

BSEP PLANNING & OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 11, 2020

BUSD Offices –Technology Room 126
2020 Bonar Street, Berkeley, CA 94702

P&O Committee Members Present

Nicole Chabot, *Berkeley Arts Magnet*
Alisha Graves, *Cragmont*
Jonathan Weissglass, *Emerson*
Chris Wallace, *Jefferson*
Vanessa Garza, *John Muir*
Carla Bryant, *Oxford*
Weldon Bradstreet, *Rosa Parks*
Dierdre Ally, *Sylvia Mendez*

Heather Flett, *Washington*
Terry Pastika, *King Middle School*
Jose Rodriguez, *Longfellow Middle School*
Aaron Glimme, *Berkeley High*
Josh Irwin, *Berkeley High*
Esfandiar Imani, *Berkeley High*
Shauna Rabinowitz, *Berkeley High*
Felicia Bellows, *Independent Study*

P&O Committee Members Absent*:

Tamara Perkins, *Early Childhood Education*
Jane Logan, *Malcolm X*
Martin de Mucha Flores, *Longfellow M.S.*

Jennifer Sitkin-Morgan, *Willard Middle School*
Rita Gaber, *Willard Middle School*
Evon Williams, *Berkeley Technology Academy*

**Alternates and co-reps are not marked absent if another rep is present. Currently there is no representation from Thousand Oaks elementary, and only one representative from King Middle School.*

Visitors, School Board Directors, Union Reps, and Guests:

Judy Appel, *School Board Member*

BUSD Staff:

Brent Stephens, *Superintendent of Schools*
Bajé Thiara, *Associate Superintendent of Educational Services*
Jay Nitschke, *Director of Technology*
Danielle Perez, *BSEP Program Specialist*

1. Call to Order and Introductions

At 7:18 p.m. Chairperson Bradstreet called the meeting to order. The meeting began with introductions around the table.

2. Establish the Quorum/Approve the Agenda

The quorum was established with 13 voting members present (increased to 16 later in the meeting).

Chair Bradstreet asked for a motion to approve the agenda, Rep. Flett moved to approve the agenda, Rep. Wallace seconded the motion; the agenda was approved unanimously.

3. Chairperson's Comments

Chair Pastika asked members to contribute to the committee snack fund when possible.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. BSEP Director's Comments

Jay Nitschke, Director of Technology for Natasha Beery, Director BSEP & Community Relations
Director Nitschke read a message email from Director Beery: "Natasha sends greetings. She will return to the Director's Chair on Feb 25 and meanwhile has been endeavoring to work and coordinate documents remotely, including the first drafts you see tonight.

This time of year is always challenging, as we endeavor to pull together a series of complex, large, interconnected budgets on a fairly tight timeline." Director Nitschke added that about 1,000 BHS students visited the District Office for demonstrations, which occupied our district leaders earlier in the day.

Director Beery's message continued: "This year, with a new Superintendent and new Associate Superintendent grappling with these budgets for the first time, and with me working remotely while dealing with family obligations, it has been more important than ever to rely on the careful and diligent work of BSEP Program Specialist Danielle Perez and Senior Budget Analyst Liz Karam, who have managed the multiple complex draft plans in many iterations. A huge thank you to Liz and Danielle!

Also Natasha wishes to thank Jay Nitschke for taking on extra work while she is away, ensuring that the history and complexities of the teacher template are clearly explained."

6. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Brent Stephens, Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Stephens offered some comments about events at BHS, germane to this group because the asks from students require resources. On Wednesday, news broke about two things, a lawsuit alleging negligent handling of an assault claim, and the tagging in bathrooms, naming BHS students as perpetrators, leading to a student body walkout on Monday. There were 400 students who were there for public testimony, and today 1,000 students walked out, marched down University Ave, filled every floor of the District Office. Hundreds stayed for conversation in the Board Room with the Superintendent. This is not the first group to raise this issue, goes back to at least 2010. There is an active group, focusing on resources from District, including Title IX, need for ongoing education of youth at every level around positive relationships, consent, development of healthy sexual identity. There is an additional need for counseling, in the immediate and in the longer term. Need to look at the right things, including enforcement, education, counseling and healing. It was inspiring to be with them today. Value this feedback and hearing the lived experiences of students that despite BHS efforts, it's not enough. The committee will hear later in this meeting a list of potential needs, for this and other groups contemplating use of resources.

