

BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

TO: Brent Stephens, Ed. D., Superintendent
FROM: Bajé Thiara, Associate Supt. of Educational Services
DATE: October 21, 2020
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 2022-2023 school year, the sixth year of the Measure. The goal for middle and high schools remains a district-wide class size average of 28:1.

2020-21 Class Size Reports

The class size goals in elementary schools have been met. For K-3, all elementary 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 fourth and fifth grade was also met. A few elementary schools have a class size average of more than 26 students in fourth and 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/or fifth grade.

The class size goals in middle school have been met, with an average class size of 24.4 in sixth grade. The district-wide class size average in 7th and 8th grade is 26.2 excluding PE and electives.

High school class size averages have been met, with an average class size of 26.8 at Berkeley High School, excluding PE. The class size average for ninth grade including the LEAP academic support elective is 24.3. Berkeley Technology Academy class size average is 5.5 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.