

**BSEP PLANNING & OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES
May 5, 2020**

P&O Committee Members Present

Nicole Chabot, *Berkeley Arts Magnet*
Jonathan Weissglass, *Emerson*
Pamela Hyde, *Emerson (Alt)*
Chris Wallace, *Jefferson*
Jane Logan, *Malcolm X*
Carla Bryant, *Oxford*
Weldon Bradstreet, *Rosa Parks*
Laura Babitt, *Rosa Parks (Alt)*

Kate Jordan, *Sylvia Mendez*
Heather Flett, *Washington*
Terry Pastika, *King Middle School*
Josh Irwin, *Berkeley High*
Aaron Glimme, *Berkeley High*
Shauna Rabinowitz, *Berkeley High*
Felicia Bellows, *Independent Study*

P&O Committee Members Absent*:

Tamara Perkins, *Early Childhood Education*
Alisha Graves, *Cragmont*
Vanessa Garza, *John Muir*
Rita Gaber, *Willard Middle School*
Jennifer Sitkin-Morgan, *Willard Middle School*

Jose Rodriguez, *Longfellow Middle School*
Martin de Much Flores, *Longfellow M.S.*
Rita Gaber, *Willard Middle School*
Evon Williams, *Berkeley Technology Academy*
Esfandiar Imani, *Berkeley High*

**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 President*

BUSD Staff:

Brent Stephens, *Superintendent of Schools*
Natasha Beery, *Director of BSEP and Communications*
Jay Nitschke, *Director of Technology*
Danielle Perez, *BSEP Program Specialist*

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was held online via Zoom. At 4:03 p.m. Chairperson Bradstreet called the meeting to order. Members introduced themselves.

2. Establish the Quorum/Approve the Agenda

The quorum was established with 14 voting members present.

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

3. Chairperson's Comments

Chair Bradstreet wished all the committee members wellness in the current challenging times.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Approval of Minutes - April 21, 2020

Ms. Perez noted she amended the draft to include President Appel in the list of attendees.

Rep. Bellows moved to approve the corrected 4.21.20 meeting minutes, Rep. Jordan seconded; the corrected 4.21.20 minutes were approved unanimously.

6. District Update

*Judy Appel, School Board President, and
Natasha Beery, Director BSEP & Community Relations*

President Appel thanked all attendees for continuing to participate in the committee. She stated that the state and district are looking ahead to an unsure future and economic standing, in which the P&O is going to continue to be very important as BSEP comprises 20% of the overall district budget. She shared that there will be an update on COVID-19 and district and planning at the May 6 Board meeting. She also expressed gratitude for teachers in recognition of Teacher Appreciation week, as they are continuing to work hard in a whole new context.

Director Beery clarified that since the transition to online P&O meetings, to shorten the agenda we have removed separate comment sections for the Superintendent, Board President, and BSEP Director. These are now merged into the single District Update agenda item, which allows each position to share thoughts and updates with the P&O as necessary.

Superintendent Stephens shared a slide presentation with a number of important items to help illustrate the district's current situation with distance learning. The slides show representations of the number of students not yet participating in distance learning; this could be for a number of reasons and it is important to recognize that unlike our regular attendance routines, how these numbers are collected is not yet standardized. It is early, too much so to speculate just yet. The district has seen teacher completion of participation trackers increase from 66% in week one to 88% in weeks 2-3. It may have been higher in the intervening 2 weeks. The number of students not participating is decreasing from week one through week three. Dr. Stephens felt that speculation that the challenges of distance learning are exacerbating the existing equity gap in our district is proving to be true. The students marked by teachers as not yet participating fall into categories that we have known need more support: homeless, socio-economically disadvantaged, Special Ed, African American, etc.). District leaders are encouraging principals to share strategies to increase participation across all schools.