7. School Board Update

Judy Appel, School Board President and BSEP Liaison

President Appel shared that the Board is preparing to consider cuts to the budget for next year based on the current annual budget provided by the Governor. She had just attended the SBAC meeting, and noted that the Board would welcome input from the community about this process. The District had hoped not to make any cuts, with an expected 3% State COLA, but it's been lowered to a projected 2.27% (about \$618,000 this year less than expected), and anything cut this year will be felt. She expressed hope that cutting in the District budget won't be necessary, and hope that committee and community members will be advocates to their elected officials and at ballots for greater state support of public education through increased funding. She also supported discussions around new additions to the budget such as ways to address the situation at BHS.

8. Approval of Minutes

January 28, 2020

Rep. Kate Jordan's name was not included in the attendance section of the minutes her name will be added under "Committee Members Absent."

Rep. Irwin moved to approve the corrected 1.28.20 meeting minutes, Rep. Bellows seconded; the minutes were approved unanimously.

9. SBAC Report

Reps. Carla Bryant and Nicole Chabot

Rep. Bryant began by stating main discussion points. 2020-21 will see modifications for Title I allocations to keep Title I funds at more sites. With newly proposed rules, BUSD will be able to keep funds at some schools longer, rather than having most schools losing all Title I funding due to declining numbers of free and reduced lunch eligible students. They discussed the downgrade in expected COLA and had a conversation about the pressures of Special Education costs on the district budget (see presentation details in agenda item #11). Part of the Superintendent's plan is to spend down Fund 20, a reserve, from \$2.3 million to an ending fund balance of \$1.4 million; which will still maintain the required 3% general reserve plus an additional 1% for LCAP. Rep. Chabot added that a month ago district leaders didn't think we'd need to cut, and now based on budget we're estimating \$1 million this year and \$2 million next year. This will be very difficult and painful after the past two years' reductions already. This \$1 million GF cut target is assuming that the P&O approves the additional expenses proposed in the Teacher Template as requested. Dr. Stephens also pointed out that \$750,000 of current expense is sitting in one-time revenue, and the challenge is to now find alternate revenue sources for ¾ of a million dollars.

Rep. Flett asked Board President Appel if there is a path that committee members can actually take to express dissatisfaction to our state government. President Appel answered that the state government needs to hear that they don't feel like there is enough money to continue to provide the quality of services that our students need. She hears the elected's talking point that the current budget is fine, and this is our opportunity to really let the governor know that having to still make cuts to public education is an unwelcome surprise. We thought we'd be fine with this governor, but here we have to make cuts to significant programs. Dr. Stephens elaborated that the COLA change means there is about \$600,000 less than we thought we'd get, and when we do all the

math we think we need to reduce expenditures by \$1 million to have a balanced budget; this is also due to cost increases across multiple categories. Last year, a number of carryover, one-time money had been used to pay for ongoing positions for an extra year, hoping that the budget outlook would improve, so that's \$750,000 that we also need to fund. The puzzle pieces to fit together are the \$1 million in reductions and ¾ of million dollars in need of alternate revenue sources or deciding to cut those positions/programs.

Dr. Stephens also highlighted that there is not a district in the state that is not cutting budgets. Chair Pastika asked where the anticipated 3% estimate originated, and Dr. Stephens answered that it was pulled from the final budget approved by the state in the last school year, so all California school districts used that same assumption. There is information now that the COLA is expected to turn down in 2021-22 as well.

10. Preliminary Recommendation for BSEP Funds in FY 2020-21: Teacher Template

Jay Nitschke, Director of Technology, for Natasha Beery, Director of BSEP

Director Nitschke distributed the following document:

- 2020-21 Teacher Template
- High Quality Instruction (HQI) Summary draft Plan 20-21
- Additional Considerations for BSEP budgets

Director Nitschke began by explaining that usually this would have been a single draft plan, but because of the rushed nature of this year with the pressure on overall district budget planning, there are instead three separate documents to review. The big change proposed in SY '20-21 is a change in the GF contribution for classroom teachers in the Teacher Template, which increases the BSEP contributions toward Class Size Reduction by over \$1 million. Per the Measure language, Class Size Reduction must be the first priority satisfied with available resources, then other purposes - Professional Development (PD), Program Evaluation, Expanded Course Offerings (ECO), Classroom Support, etc. can be funded. PD and Evaluation budgets will come to the P&O at a subsequent meeting. Last year 5 FTE of staffing was added to the Classroom Support budget to support the Universal 9th grade (U9) at Berkeley High, as well as the Two-Way Immersion program (TWI) support at Sylvia Mendez. A new item in this HQI budget is 5 FTE of staffing to support students with disabilities. As the budget stands, this will decrease the HQI fund balance moving forward.

Rep. Irwin asked if the GF contribution to the Teacher Template (TT) is a reflection of State or District priorities. Director Nitschke explained that this is a District decision prompted by the increasing costs to the GF creating a need to reduce other expenses to keep a balanced budget. This change in the TT is one way BSEP can utilize larger than expected fund balances to support District needs at a time when the GF is experiencing a squeeze on resources. It is true that the state is underfunding schools generally, but this specific change is a District-made one.

