

BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

TO: Javetta Cleveland and Neil Smith, Co-Superintendents
FROM: Debbi D'Angelo, Director, Evaluation and Assessment
DATE: Feb. 27, 2013
RE: Status Report on Plan to Accelerate the Achievement of African-American Students

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The recommendation to develop a District plan to accelerate the achievement of African-American students was presented to the Board in December and the first status report was presented on January 9. This report is intended to keep the Board up-to-date on the progress to develop this plan.

Goal

The purpose of this three-month planning process has been defined as follows:

- * Utilize what has been learned from the *2020 Vision* and the District's Plans to Close the Achievement Gap to choose the next steps for BUSD
- * Examine data to identify the students who do not appear to be benefitting from current efforts and need additional support
- * Select actions designed to improve outcomes for identified students based on national research and familiarity with BUSD

Work Group

The members of the Work Group include fourteen BUSD staff members: four principals (one elementary, one middle school, BHS, and B-Tech), two secondary school teachers, a site coordinator and a supervisor of family engagement, one middle school counselor, a vice-principal and a dean from BHS, the President of BCCE, the Director of Evaluation and Assessment, and a co-superintendent. In addition, there are two Board members, the Executive Director of the Berkeley Alliance, the Assistant City Manager, a graduate student from UCB who works with Dr. Frank Worrell, a community member who has created a blog on the achievement gap, and the Director of Local Government and Community Relations at UCB.

The District has engaged Chris Lim and Diana Levy to guide and support the Work Group. Ms. Lim, who has a history in BUSD and retired as the Superintendent of San Leandro, has worked closely with Glenn Singleton and led equity work for aspiring superintendents and other school administrators throughout the state. Ms. Levy has been a school administrator in the East Bay and is familiar with the research in this area.

Financial Support

The District has received a grant of \$10,000 from In Dulci Jubilo to be used as “seed money” to support the goal of improving outcomes for our African-American students.

Review of Data

The first task of the Work Group has been to examine data to identify the students who do not appear to be benefitting from current efforts and need additional support.

Methodology: Much data have been presented to the Board, staff and community regarding the achievement of students and the gap between the performance of African-American students and their white peers. The Work Group examined data comparing African-American students to students who are not African-American. This gap is examined by gender, socio-economic advantage/disadvantage, parent education, grade level and special education identification. Achievement was measured using the California Standards Test (CST) for Grades 2-11 as well as the Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA), CAHSEE, and cohort graduation rate for high-school students. Other measures, such as the number of suspensions and absences, were examined in relation to students’ academic performance levels.

Demographics: African-American students currently make up 26% of the total population of students enrolled in BUSD. (Slide 14) The enrollment of African-American students has declined over the years with Elementary African-American students making up only 23% of the current population of students.

- African-American students are almost evenly split male and female.
- Socio-Economically Disadvantaged (SED) students make up 59% of the African-American BUSD current population whereas SED students make up only 31% of students who are not African-American. (Slide 15)
- Special Education (SPED) students make up 19% of the African-American BUSD current population whereas SPED students make up only 9% of students who are not African-American. Of the total SPED population, 46% of the students are African-American. (Slide 16)
- There is a greater percentage of families of African-American students with a parent education level of High-School Graduate and Some College whereas the majority of families with students who are not African-American has a parent education level of College or higher. (Slide 17)

Achievement:

1. The data show that African-American females out perform African-American males but not to a significant degree overall. (Slides 22-25, 29 and 30) There are four key gender findings:

- African-American females outperform African-American males to a larger degree in middle school Math and ELA. (Slide 24)
- A greater number of males are identified for Special Education (Slides 35/36, 46/47 and 58) with the majority of this group not achieving at

proficiency.

- A greater number of males are being suspended (Slides 42/43, 53/54 and 62), yet suspended male students are represented in all achievement categories (High, Medium and Low).
- There is evidence in National and State research that there is a significant gap between graduation rates between African-American Males and African-American Females as well as a gap between their White counterparts. This trend is not as true in BUSD. Although over 12% more African-American females graduated in 2010-11 in the State and County than their male counterparts, the difference is less than 5% for Berkeley High School. (Slide 69)

2. Socio-Economic Status for African-Americans is not as big a factor as for students who are not African-American (Slides 16, 22-25, 27/28, 30-32, 35/36, 46/47, 58) with the exception of male students in middle school (Slide 47) and performance on the CAHSEE in high school. (Slides 65-66)

3. A parent's college education is highly correlated with African-American student achievement. (Slides 37-39, 48-50, 59-60, 67/68)

4. In elementary and middle school, absences and suspensions do not have a significant impact on African-American performance. (Slides 40-43 and 51-54)

5. In high school, GPA and attendance are highly correlated for African-American students. (Slide 61)

6. The high school suspension rate is higher for African-American students with a GPA of 1.99 and below. (Slide 62)

7. District entry date (years in BUSD) has minimal impact on African-American performance. (Slides 44, 55-56 and 63-64)

8. Pre-Kindergarten experience had a positive impact on African-American achievement indicating only a small difference between African-American students and their White peers. (Slides 73-76)

Next Steps

The Work Group is reviewing the national research and identifying current District practices and programs that appear to be effective with African-American students. The Work Group will use this information to explore building upon current practices to achieve better outcomes for African-American students. The consultants are researching practices in districts that are similar to Berkeley and that have achieved better results with their African-American students in order to give the Work Group other options to consider. Staff is arranging focus groups with African-American students at Berkeley High School and B-Tech to be facilitated by non-BUSD staff. This information

along with a recent survey of BHS students will enable the group to hear from our students. Staff has not yet scheduled focus groups for parents.

The next status report will be presented to the Board on April 24.

DISTRICT GOAL

II. Strategies to Promote Student Success

POLICY/CODE

Board Bylaw 9000

FISCAL IMPACT

None at this time

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Receive the Status Report on the Plan for 2013-14 to Accelerate the Achievement of African-American Students for information.