools.net/twentythings



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Berkeley, CA 94702

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BSEP – A Most Important Acronym

It's true. Educators use lots of acronyms to communicate about their work. But if you can remember only one – make it BSEP. BSEP stands for the Berkeley Schools Excellence Program – our community's voter-supported special tax measure first approved in 1986 and renewed every decade since then.

What difference does BSEP make?

\$23 million in BSEP dollars each year fund:

- One-third of the district's teachers to reduce class size
- Middle school counselors
- Libraries in every school
- Music instruction in grades 4-8
- Professional Development
- Evaluation and Assessment
- Technology
- Family Engagement
- School Site Programs, and more!

The BSEP Planning & Oversight Committee is comprised of representatives from every school who meet regularly to review the use of these monies, and to ensure that BSEP funds are spent in accordance with the measure. An annual outside audit of all BSEP funds is also conducted. (Read more at: <http://www.berkeleyschools.net/departments/bsep/>)



We've Moved to 2020 Bonar Street

The district property at 2020 Bonar Street (at University Avenue) in central Berkeley, previously occupied by the Berkeley Adult School, now houses the administrative offices for the Berkeley Unified School District. We vacated the downtown properties at Old City Hall (2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way) and the Annex (1835 Allston Way), both owned by the City of Berkeley. Additional renovation at Bonar Street continues on the School Board meeting room and charter school and/or career technical education classrooms. Until the next phase of construction is completed, School Board meetings will continue to be held in the Old City Hall.

BPEF Makes a Difference — So Can You!

Berkeley has one of the state's first and most enduring public education support organizations. The Berkeley Public Education Foundation (BPEF) has raised over \$12 million since 1983 from generous community donors to support teachers and students at every school. Check out the video about how our students benefit from BPEF: <http://www.bpef-online.org/category/news-events/>

Become a School Volunteer

The Berkeley Public Education Foundation's BPEF School Volunteers connects community volunteers with students and teachers in classrooms across our city. Find out more at: <http://www.bpef-online.org/volunteer/>

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Berkeley High School Stadium Dedication and Open House: Saturday, September 15, 11:00 a.m.
- Administrative Offices Open House: Wednesday, October 17, 4:00–6:00 p.m.
- Kindergarten Fair: Sunday, December 2, 1:30–4:30 p.m. Location TBA