Rep. Glimme clarified that the measure language does not identify a class size target for TK, but does say 18:1 for continuation programs, meaning Berkeley Technology Academy (BTA).

President Appel stated that specifically the '20-21 TT has an increase in the GF-provided teacher

to student ratio, from 34:1 to 36:1. Rep Chabot shared that she felt it could be hard to defend this increase, recognizing that if BSEP weren't here the district would have to drastically increase class sizes. She asked what the average class sizes are in our neighboring communities. Dr. Stephens answered that he could track down that information but generally in most districts it's 28:1 in lower grades, up to high 30s in upper grades.

Rep. Rodriguez stated, given the information in the article "Silent Recession," it seems that actual costs are far outstripping any inflation, driving the GF to not be able to afford the same class size contribution. This is a separate issue from the change in COLA. Given this, it is important to forecast, as we're staring into a scary future for our schools. Conversely, we have a \$20 million budget with an accumulated fund balance that looks like \$4.5 million, and how do we reconcile that? Director Nitschke responded that the last BSEP measures all ran out of funds at the end of each cycle, resulting in the GF having to take on expenses that BSEP had been paying. The idea was to start Measure E1 with a rather higher fund balance and have it erode away as costs rise. President Appel shared that there has been a lot of discussion about the excess in the BSEP funds, which is one of the reasons that the district is proposing to make use of some through the change in the TT. She stated that the proposal being put forward allows both of those things; using some of the money now, but the idea is not that we'll keep putting in more and more expenses each year. Rep. Rodriguez asked if we have that projection over several years for the GF. Dr. Stephens responded that we have spent time on multi-year GF projections on SBAC looking 3 years at a time, this group's purview is a different budget.

Rep. Glimme reminded the group that the District has done this before, it's not the first time that the CSR number has been adjusted, for many reasons. Rep. Wallace shared that his bigger concern was from the update from the Office of Family Engagement and Equity (OFEE), as this seems to be making an impact and they are asking for more funding. He felt it was important to find ways to fund programs like this, not just from BSEP but also from GF, to create equitable programs to address issues we keep saying we're not addressing. He worried that if BSEP continues to take on costs currently being funded by the GF, BSEP wouldn't be able to afford other programs. Rep. Glimme answered that the GF can stop paying for things it's currently paying for, like TSAs who work with students, in favor of implementing special services, projects, or addressing students with more needs. The question is not do we have to, but it's what do we cut instead. Rep Imani echoed Rep. Rodriguez's statement, that as a new member, it is valuable to hear about projections and to be informed about elements and components that make up those projections; some components we seem to have more control over than others. Speaking of the FTE for IB coordination at BHS, he asked if we know if the students in that group are increasing and if that will that impact the cost. President Appel answered that because now 9th grade students aren't yet assigned to a small learning community, it's hard to track the change from last year to this. Also, note that the big debate at BHS is around the fact that half of the students are in Academic Choice and the other half are spread between the remaining programs.

Director Nitschke noted that the Additional Considerations document addresses some of the discussions floating around that may be brought into the HQI budget, new from last year. The committee will hear more about this at the next meeting on 2/25. Dr. Stephens wanted to create a placeholder for new ideas, though we haven't yet determined what flexibility exists in each resource, and are not sure where these costs may land. President Appel added that given the

conversations district-wide about sexual misconduct, she would like to add this as a consideration on this list, including education for younger students and Title IX.

Rep Graves asked if there is any data so far, such as attendance, around the AASP activities at Longfellow. Dr. Stephens responded that Longfellow now has the best attendance of any middle school in the district. Rep. Graves asked if the AASP item in Additional Considerations would focus on extending the program beyond Longfellow or deepening at Longfellow. Dr. Stephens responded it would do both.

Rep. Irwin added that an idea about the issues at BHS, it seems like a topic that could be addressed in part by partnering with groups already existing in the greater Bay Area; we have so many things we want to handle, but maybe public-private partnerships could help address some of these issues. Dr. Stephens responded that the district is pursuing a grant application from Berkeley Mental Health that could bring \$3 million, but that's still finite and addressing this problem will need soft and hard funding for an ongoing program. Rep. Flett would like to share an article that argues that the greatest success in preventing this behavior is addressing it in middle schools, and she would like to see the district act on that.