The district's Town Hall event the previous week used the Thought Exchange program, saw 350 attendees, and solicited ideas and rated responses using the program from attendees as well as others. The Thought Exchange was open for a week, and gathered quite a lot of data. The participants were mostly parents and guardians, most of those representing elementary level students. The big values expressed are interaction between students and teachers, and concern

about connectedness, emotional wellbeing, and the mental health of students and staff through this period. See slides for more details. This information is not conclusive, but it is interesting and the district will continue to look at data as we get it. Thought Exchange can also provide “sides” analysis, which sorts comments into “A” and “B” groups using AI, to see any divergence emerging in the data. We can see a clear divide between those wanting more rigor in learning versus those wanting more emotional health for students.

Regarding the district budget: a challenging aspect of the current environment is an impending likely recession due to COVID mitigation strategies in place. The May 14 Governor’s Budget revision will hopefully give us a clearer picture of what we can expect in state funding for 2020-21. An economic recession will likely reduce funding for public schools. The Educators Advisory Committee (EAC) and SBAC have both reconvened, as we are starting from scratch in budget reduction conversations at this point. The groups will be going back to work to identify a further \$2 million dollars in budget reductions, in case state funding declines as feared.

Regarding summer learning, the district is planning an expansion of learning opportunities for students in the summer. Typical years see a light summer learning program, including our SpEd extended learning program, and credit recovery for High Schoolers. We are planning out a distance learning program for all of these existing summer populations, and are also expanding planning to serve unduplicated students. We have redirected \$100,000 thus far for the expansion, and we can move more funds if demand is strong. We are planning as a contingency about how to use district facilities if that will be permitted, but currently the default is to the distance learning model. If it’s permissible to bring small groups of students into a summer program in person, we will do that. The district is also exploring potential partnerships to provide free and reduced participation fees to virtual camps for unduplicated students, one big one so far is with the Lawrence Hall of Science. We are also expanding our High School program from 4 weeks to 6 weeks to expand credit recovery. We have sent out a survey gauging interest from teachers in doing extra summer teaching work, as we are looking at smaller groups for this new model.

Board President Appel shared that on a recent California School Board Association meeting, she had heard that there will be another budget revise in August as well. Dr. Stephens commented that the district will have to plan for flexibility. Rep. Chabot asked if this would revise the budget that would apply to the 2020-21 school year. President Appel responded that was what she understood, though obviously we have to make a budget to be in effect in August when the new school year opens. When she finds out more, she will bring the information to the P&O.

7. SBAC Update

Carla Bryant, Nicole Chabot, and Josh Irwin

Rep. Chabot shared that the SBAC mostly discussed the information that Dr. Stephens had just reviewed with the P&O. The SBAC also saw a list of suggested cuts from the Superintendent and his leadership team. The cuts were aggregated into \$500,000 tranches. As a group they had an opportunity to ask questions and log thoughts, questions, and opinions on the new suggestions as the first input session. It sounds like it will go through many iterations in preparation for the Fall. The proposed cuts fall into 3 groups, those that are easy to visualize (not palatable but easy to visualize), things like security officers at BHS. The second group are items on a sliding scale

with revenue sources, for example increasing rental rates, reducing the use of utilities and transportation (maybe through less use during closure). The third group is comprised of larger-picture ideas about making cuts to budgetary items which have yet to get specific details; these include a suggestion to reduce the number of filled and unfilled TSA roles. The SBAC will need more meat on the bones of that recommendation to be able to make decisions. The proposals will go through rounds with a variety of advisory committees before final decisions are made. Rep. Bryant added that the options are informed by looking at potential COLAs, for example having a 1% or 2% or 0% COLA. What came out in comments about the proposals were a lot of questions around the long-term impact of these cuts.

Rep. Babitt asked to add on to Rep. Bryant's comment. She reminded the group that when one Security Officer position was eliminated at BHS, an unexpected fallout was that Longfellow lost its Security Manager because of seniority rules about positions in the district's hiring practices. Longfellow didn't realize they would lose an important part of their community, and this illustrates how unintended consequences can result from some of these proposed reductions.

