

**BSEP PLANNING & OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES
February 9, 2021**

P&O Committee Members Present

Nicole Chabot, *Berkeley Arts Magnet*
Colin Eyre, *Berkeley Arts Magnet (Alt)*
Leda Dederich, *Cragmont (co-Rep)*
Nimota Abina, *Cragmont(co-Rep)*
Jonathan Weissglass, *Emerson*
Heather Ball, *Malcolm X*
Stefan Cohen, *Oxford*
Weldon Bradstreet, *Rosa Parks*
Justin Randall, *Sylvia Mendez*
Heather Flett, *Washington*

Chetan Kamdar, *King Middle School*
Olivia Lim, *Longfellow Middle School*
Kate Jordan, *Willard Middle School*
Sarah Cline, *Berkeley High*
Aaron Glimme, *Berkeley High*
Josh Irwin, *Berkeley High*
Shauna Rabinowitz, *Berkeley High*
Terry Pastika, *Berkeley High (Alt)*
Esfandiar Imani, *Berkeley High (Alt)*

P&O Committee Members Absent*:

Jerry Liang, *Pre-K Program*
Shereen Katrak, *Ruth Acty (co-Rep)*
Nikhila Pai, *Ruth Acty (co-Rep)*
Vanessa Garza, *John Muir*

Prashant Jawalika, *King Middle School*
Martin de Mucha Flores, *Independent Study*

**Alternates and co-reps are not marked absent if another rep is present. Currently there is no representation from BTA or Thousand Oaks Elementary, and only one representative each from Longfellow and Willard Middle Schools.*

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

Ana Vasudeo, *School Board Director*

BUSD Staff:

Natasha Beery, *Director of BSEP and Communications*
Pete Gidlund, *Music and Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator*
Danielle Perez, *BSEP Program Specialist*

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was held online via Zoom. At 6:30 p.m. Chairperson Bradstreet called the meeting to order and conducted a roll call for members.

2. Establish the Quorum/Approve the Agenda

The quorum was established with 15 voting members present.

Chair Bradstreet asked for a motion to approve the agenda, with the correction that item 11 is a presentation, while item 12 is an action. The agenda was approved by acclimation without objection.

3. Chairperson's Comments

Nicole Chabot and Weldon Bradstreet

Co-Chair Bradstreet thanked members for attending the meeting.

4. BSEP Director's Comments

Natasha Beery, Director BSEP & Community Relations

Director Beery shared that Associate Superintendent Thiara is convening regular BSEP Manager meetings to produce the 2021-22 Annual Plans, and to collaborate on revisions to the overall Plan format. She is also grateful to have the collaboration of VAPA Coordinator Pete Gidlund as a thought partner in drafting an actual revised template, which the committee will see later this meeting.

5. Approval of Minutes

January 26, 2021

Rep. Dederich moved to approve the [1.26.21 Draft meeting minutes](#), Rep. Kamdar seconded; the minutes were approved by acclamation without objection.

6. Public Comment

Rep. Dederich shared her family's personal struggles through the shutdown and school closures, noting that many other BUSD families are facing even more challenging situations. She asked the committee and district leaders to marshal every available resource, BSEP and otherwise, to support students, families, and each other through the hardships and losses of this year. With so many families struggling under the weight of the pandemic and school closures, she asked that we keep this in the forefront of work being done and central to discussions as our planning moves forward.

7. District Budget Update

Natasha Beery, Director BSEP & Community Relations

Director Beery shared the [Budget Update Presentation](#) from the 2/3/21 Board meeting. This information was given by Assistant Superintendent of Fiscal Services Pauline Follansbee and focused on where the district is now and will be next year overall. This big-picture look at the district budget helps to contextualize BSEP and BERRA considerations. For the P&O Committee's purposes, we're looking at core funding from the state (also called the Base Grant), supplemental (LCAP) funding, and special COVID funding as well as trends in overall enrollment and numbers of unduplicated students. As our enrollment of unduplicated students decreases, the district receives less in supplemental LCAP funding. The funds tied to BUSD's Average Daily Attendance (ADA) are also a concern; the state is not collecting attendance in 2020-21 and into 2021-22, but when we get into the 2022-23 school year, if current declines in attendance hold steady, we could see ADA based on an enrollment decline of 7%, which will proportionally reduce our base grant funding from the state. Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) are also a big factor in future budget outlooks, though harder to predict, and between estimated COLAs and attendance changes there may be a large drop in overall district funding in a few years.

