

# Berkeley Public Schools

BI-ANNUAL REPORT from Berkeley Unified School District | Berkeley, CA



## STRENGTHENING OUR SCHOOLS

### Dear Berkeley Resident,

The tide is turning for public education in California: State revenue is increasing, and a recent poll shows that a majority of voters support the sales and income taxes that were passed in 2012's Proposition 30 to restore the state education budget. We now have more local control over the use of state resources, and a strong improvement plan in place that will strengthen our service to students and families.

## Local Control with Accountability

The new system for funding California's K-12 public schools gives more local control to school districts to determine the most effective use of funds to meet the needs of students. In turn, every California school district must develop a three-year Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) with measurable goals, actions, and the related expenditures that will improve educational outcomes for students.

The LCAP prioritizes the expansion of programs and services that have been correlated with positive outcomes for our highest need students, and is intended to disrupt patterns and practices that could perpetuate under-performance of some student groups. The state identifies high needs students as those from low income families, English Learners, and Foster Youth, and provides supplemental funding to better serve them.

### Some Key Actions in Berkeley's LCAP:

- Training and coaching for teachers to learn effective instructional practices for new Common Core English Language Arts and Math Standards and Next Generation Science Standards, including the integration of technology.
- Instructional and behavioral supports and interventions for students and families with help of Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>) Teacher.

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My team and I are focused on three foundational elements to strengthen our educational program this year:

- Successful implementation of the Common Core State Standards in every classroom, differentiated to the learning styles of our students,
- A well-defined and effective three-tiered model of academic and behavioral support systems in every school (Response to Instruction & Intervention – RtI<sup>2</sup>), and
- Active Professional Learning Communities for teams of teachers and staff in every school to learn and practice the best teaching strategies that bring the most positive results for all kids.

We must be consistent in our implementation of these effective research-based models in order to ensure maximum benefit for every student. I am proud of the depth of community engagement that produced a well-articulated Local Control and Accountability Plan and the targeted resources now supporting action steps in these and other key areas. This plan also furthers community goals set forth in the 2020 Vision.

As you may already know, the number of families choosing to live in Berkeley and enroll in our public schools is growing. A recent demographic study estimated that some 250 additional elementary-age students will enroll in our schools over the next five years. Neighboring school districts are also reporting growth. My team has been working with the School Board to develop short-term and long-term facilities solutions to address the fact that our elementary schools are currently at full capacity. We are also studying our enrollment process and policies, and verifying student residences.

Our public schools are a great source of pride in this community. Your continued passion and commitment to our schools continues to move us swiftly forward on our promise of an excellent education for every Berkeley student.

Respectfully,  
Donald Evans, Ed.D.



*Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Delia Ruiz, Superintendent Donald Evans, Deputy Superintendent Javetta Cleveland, and Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services Pasquale Scuderi*

### LCAP Goal 1:



High-quality classroom instruction and curriculum, with academic interventions to eliminate barriers to student success. *All students graduate college and career ready.*

### LCAP Goal 2:



Culturally and linguistically responsive practices in every classroom. *All students are engaged and experiencing success in school.*

### LCAP Goal 3:



Safe, welcoming and inclusive climates. *All students feel safe and ready to learn.*

# A Look Inside Berkeley's Local Control & Accountability

**Berkeley's three-year LCAP identifies student needs, sets measurable goals, and accounts for the actions and services that will have the greatest impact on the education of our high need**

## Literacy Coaches in Every Elementary School



The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project from Columbia University is the research-based curriculum used in every K-5 Berkeley classroom to teach English Language Arts. Reading proficiently by the third grade is a key indicator of long-term academic success. With funding from both BSEP and state funds, each elementary school employs a full-time literacy coach. These local experts in the teaching of reading and writing serve as coaches to classroom teachers, and are specially trained to teach reading in small groups, and one-on-one, to emerging and struggling readers.

During this time of transition to the Common Core State Standards, literacy coaches also work closely with teachers on adjusting the curriculum to meet new standards, and collaborate with them on the assessment of student work.