Dr. Stephens then shared slides to show how COVID 19 has impacted the district's expenses, savings, and new revenue due to the school closures. [See slides for details](#). The district has received emergency response revenue from SB 117, California legislation to provide emergency relief. The CARES reimbursement is federal money for additional expenses associated with the pandemic, and we don't know how much the district stands to earn from available FEMA funding. He will be asking the School Board tomorrow to declare a state of emergency to make the district eligible for these funds, then we'll apply. New expenses include a 5% differential pay for bargaining units to work during the 6-week closure period. There is a newly formed group of 90 educators creating weekly curriculum sets for grades TK through 12. We also have additional costs for overtime, and materials for extra site cleaning. We are also anticipating a 20% loss and replacement rate for chromebooks distributed to students, as well as some expense due to unpaid meal charge balances in the Nutrition Services budget. There are some savings associated with the closure from a variety of resources, which could be up to \$500,000 through unrealized programs. We also expect \$100,000 in savings in the LCAP budget for activities that can't take place like PD, tutoring, Super Science Saturdays, etc. That LCAP funding has already formally been redirected by the Board toward expanding summer session offerings as discussed earlier.

8. Community Engagement for Long-Term District Planning

Brent Stephens, Superintendent of Schools, and

Natasha Beery, Director BSEP & Community Relations

Dr. Stephens explained that sketchy guidance from the state coupled with the possibility of distance learning for next year pose challenges for our district. The Governor shared a roadmap with criteria to be met for various operations to restart, including public schooling. That roadmap includes comments on what school will look like in fall, including capacity to maintain social distancing once school returns. We have gotten some more information, for example from San Diego Unified, which released an analysis of hard-to-plan-for scenarios. It suggests possibly dividing students into two alternating groups, in which only one would be on campus while the other group does distance learning. Another model could be 4-5 equal groups, where each group is on campus one day per week and continues distance learning the other four days of the week. It

also proposes thinking about how to manage common spaces such as hallways, playgrounds, and cafeterias. The features of distance learning will still need to be maintained centrally, including things like meal service for pick-up and technological support and structure.

Dr. Stephens is organizing advisory committees to serve as sounding boards for the leadership staff's work to take place between now and mid-June. There will be groups for both parents and staff. He sent letters to the Chairs of all existing committees, including the P&O, requesting 2 representatives from each to fill the parent committee. A variety of educators will take part on the educator group as well. These committees will begin meeting on Monday and Tuesday of the following week, and we expect to present staff proposals on BUSD social distancing practices, analysis by our Facilities department about school capacity while maintaining social distancing, and transportation capacity. This will be immensely complicated work, and Dr. Stephens plans to share much more detailed communication to the community in a day or two, with a sequence and process to create plans.

Chair Bradstreet asked that P&O representatives interested in serving on the Community Advisory Committee for the Fall email both co-Chairs as soon as possible.

Rep. Weisglass asked if the state was providing any guidance around Fall planning, as it seems inefficient for each district to have to figure this out individually. Dr. Stephens answered that there has been no firm guidance yet, which is very difficult, but this is likely to continue to be true for a while and we have to proceed as best we can.

Rep. Babitt asked if there had been any coordination with the private sector; given that kids not having school to go to will greatly impact their parents' ability to work. Dr. Stephens responded that it's not a reasonable expectation on parents either now or next year. An extension of school day programming, giving space and a program for students who can't be home any longer, is being evaluated. That represents designing a whole new program, the district would need to add staff for that capacity, and our limits will be primarily physical space. We are looking harder across all available district buildings to open up every available space for the coming school year.

Rep. Glimme asked if there were a mechanism for staff to volunteer in the planning process. Dr. Stephens replied that yes, and the process is more direct for staff, having included in a number of communications to staff a solicitation to email interest to superintendent@berkeley.net. The pace of the committees' work is roughly equal for both parent and staff groups. There will also be a number of staff work groups preparing draft material for presentation to these sounding board committees, and the district may also use the teacher leader structure already in place. Rep. Babitt how parents might be a part of summer school planning. Dr. Stephens responded that he had to make a tough decision about bandwidth for engagement and time available for planning. He has already asked Ed Services to design summer offerings, as already described, and community engagement will be focused on the fall.

