

P&O Statement to BUSD BOD

12/15/20

Terry Pastika, Alt BHS

Good evening, my name is Terry Pastika and I am here on behalf of the Planning and Oversight Committee, or the P&O. The P&O is an oversight advisory body that makes recommendations to the School Board on two special tax measures that have been passed by Berkeley voters to support BUSD: BSEP and BERRA.

BSEP stands for the “Berkeley Schools Excellence Program” and was most recently approved by voters in 2016, which has a history going back to 1986 as a response to school funding challenges after Prop 13. BSEP generates more than \$32 million per year, and the majority of funds go to supporting small class size and teaching.

BERRA stands for the “Berkeley Public Schools Educator Recruitment and Retention Act and was approved by voters in 2020. Its focus is to recruit and retain qualified teachers and staff, provide funding to improve public educator salaries and address hard to staff positions.

The combined BSEP and BERRA budgets that the P&O reviews totals more than 20% of BUSD’s overall budget. Every school in the District is represented on the P&O and it is comprised of parents, caregivers, and some educators.

I served as P&O Co-Chair for the past three years, and am I am an alternate parent representative from BHS. Given the importance of the various budgets the P&O reviews, the Committee would like to be proactive in providing routine snap shots of the conversations, questions and discussions that are happening on general level, so when you, the Board, review the P&O’s recommendations for BSEP and BERRA, they are put into some kind of context in an on-going basis – so the intent here is to provide for regular updates to the Board.

And, tonight is the first (brief) update! So, to that end, in last night’s meeting there were three major points of discussion:

First, after a historical overview of BSEP funding, it’s importance to the District’s budget, and learning that the current measure will expire 2024, the P&O’s discussion focused on:

- When planning for a new measure needs to start, what’s the role of the P&O in developing the measure, what should P&O members be thinking about, and how does this local tax fit into the larger picture of school funding with state, federal and other local [measures](#)^[1]

Second, after a review of the 2019 Audits for Measure A and E1, the P&O’s discussion focused on:

- How smaller class size costs are calculated – the teacher template; that in 2019 there is a positive fund balance; and asked for an updated budget projections from now to the

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end of the measure to put into context for the P&O how the 2019 positive fund balance is impacted by the remaining years on the measure.

Lastly, in discussing BERRA budget issues related to stipends in support of special education positions, the discussion focused on:

- How much of BERRA funds are spent on special education hiring and retention, and what are the other funding sources; what kinds of teachers fall under “special education teacher,” and what was the process used to assess the most useful way to repurpose funds that the P&O was being asked to vote on.

For now that’s a start, and we thank the Board for the opportunity to provide this brief recap.

The next P&O meeting is Tuesday, January 12th at 6:30 online. We invite any of you, as well as members of the public to attend.

Thanks.