In response to a question from Rep. Flett, Director Beery explained that the \$9 million in one-time COVID funding is a lot of money, but much of these funds are being used for the district's response and reopening preparation, including changes to school facilities, hiring two more school nurses, and all the necessary extra supplies. Further, this funding is meant to be supplemental, not used to supplant any existing funding priorities.

In response to Rep. Dederich's question about the impact of reduced attendance, Director Beery explained that many expenses can't be shaved down incrementally, particularly staffing. If funding reduces, the workload for many positions doesn't ratchet back proportionally. Rep. Weisglass asked, if every district in the state is losing roughly the same proportion of students, and the state has same amount of money, why state funding to our district would decrease. Rep. Glimme answered that it's rare that we would see the same enrollment decreases evenly across the state; we don't see students disappearing, they leave one district and enter another and state targeted funding follows these shifts. He also shared that from his 25-plus years in BUSD, this approach looks in line with how we've approached being prepared in the past.

Rep. Rabinowitz observed that the 7% decline predicted seems extreme, and a significant number of students would have to not come back for this to become reality. She also asked if the district and city are losing children overall. Director Beery and Rep. Glimme confirmed that yes, the number of children is decreasing. Rep. Pastika asked if the district has ever seen such a steep enrollment decline in a single year before. Director Beery clarified that this number will be the cumulative drop over several years, but that the district has seen an equally big jump in the other direction over the course of three years. Swings of this magnitude over this amount of time aren't unprecedented.

8. 2021-22 Cost of Living Adjustment and Revenue Projections for BSEP and BERRA

Natasha Beery, Director of BSEP and Community Relations

Director Beery presented the [2021-22 BSEP Revenue Projection](#) and the [2021-22 BERRA Revenue Projection](#). She also referred to slides from presentation to [Board presentation on the BSEP and BERRA 2019-20 Annual Reports](#), and the [BSEP 2020-21 First Interim Report](#).

9. 2021-22 Teacher Template and HQI Overview

Natasha Beery, Director of BSEP and Community Relations

Director Beery presented the revised [Class Size Reduction \(CSR\): Teacher Template Overview](#) slides and the [2021-22 Draft Teacher Template](#). She explained the function of the Teacher Template document and how the numbers are calculated, and then presented the newly drafted version that begins to plan for the coming school year. Note that though the P&O had been concerned about increasing expenses to BSEP for CSR purposes, with enrollment drops this year and projected through next year, there are actually savings. Additionally, the average teacher cost is less than expected, primarily because the state is providing relief to districts by temporarily reducing mandatory retirement contributions. There looks to be a significant fund balance in the broader HQI budget, 66% of available BSEP funds. We had planned for deficit spending in 2020-21 already within approved HQI purposes, but as Dr. Stephens mentioned at the last P&O meeting the 5 SpEd positions and the BHS 504 Coordinator position were all unfilled this year, further increasing that fund balance. Our challenge now is that we have these funds, and need to

use them for our students and the needs they have now, and through the end of the measure. we know our projections for major purposes are significantly less, and we want to be thoughtful and will hear a lot from educators and leaders about the highest and best uses of these funds in keeping with the purposes of the measure.

Rep. Chabot asked how enrollment changes impact our teaching corps. Director Beery explained that it's always the case that there are changes from the Teacher Template to the implemented realite. Rep. Glimme added that the district cannot lay teachers off in the fall, state law and the union contract requires that teachers must be kept employed for the duration of the year in which they were promised work. Director Beery added that she hopes it will remain unusual that there are last-minute drastic changes like this, and noted that the small usual shifts every other year are in the realm of our projections.

Rep. Jordan asked how the district would handle many students coming back to the district unexpectedly once schools reopen, given that families may have only left temporarily due to our school closures. Director Beery answered that when students enroll after our deadlines, they don't get first choice of school and Admissions works to fit them into whichever schools and classrooms have available space, to avoid having to open up extra sections unless absolutely necessary.

Rep. Pastika asked if the BERRA measure, which raises educator compensation, raises the cost to BSEP. Director Beery responded that no, it does not, the BERRA calculation is made completely separately and is paid entirely from BERRA revenues.