9. Recommendation for BSEP and BERRA Funds 2020-21: BSEP Measure Oversight, Communications, and Community Engagement; and BERRA Measure Oversight
Natasha Beery, Director BSEP & Community Relations

Director Beery addressed and discussed the following document:

- Recommendation for expenditure of BSEP and BERRA Funds in 2020-21 for Oversight, Communications, and Community Engagement

Director Beery explained that there have been no changes to the plan since its first presentation at the 4/21/20 P&O meeting. See [plan document](#) for details.

Rep. Irwin stated, regarding the Communications budget, that he was not questioning the merit of adding the position; but asked if the half time specialist is a new expense at \$50,000 that the district is considering funding. Director Beery answered that this expenditure is new as a position, but not in purpose. Past budgets had similar amounts to fund contracts which fulfilled the same function, and the idea with the change to a salaried position here is to reduce outsourcing and achieve the same ends through staffing to satisfy what has proven to be a stable need. Contractors have been a point of issue with labor partners as well. She continued that we've focused heavily on expanding the district's communication capacity, and eliminating piecemeal contracts in favor of one part-time staff position. Rep. Irwin responded that when the district brings new staff on and then positions have to be eliminated due to later budget shortfalls, it's painful; with contractors it's more understandable. In talking about a likelihood of cuts to positions, which seems to have been expressed earlier in the meeting, he expressed discomfort with adding positions in light of others being reduced. He would like more guidance from the district letting committee members know, given that things have changed dramatically past months, that this is really what we need. Director Beery expressed appreciation for the shared perspective. She acknowledged that the Board has expressed concern as well, with new staff and programs. But there are competing concerns about both budgets and also bandwidth, and there is a lot of belt tightening going on. Regarding this particular item, this is a specified purpose in the BSEP measure language, and we can't use this resource to fund non-communications or community relations purposes. We have tried to use BSEP funds wherever possible to relieve pressure on the GF, to the concern at times of this committee's members. Though ultimately all funding that serves students, families, and staff is positive. This work is currently being done on contract, and may continue as such for a while due to how long it takes to get a new position through the Merit Commission, but we would serve our community better with something that is more stable.

Chair Pastika asked, hypothetically, if this position were removed, would we come back and plug that same amount into contract expense? Director Beery answered yes, and as we've seen in the past, the P&O is here approving the purpose rather than the exact type of expense. It's happened before that a position could be filled by a certificated staff member but ends up being filled by a classified employee. As long it's serving the same purpose and efforts, whether it's different types of positions or a contract, that wouldn't need re-approval from P&O. If the P&O says this purpose is not approved, then the question would become: what the funds will be used for instead. Recall that BSEP has 2% of revenue designated exclusively for oversight, communications, and community engagement (though the funds are not subdivided between those three purposes in any required ratio). The remaining BSEP funds are allocated among purposes that have some flexibility; CSR must be the primary use of the 66% budget, then there is flexibility with any remaining revenues between PD, BREAA, Classroom support, and these can be mixed and matched. There is also flexibility in the 7% budget, in which we may move up to

10% of those funds between Library, VAPA, and Technology budgets. But we can't take from the 2% Oversight budget and use it elsewhere, in the same way that we can't take from CSR to fund Libraries.

Rep. Irwin asked if that is the case, then by not funding this position the only money saving benefit would be an increase in the remaining budget in this resource, and it wouldn't be applicable or able to redirect to other needs. Director Beery agreed that was exactly right. She continued that this is a specified purpose of funds, and if it's not expended it remains in the fund balance until it is used for the designated purpose. Rep. Irwin responded that this information makes him more comfortable about this proposal, knowing also that there is a need for this position and there isn't a lot of fat to trim in BSEP. Director Beery added that this is a tight budget, she had to scrape to fund a half-time position, and it may end up back with a contractor. This proposal includes dipping into Measure A carryover to fund purposes like printing and mailing. She hasn't been able to see another clear way to use that \$50,000 to relieve the GF. Also, she and the PIO are really struggling this year with capacity to meet the district's communications needs, even before COVID 19. The new position is an ask coming out of very real need.