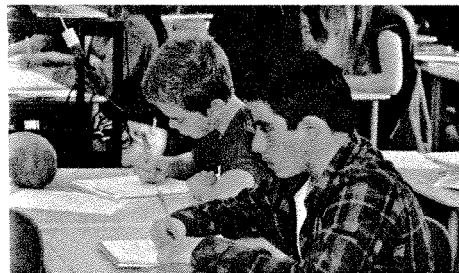
## Advancement Via Individual Determination — AVID



Designed to meet the needs of students in the "academic middle", AVID prepares students for academic success by providing them with a special course focused on a nationally recognized set of research-based strategies. Beginning in 7th grade, AVID students are prepared for rigorous academic work by learning how to dive

into text and read closely, take notes, use academic writing mechanics, practice effective organizational strategies, and develop a college-going mindset through exposure to guest speakers, college visits, and mentors.

The LCAP increases the number of students able to participate in AVID, while improving the school-wide college and career-going culture.



## Academic Support and Interventions for Middle and High School Students



Early outreach, resiliency programs, and academic supports are part of the three-tiered Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI2) model being built to better support students identified with known risk factors. For example, Bridge, RISE, and other similar after-school programs create a structured setting with access to a network of resources and mentors that can often guide students on the path to college and a career.

The success of these programs led to action steps in the LCAP that expand counseling, academic interventions, and the kinds of skill development and support students need to overcome challenges in their daily lives. The role of the high school intervention counselor is to mentor and monitor the students who need it the most. Building relationships with students is the first

step in connecting them with resources and mentors on campus.

## Specialized Instruction for English Learners



Targeted English language instruction is provided every week to ensure that the 985 English Learners (EL) in our schools can access the challenging academic curriculum to meet performance standards in all content areas. EL students develop fluency both through in class instruction and small-group English Language Development lessons.

The LCAP now ensures that every K-12 school has a dedicated ELD teacher to work with students in fluency level groups, as well as monitor and assess individual EL student progress.



## Social-Emotional Health: Prevention and Restoration



To succeed in school and in life, students must have the social-emotional readiness to learn. Teachers and staff are now expanding successful preventative and restorative practices to manage the big emotions and behavioral challenges that come with the complex academic and social world at school. Several components in Berkeley's LCAP improve conditions of learning for all students by advancing the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports framework.

## Stakeholder Engagement:

Berkeley's Local Control and Accountability Plan was developed with the contributions of the many diverse voices that represent our entire community.

# LCAP (LCAP)

## Additional funding to implement programs for students.



- **The Toolbox**, a highly successful social-emotional curriculum, is based on a set of twelve tools that create a common language and strategies to solve problems and build resiliency. Toolbox is now being taught to all students in grades K-6.

- **SEEDS Community Resolution Center** is now working in each middle school to train students as peer mediators, and teachers and staff in the use of restorative practices that serve to promote positive relationships, de-escalate conflicts, and reduce the use of suspension in discipline.

- **The Lifelines Academy**, based on Dr. Joseph E. Marshall, Jr.'s *Alive & Free* prescription for violence prevention, meets weekly with groups of students in grades 4-12. These groups provide a more intensive setting, using film study and reflective writing, as well as discussion, to teach students how to identify and avoid the risk factors for violence.

- **On-site mental health counseling and therapy** for Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Prevention (ATOD) at our three middle and two high schools is provided by the New Bridge Foundation with matching funds from the city of Berkeley.

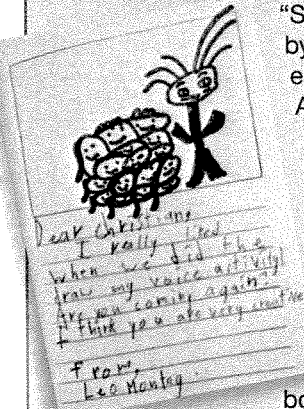
# Our Libraries: Mirrors and Windows

Active and open in every Berkeley public school, our BSEP-funded\* school library program offers students "mirrors and windows" — reflections of themselves in stories, and thought-provoking views into the lives of others. "Paying attention to the breadth of ideas and human experiences is a fundamental ethic of librarianship," notes Becca Todd, District Librarian. "Diversity in book characters and authors/illustrators is a key element of that commitment. And we are a very committed bunch of people."

Berkeley Public School libraries are actively engaged in the national *#weneeddiversebooks* campaign, both by expanding library book collections and arranging author/illustrator visits. Last year illustrator Christian Robinson visited every elementary school; this school year launched with author visits from Andrea Davis Pinkney, Rita Garcia-Williams and Jacqueline Briggs Martin, and others. Students are thrilled with opportunities to meet and ask questions of a diverse spectrum of authors and illustrators. Both the Berkeley Public Schools Fund and the Office of Family Engagement & Equity are key collaborators in this campaign.

