

**P&O Statement from 1/12/21 Meeting
1/20/21 BUSD BOD Meeting
Terry Pastika, Alt BHS**

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

BSEP is the “Berkeley Schools Excellence Program” that was most recently approved by voters in 2016, with a history going back to 1986 as a response to school funding challenges after Prop 13. BSEP generates more than \$32 million per year for the District, which is more than 20% of BUSD’s overall budget. The majority of BSEP supports small class size and teaching.

BERRA addresses Educator Recruitment and Retention and was approved by voters in 2020 to support recruitment and retention of qualified teachers and staff and to provide funding to improve public educator salaries and address hard to staff positions.

The P&O is comprised of parents, caregivers, and some educators and every school in the District is represented. I serve as an alternate from BHS and this is an overview of the P&O’s discussions from the Jan. 12, 2021 meeting.

The flow of the P&O calendar is that we first review last year’s programs and budgets in the form of an Annual Report so when we are asked to look at and vote on next year’s budget we have some kind of context.

The Annual Reports were revised this year to serve as a high-level, general overview of the primary focus areas within each program supported by BSEP so budget information was not provided at this time. Instead, we looked at three main areas: 1) priorities for last year; 2) how priorities changed when distance learning kicked in, and 3) specific areas of concern each program manager has as they plan next year’s budget.

The programs reviewed included the following:

- 1) **Communications and Community Relations Report** that reviewed of the vast amount of work the District did with families and the general community on dozens of topics that included the three BUSD ballot measures and national news outlets asking about the Vice President attending school in BUSD. P&O asked if any of the measures passed will relieve pressures put on BSEP to fund certain areas, how increased on-line communications might increase the department’s outreach and efficiency, and if and why BSEP funds the entire communications budget for the District.

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- 2) **The Library Annual Report** focused on the extensive programs and the significant adaptation to distance learning. P&O members discussed how parents learned about getting books for their kids; concerns over student participation in library activities dropping off during distance learning because use of library resources are voluntarily; how does the library coordinate with the office of family engagement; and from an early education standpoint, can there be training for parents about when transitions happen from parents picking books to kids.

- 3) **The Music and Visual and Performing Arts** report outlined core programs from grade school to high school; how the programs pivoted to adapt to distance learning; and how to address the notable drop off in participation of programs after 5th grade by students of color. The P&O also discussed why is it that students only have music once a week currently and the impact that will have next fall.

- 4) **The last Annual Report reviewed was for Student Support and** that focused on the District's Response to Intervention, Literacy Coaches, and counseling programs. P&O discussion focused wanting feedback about how students were dealing with the pandemic, and the District's thinking on keeping students engaged in class during virtual learning when so many are easily checking out and play on-line during class time.

General themes brought up by P&O members at various points during the meeting was the need for objective metrics to measurement of how the various programs funded by BSEP are impacting students. The Superintendent indicated that part of bringing together the budget managers for preparing the 2021/2022 budgets was going to include a discussion on this topic.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide this brief recap. The next P&O meeting is February 9th at 6:30 online. We invite any of you, as well as members of the public to attend.

Thanks.