Rep. Babitt suggested that we can also think about how much work is put on BSEP/P&O support staff. They give us a lot of information, but maybe templates even how we run the committee can be reformatted, including how we can deal with equity and other conversations. She suggested now may be a good time to cut back and reformat so that workload is a little lighter.

Rep. Jordan moved to approve the BSEP/BERRA Oversight Plan for 2020-21, Rep. Glimme seconded; the plan was approved unanimously.

10. P&O Guidelines: Plan and Budget Changes, Goals and Objectives

Director Beery noted that this is a good segue from Rep. Babitt's comments to our next topic: there are ways that we've done things that have built up over time, for example how plans and reports are provided, how the committee reviews them, and how the committee gets involved in potential changes. As has been brought up in recent meetings, we can consider ways to include goals and objectives. 2-3 years ago SMART goals were a part of BSEP plans, that relatively quickly fell by the wayside. She would welcome suggestions about ways to streamline and deepen the committee's work, to cut away the extraneous and allow more room for discussions of things that really matter to oversight and the use of voter-approved measure funds. This initial conversation is meant to open up this discussion area, and the committee will continue discussion in June. This group can work together even if we're still in a remote world next year, to do required oversight work like audits that have to be done, and also make room for discussions that people really want to have.

Chair Pastika expressed that BSEP staff do a great job in educating how the proposed expenditures comply with measure language, like necessary audit results and how funds are being used within purposes. Information that educates the committee about why or how BUSD knows or think they know why expenditures will be effective is lacking. The absence of that information impacts committee members' ability to make really informed decisions. She

acknowledged that she is not an educator, and relies on staff's recommendations, but the members have the capacity to think about what we are trying to achieve, and to evaluate based on staff experience where we are on that road. The answer to the question of why behind funding decisions doesn't feel well-addressed. Rep. Babitt agreed with the question of why, particularly feeling compelled to think about what we've done in the past and why, and evaluating whether it's relevant now. For example, why certain positions seem always to be first up as considerations to be cut, and who is working on filling those needs when the cuts eventually come. She shared that having historical context for why decisions have been made or not been made can help us overcome hurdles. Rep. Bryant expressed agreement with Chair Pastika and Rep. Babitt.

Rep. Irwin felt that the district does a good job with thoughtful presentations for programs like Library, VAPA, Technology, etc. They do help us get to the right results as a committee, public body, and testing board. District leaders have to explain these to us, and it stands to reason that if we understand it and get it, other groups like the Board and general public will also. But he also feels that "why" is important; when the district gets into a budget crunch like we're in, when a program manager says this is what we've done and we want to continue, that would be how we know if there is an alternative or better way to spend the money. It is hard to know as non-educators, we need more communication of underlying research and purpose to explain why we're doing these things. Depending on the program, you can use research to support best practices, and if budget and program managers say we're picking an approach because of a specific hoped outcome it would be easier for the committee to evaluate.

Board President Appel appreciated the committee members' points, and also wanted to note that the administration and Board have conversations about best equity strategies. These are complex conversations and committee members have a right to know, but the Board and Superintendent don't make these suggestions without equity in mind. She thinks there has to be mutual trust.

Chair Pastika respectfully disagreed, given that the committee's purpose of oversight is to make advisory recommendations to the Board, and part of the information gathering process to make informed decisions is knowing if these are effective uses of resources. The conversation of how to improve is worth systemic improvement, it doesn't matter who the decision makers are. President Appel agreed, if systems are trustworthy and reliable, outcomes should be too.

Chair Bradstreet reminded the group that this conversation would continue at future meetings.

11. For the Good of the Order

Rep. Babitt asked if furthering this discussion will be undertaken in a subcommittee meeting. Director Beery answered that it is back on the agenda for the next June meeting, and then we can also create a small workgroup of members to look at redesign of processes, plans, etc.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 5:40 p.m.