

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

P&O Committee Members Present

Nicole Chabot, *Berkeley Arts Magnet*
Nimota Abina, *Cragmont (co-Rep)*
Jonathan Weissglass, *Emerson*
Shereen Katrak, *Ruth Acty (co-Rep)*
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*
Aaron Glimme, *Berkeley High*
Josh Irwin, *Berkeley High*
Terry Pastika, *Berkeley High (Alt)*
Shauna Rabinotitz, *Berkeley High*

P&O Committee Members Absent*:

Jerry Liang, *Pre-K Program*
Vanessa Garza, *John Muir*
Prashant Jawalikar, *King Middle School*

Sarah Cline, *Berkeley High*
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:

Liz Ozol, *Community Member*

BUSD Staff:

Brent Stephens, *Superintendent of Schools*
Debbie Dean, *Director of Schools*
Natasha Beery, *Director of BSEP and Communications*
Max Eissler, *Director of Technology*
Pete Gidlund, *Visual and Performing Arts Supervisor*
Adelita Martinez, *Professional Development Coordinator*
Thom Reinhardt, *BREA Coordinator*
Danielle Perez, *BSEP Program Specialist*

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was held online via Zoom. At 6:31 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 14 voting members present, later increased to 16.

Chair Bradstreet explained that Item #12 will be presented at the next committee meeting on March 23. Chair Bradstreet asked for a motion to approve the revised agenda; Rep. Irwin moved to approve the agenda, Rep. Chabot seconded, the agenda was approved by acclamation without objection.

3. Chairperson's Comments

Nicole Chabot and Weldon Bradstreet

Chair Chabot shared that as a BUSD alum and as a BUSD parent, she has never felt a period of so much tension across the board in the district, and offered sincere appreciation to everyone present and the time they have dedicated, knowing that their time is also being taken by so many other top priorities in the school system. She respects the fact that staff are working so hard on so much.

4. BSEP Director's Comments

Natasha Beery, Director of BSEP & Community Relations

Director Beery thanked all attendees for spending their precious time with this group. She acknowledged the difficulty of the past year, and the feeling that there is a light at the end of the tunnel in this moment, while also recognizing that even the normal amount of work at this time of year is substantial. This challenge means that the annual plan presentations this evening are very much in draft form, with the managers attempting to “show their work” as they are in the process of evaluating the many elements in play and attempting to make decisions for the coming year under ever-changing circumstances. She hopes the committee will provide initial thoughts and feedback on these.

5. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Brent Stephens, Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Stephens provided updates on the school reopening process and expressed appreciation that families continue to exhibit patience as we travel the path together toward reopening. Rep. Flett shared her excitement at the plans to reopen elementary schools and recognized the amount of work for teachers and staff to reach this point, and appreciated the work to come as well. Rep. Glimme shared that he has been running his classes remotely from his classroom at BHS, and shared how impressed he is with all the work happening at the high school even as elementary reopenings have been the primary goal of the district. He shared that from the work being done in terms of traffic flow, ventilation, sanitation materials, etc. it is clear that the district is trying to get everyone back in person as much as possible.

6. Approval of Minutes

February 23, 2021

Rep. Pastika moved to approve the [2.23.21 Draft Minutes](#), Rep. Flett seconded; the minutes were approved by acclamation without objection.

7. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

8. Superintendent's Budget Advisory Committee (SBAC) Update

P&O Reps. to SBAC: Chabot, Pastika, Irwin and Imani

There has not been an SBAC meeting since the last P&O Committee meeting on 2/23/21.

9. Update to 2020-21 BSEP Annual Plan: Instructional Technology

Max Eissler, Director of Technology

Director Eissler presented the [2020-21 Technology Annual Plan Update](#) document. Director Eissler explained the needs that necessitated the shift in purpose for BSEP funds in the current year. See document for details. Rep. Chabot asked if the increased need for hourly work is expected to continue in the coming year, or if it is limited to the current situation. Director Eissler answered that while there is always a need for additional instructional technology support, the staff have all been made aware that the Technology budget can't fund these additional hours in the future if there aren't changes in available funding. Rep. Irwin asked if the increase in expense reflects all of the teachers giving a consistent level of extra hours through the end of the year. Director Eissler answered that this increase should cover the entire year, with an expected 50% increase in hours worked over the next three months.