11. Support for Teaching and Equity Lens: Focus on Special Education Staffing in Classroom Support

Brent Stephens, Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Stephens presented the following slides:

- P&O Special Education Presentation

Dr. Stephens explained that this presentation elaborates on the rationale behind the proposal in the HQI plan to add funding to pay 5 FTE of SpEd staffing. See slides for details. *IDEA* is the law that dictates federal programming, and is only set at 40% of needs, it is important to let federal leaders know that we're dissatisfied with this. What happens in SpEd impacts our GF and BSEP budgets. SELPA is the Special Education Local Plan Area, the north part of Alameda County. The cost to place students in other public schools within SELPA is about \$15,000 annually, whereas the cost for private or out-of-SELPA placement can range from \$50,000-\$150,000 per year. BUSD emphasizes inclusion, serving students in regular classrooms, rather than special day classes in which sped students are separated with dedicated teachers.

Chair Pastika asked, given the section in the upcoming ballot measure allocating funding to SpEd, why BSEP is being asked to fund these positions. Additionally, a lot of SSCs fund RTI positions through site funds, what has been discussed about how these 5 full-time SpEd positions will overlap with or work with these existing RTI positions. Dr. Stephens responded that if passed, BERRA revenues would go mostly to compensation increases to all staff. The remaining small portion of funding will go to support hard-to-staff areas, of which SpEd is the hardest to staff. But it's different than just hiring, it's figuring out how to recruit and have them stay. Also, RTI is pre-referral, and SpEd staff serve students post-IEP. SELPA helps us understand where we can use more Special Day Classes (SDCs) across the region. Rep. Graves asked for clarification about the litigation cost percentage in the slides. Dr. Stephens said he will bring more info on this. Rep. Glimme noted that cash-in-lieu benefit is not available to certificated

staff, only classified. Rep. Rodriguez asked for the percentage of GF budget that pays for SpEd. Dr. Stephens answered roughly 18%.

12. High Quality Instruction BSEP Funds in FY 2020-21: Evaluation and Assessment: An Outside Assessment

Brent Stephens, Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Stephens distributed:

- Executive Summary of Report from Linda Wing

Dr. Stephens introduced Dr. Thomas Reinhardt, who is 2 months into his work for BREA with BUSD. He is the first BREA hire this year after most of the team turned over this past summer. Knowing that we couldn't fill all these openings right away, we brought in a consultant, Dr. Wing, to help inform how the team is reconstructed. The cover letter is general, but executive summary is the primary focus. The goal is to use the recommendations as we propose a BREA budget, which will come with a list of asks to implement these recommendations.

Rep. Irwin asked if BREA is school-centric, focusing on what the schools need to understand their scores. Given the 12 recommendations in this document it leads one to think that the focus is broad. Dr. Stephens responded that the focus will be something that sits in between, building capacity for sites to access data, while addressing programmatic issues. There is the idea of outsourcing program evaluations to contractors. The community demands a reasonable set of program evaluations each year, which can happen through contracting, and then focus is on building site capacity. Rep. Imani asked, given that additional resources add costs, is there is any opportunity to tap the skilled community in schools or broader city or area. There could be students who could help. Dr. Reinhardt responded that there is already a plan partnering with a member of the PAC, who is a data science professor, pulling together a team of data science interns who want to work with education data. Rep. Bryant expressed happiness that even in SBAC the conversation emphasized that what parents want are kids to be successful. She wants the district to know and be able to measure success. UC Berkeley has entire departments who could answer a lot of questions. Dr. Stephens responded that things are changing in a positive way. The School of Education at UCB has invested in a Strategic Partnerships Director position, to foster partnership between Oakland, Berkeley, and UCB, and came on board 3 months ago. This whole job is to make research connections.

13. BSEP Library Subcommittee

Jessica Lee, Library Services Coordinator

Ms. Lee provided the following:

- Library Subcommittee Information Flyer

While Ms. Lee was not present, there was discussion about whether the group has been or should proceed to function as a P&O Subcommittee, or if it's a general program advisory committee. [BSEP staff note: after discussion with Ms. Lee, this group is advisory only and will not function as a formal P&O subcommittee, though P&O members are invited to attend these meetings.]

14. For the Good of the Order

Rep Rabinowitz acknowledged that many promises were made to BHS students earlier in the day, and expressed hope that we will honor those.

Rep. Chabot asked about the process for evaluating a large fund ask, such as the TT change, increased HQI budget, etc. Rep. Glimme answered that the P&O has made comments to the Board, can do so again at need. Historically these have been to caution the Board on adding expense to BSEP in light of fund sustainability. He also reminded the group that the P&O is advisory, and the Board will make all final decisions about budgets.

President Appel added that if any members have questions about GF contributions they should feel free to contact her.

Rep. Pastika noted that the group is also still waiting for a summary of the budgeting model used to inform BSEP measure planning, and this could be used to assess how BSEP could cope with taking on additional costs.

15. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 9:25 p.m.