

BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

TO: Donald Evans, Ed. D., Superintendent
FROM: Pasquale Scuderi, Associate Supt. of Educational Services
DATE: October 24, 2018
SUBJECT: School Class Size Report

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since 1987, Berkeley Schools Excellence Program (BSEP), a community response to state and federal education funding shortages, has financed lower class sizes at all Berkeley public schools. In 2016, BSEP Measure E1 reaffirmed the community's commitment to smaller class sizes by allocating additional funds to continue maintaining a lower student-to-teacher class size ratio. Currently, BSEP funds approximately 30% of classroom teachers in Berkeley schools.

The class size goal in K-3 is a school-wide average of 23:1. The prior BSEP Measure A of 2006 has a goal for fourth and fifth grade as a district-wide class size average of 26:1 and it remains in place until the ultimate goal of Measure E1, a balanced school-wide average of 23:1 to be achieved by the sixth year of the Measure. The goal for secondary schools remains a district-wide class size average of 28:1.

2018-19 Class Size Reports

The BSEP Planning and Oversight Steering Committee met on October 11, 2018 to review the Class Size Report.

The class size goals in elementary schools have been met. For K-3, all school sites have averages below 23:1, and in fact school-wide class size averages are currently below 23:1 for K-5 as well. The district-wide class size goal of 26:1 for fifth and sixth grade was also met. A few elementary schools have a class size average of more than 26 students in fifth grade. A solution could have been to implement 4th/5th grade combination classes. However, most families and teachers do not favor combination classes. As a result, a few elementary schools have smaller class averages in the fourth grade and larger averages in the fifth grade. Emerson Elementary school is an exception, with larger fourth grade classes. Emerson was offered an additional teacher to lower the fourth grade class size and create three sections instead of two. The school staff declined the additional teacher as it would have meant that Emerson would have lost its flex classroom. Instead, Emerson was granted funds to implement an additional release time period for fourth grade.

The class size goals in middle school have been met, with an average class size of 27.4 in sixth grade. The district-wide class size average in 7th and 8th grade is 27.2 excluding PE.

High school class size averages have been met, with an average class size of 27.2 at Berkeley High School excluding PE. The class size average for ninth grade including the LEAP academic support elective is 26.2. Berkeley Technology Academy class size average is 9.2 students per teacher, significantly less than the 18:1 average stipulated in the Measure.

POLICY/CODE

Berkeley Schools Excellence Project, Measure E1 of 2016

FISCAL IMPACT

None

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Receive the School Class Size Report for information.