## Things They Say...

"There are a lot of different kids in this school. We don't always want to have to read about the same characters. I like to read about all kinds of characters, and characters like me." — 3rd grade student, Malcolm X Elementary



"Students were hugely inspired by Christian Robinson's visit — especially as a young African American illustrator who includes many diverse characters in his books. He talked with 5th graders about going to the California Institute for the Arts. I loved his message of perseverance and following your dream."

— Mary Ann Scheuer, Emerson Librarian

"I just love reading, and being able to be around so many books, and seeing different titles makes it interesting.

There is definitely a diverse range of books and authors."

— Ayana Preston, BHS student and library proctor

\*BSEP is the Berkeley Schools Excellence Program, funded by Measure A of 2006. Learn more about all that BSEP provides for our students: [www.berkeleyschools.net/BSEP](http://www.berkeleyschools.net/BSEP)

**Visit: [library.berkeleyschools.net](http://library.berkeleyschools.net)**



## Some Key Actions in Berkeley's LCAP

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- Training for English Language Development (ELD) teachers dedicated at every school site to teach English Learners.
- Increasing use of culturally and linguistically relevant instructional practices.
- Active recruitment, support and retention of more African-American and Latino teachers.
- Expansion of the Bridge Program for African-American and Latino students at all three middle schools, providing support for academic achievement.
- Implementation of a social-emotional curriculum for grades K-6.
- Strengthening relationships with students by increasing alternative behavioral interventions, restorative practices, counseling and mental health services.

**More of what is inside the LCAP can be found at:**  
[www.berkeleyschools.net/local-control](http://www.berkeleyschools.net/local-control)



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## Vibrant Schoolyards Take Learning and Fun Outdoors

Local school construction bond proceeds are often only associated with big projects such as the new "M" Building on the Berkeley High campus, or the expansion of Jefferson Elementary School. In fact, each year there are smaller projects to upgrade aging building systems including roofs, boilers, fire alarms, security systems, and more. The funds also create new landscapes, playgrounds, and athletic spaces that enrich school life for Berkeley's students. Here's a glimpse at some of the most recent grounds improvements:

### Emerson Elementary in the Elmwood

- New play structure, picnic tables, benches
- New sport court play surface, and new entrance gates
- New shade trees, terraced plantings, and more

### John Muir Elementary in the Claremont

- New synthetic play turf and net structure
- Blacktop human sundial and globe map rendering
- New/renovated plantings, benches, water fountain, and more

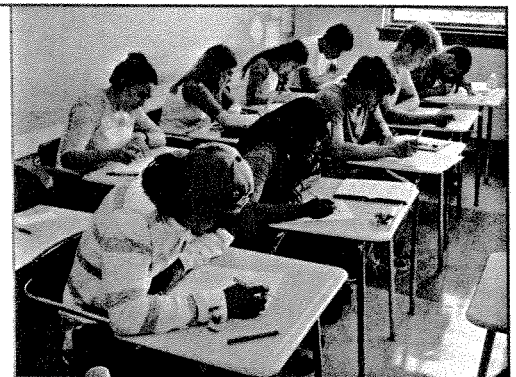
### Willard Middle School on Telegraph Avenue

- Enhanced landscaping with native plants along school perimeter
- Improved wayfinding, signage and enhanced entry
- New paving, concrete, and pathways

### Berkeley High School, Women's Softball Field at Milvia and Channing Streets

- Removal of portables; classroom space now in new "M" building
- New softball diamond and field
- Improved landscaping and fencing

**Summer 2015:** Schoolyard improvements coming to Berkeley Arts Magnet and Jefferson Elementary Schools.



**Your school bond and maintenance parcel tax monies at work. THANK YOU, BERKELEY!**

## New State Test to Better Measure Student Learning

The new Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA) will officially replace the California Standards Test (CST) in the spring of 2015. A more meaningful tool for measuring student achievement, the test will help educators and parents know how well students are learning the new Common Core State Standards. The fill-in-the-bubble answer sheets are being replaced with a computer-based format that go beyond multiple choice, requiring short answers, longer responses and meaningfully calibrated performance tasks.

Problem-solving, analysis and learning to demonstrate their knowledge and skills on these exams means students are also practicing skills that are useful in the workplace, and in life. More than 2,000 Chromebook computers are in the hands of elementary, middle and high school students every day to improve student learning and engagement.