Rep. Dederich, observing that BSEP is not tied to enrollment, and can end up with excess funds when other district funding is declining, asked who has oversight and decision-making power over how this money is spent. Director Beery first acknowledged the accurate observation about BSEP and enrollment, noting that people often comment online that BUSD tax dollars are "diluted" by students who come in from other districts, which is really not the case. As to how the money is spent, we first adhere to the stipulations in the measure language describing what percentages of funds can be used for each purpose. Our colleagues in Ed Services and Student Services will think about how to take both one-time and BSEP funds to be driven in meaningful ways to meet current needs, and this committee is a venue for the community to bring ideas and suggestions into the process. The proposals are drafted by each Manager, presented to the P&O for their vote of recommendation, and ultimately approved for implementation, or adjusted and then approved, by the School Board, who have final authority over all school spending. Speaking to our current situation, where the majority of our savings are in the HQI budget after the Class Size Reduction purpose is achieved, the work is to identify how much room is there is to address needs from each subsidiary purpose: Expanded Course Offerings (ECO), Professional Development (PD), Evaluation, and Classroom Support. PD funds positions like Literacy Coaches who could identify supports to students and teachers. In Evaluation, questions might go to BREA around student wellness, perhaps. In ECO, could we do something with those funds to bring kids together to expand possibilities for interaction. The biggest place to look is Classroom Support, a broad category that can allow us to drive help to kids in most needed ways. For example, that's where the additional SpEd positions were added last year, hoping to utilize that flexibility to serve a strong current need, though the hiring of those roles unfortunately couldn't be realized this year.

Rep. Lim asked if there is leeway to hire more teachers or allocate more teacher hours, something more student-facing. Director Beery answered that yes, additional teachers can be a part of Classroom Support, something we're already doing with 5 BSEP-funded Universal 9th grade teachers at BHS. We have also achieved smaller classes in other ways, like funding FTE for middle school math classes. On the other hand, looking at our current struggle around the logistics of bringing some students back on campus while others stay remote, while we still only have one teacher for each class, BSEP doesn't have the funds to address a challenge of adding more classroom teachers on that that scale. Rep. Lim asked if there are ways to support needs with immediate changes to this year's budget. Director Beery answered that yes, plans can be changed during the year as needed, but finding more teachers is already a huge challenge right now, we are short of teachers and can't find subs at the moment with our current number of positions.

Some ideas from committee members about potential uses of fund balance included: COVID response community coordinator, social workers and counselors. It was suggested that if the 504 Coordinator position can't be filled, and knowing that SpEd can't take on this load, could we find an alternative to that role to serve the same purpose; perhaps more academic counselors at BHS to achieve similar results.

10. Recommendation for BSEP Funds in 2021-22: Class Size Reduction

Natasha Beery, Director of BSEP and Community Relations

Director Beery Presented the [Draft 2021-22 Teacher Template](#) and explained that this is the first look at how we plan to spend the Class Size Reduction (CSR) portion of the BSEP HQI budget. She plans to have one more meeting with our head of Admissions and Fiscal staff to do a deeper dive to make sure that the math is correct, and also to drill down at each school site to make sure that the rounding up or down is working for each school's individual needs. For example, Longfellow has a specific need to support the Spanish Two-Way Immersion (TWI) program, requiring more sections for certain subjects. So the next version of the Teacher Template that comes back for committee approval on 2/23/21 could be adjusted, but not hugely.

11. Draft BSEP/BERRA Annual Plan Template

Pete Gidlund, Music and Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator

Mr. Gidlund presented the draft [BSEP/BERRA Annual Plan Template](#) document. The format of our BSEP Annual Plans has been static for many years, and it was necessary to read between the lines to find out the overall program structure--what it does and doesn't do, and what other program features might be funded from non-BSEP or BERRA sources. Readers also couldn't always see explicit equity measures, which were often mentioned in the text but not explicitly outlined in a single space. His and Director Beery's hope is to daylight this draft revision for the committee members' feedback and thoughts. He highlighted the idea of links to videos from program managers explaining the overall programs, saving P&O meeting time for discussion and questions. There is also a program overview page and a section to spell out the equity measures involved in each budget. There would then be a full budget, and a narrative portion that should be much smaller because it won't duplicate information given elsewhere.

Rep. Chabot noted that, in addition to all of the new features which address so many of the committee's concerns and suggestions, the Annual Plans also usually include an element of ongoing business and aims the managers hope to achieve in that specific year, above and beyond business as usual. Mr. Gidlund noted the need to include space for that, and appreciated the idea of including current projects. Director Beery added that item #4 on equity and quality measures includes data outcomes, which might serve this purpose as well, or that section can be reworded to cover current-year and long-term goals.

Rep. Weisglass praised the work and suggested it might be useful to include either in one summary box or in each of the line items of the last section how the program has changed from the prior year. Director Beery agreed, noting that we have sometimes done that in the Plan narrative, but have also done it as a single-page summarizing the last three years of FTE, for example, either due to changing funding between resources or just increasing and decreasing from this single funding source. She suggested that we could add summaries like that again.

Rep. Pastika appreciated the effort to focus on both equity and also other more general goals and outcomes, noting that SMART goals or program goals may not all be equity-explicit because these funds serve all students. She noted that including what other funding might be contributing to the work being described, even if it's not from BSEP or BERRA, would be helpful. Mr. Gidlund agreed, and explained that the section for district context is intended for this purpose, and can be expanded depending on the situation for each budget or program.

Rep. Dederich asked if there is room to bring in professionals to help figure out how to make this the most useful tool possible given how important it is to the decision-making process. Director Beery answered that the need for specialized help is strong in the district right now for many reasons, including communications, and that she can include this on the list of potential contract work available which will be put out shortly by the Public Schools Fund volunteer network.

Rep. Lim observed that the equity page still looks really narrative driven, and asked if there is a way to incorporate data. Mr. Gidlund answered that the intention is for that kind of information to have a place in this template. With this feedback he hopes the new Plan template can be really specific and targeted.

12. For the Good of the Order

Rep. Lim asked what power the committee has to effect change in an immediate way. Director Beery agreed that we are feeling that desire acutely right now but also it is present every year. This oversight committee has an essential function to verify that local tax monies are spent in compliance with the voter-approved measures. But participation here is also a way to bring questions and concerns to district leadership. This group only makes recommendations for BSEP and BERRA funds, and there are similar situations and feelings among the PAC and SBAC. For overall urgent change, the best ears are those of the Superintendent and School Board. If this group has concrete suggestions, she always relays suggestions and concerns directly to district leaders at standing meetings. Right now we are so focused on opening schools but there are parallel needs. P&O members can use the For the Good of the Order portion of our meetings to add new items to the next meeting's agenda, for example the question of spending classroom support funds for counselors, we can ask if staff would include that idea in a future meeting.

Rep. Glimme added that one of the big ways that those changes get done is that people bring the concerns and suggestions back to their sites, then the Principals can advocate that they want to try something through district-level processes. In this way, program managers then write up a proposal to spend these tax funds at district level, which then come to the P&O as plans for our review and recommendation before going to the School Board, who have the only legal right to spend district money. Representatives can also bring updates about what your site is working on and doing, to build momentum, as an effective practice as well within the P&O group.

Director Beery confirmed that the Head of K-8 schools is right now soliciting input from Principals about their schools' needs, and she brought these requests to Natasha to see if there are ways BSEP can support. Mr. Gidlund added that as a program manager, it really helps him to have P&O members direct suggestions and ideas his way, and that impacts spending in his real budget.

Rep. Lim asked about the line between advocacy and oversight, and if the SSC is more focused on oversight or advocacy. Director Beery explained that these budgets and plans making an impact in the lives of students is the overall point of both Site Plans (SSC work) and the BSEP/BERRA Annual Plans (P&O work), and the BSEP staff try to support both processes. Rep. Pastika noted with budgetary issues, it's figuring out whether something is BSEP or BERRA related to determine if it's within this committee's purview. She also suggested looking at how the issue in question has been addressed in the past, as many issues are cyclical and you can follow a path to determine who will likely end up addressing them.

Rep. Pastika, for the coming School Board meeting, provided a brief overview of the summary she would present to the Board of the P&O's items of discussion and related questions. She would welcome any other committee members who might want to present these statements at the Board meetings, and noted that she sends fleshed out drafts to the committee co-Chairs and BSEP staff in advance, if any other committee members would like to review those as well they can email Ms. Perez to be included in the messages.

Rep. Flett moved to approve the summary statement outline, Rep. Jordan seconded; the summary was approved by acclamation without objection.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 8:50 p.m.