Director Beery explained that because the change is not a substantial change in the direction of this Plan, it does not require a vote of approval from the P&O. However, this fund balance was and remains extremely tiny, and the only other source for additional funding moving forward would be to shift the percentage of the allocations between Technology, VAPA, and Libraries. It may become necessary to consider other funding sources to move some expenses out of this budget.

10. Update to 2020-21 BSEP Annual Plan: Visual and Performing Arts

Pete Gidlund, Visual and Performing Arts Supervisor

Mr. Gidlund presented the [2020-21 VAPA Annual Plan Update](#) document. See document for details. He explained that this is a minor adjustment to the overall budget and doesn't make the fund balance in VAPA unsustainable. Rep. Chabot asked generally how many kids are involved in the camp, and Mr. Gidlund answered that information is included in one of the documents linked in the Update document. Rep. Irwin asked if BUSD has supported this program in the past and if so to what extent. Mr. Gidlund responded that the camp usually takes place at Longfellow, but that it is not usually funded at all through BUSD. Rather, the startup money each year comes from paid student enrollment, which then funds the scholarship recipients, BUSD students who really benefit and who we want to continue to serve. This will be a one-time expenditure, but as an equity piece this could make up for some learning loss experienced by those students. Rep. Weisglass commented that he appreciated Mr. Gidlund and commends this proposal as exactly the sort of creative thinking required to provide needed opportunity which might otherwise be totally lost. He felt that this is a small amount of money to pay for that benefit, and encouraged this type of thinking in the future. Rep. Rabinowitz asked if this change means that students who would ordinarily have enrolled and paid tuition would not enroll now. Mr. Gidlund explained that the students won't be selected by VAPA, though his staff will put the word out to kids who have been missed this year in BUSD distance learning music classes. Students who participate will not pay tuition at all.

11. 2021-22 Teacher Template Update

Natasha Beery, Director of BSEP and Communications

Director Beery presented the [3.2.21 Revised Teacher Template](#). She explained that as the document was being prepared to go to the Board on 3/10/21, one more adjustment was needed to round out staffing at the middle school level. There were an odd number of sections for 6th grade at one of the middle schools, and because 6th graders are “cored” with two primary teachers per group, there needed to be an even number of teachers to balance out the groups. The enrollment numbers were within one student of requiring two sections rather than one, and so it was decided to round up in the Teacher Template, with a plan to assign late-coming students to that site to make use of the extra space. She explained that sometimes district staff catch things like this even later in the year, and that not every small change is brought to the P&O for review, but as the timing allowed and this ties into the committee’s upcoming discussions of HQI funding, it was brought to the committee as an informational item.

12. Recommendation for BSEP Funds in 2021-22: Expanded Course Offerings; Counseling
Bajé Thiara, Debbie Dean

This agenda item was postponed to the next P&O meeting on 3/23/21.

13. Recommendation for BSEP Funds in 2021-22: Classroom Support, Professional Development, Program Evaluation, Student Achievement Strategies
Natasha Beery, Thom Reinhardt, Lita Martinez, Debbie Dean

Director Beery presented the most recently revised [HQI Budget Summary](#), which includes a projection into the future of the BSEP resource as requested by the committee. This draft represents the best current thinking around subsidiary HQI budgets to be set once the Class Size Reduction allocation is established. In this version, all the possible additions being considered are included for illustrative purposes, and result in the long-term fund balance not being sustainable through the final year of the BSEP measure. Decisions will have to be made about which proposed additions will stay and which will be removed.

Rep. Irwin asked, in the case of BHS requesting additional staffing, what would happen to any unspent funds if the positions weren’t filled. Director Beery explained that at BHS the FTE pays for multiple teachers to expand the sections being offered, and on the occasions when an ECO section isn’t filled, funds revert back into the larger BSEP budget to be reallocated in the following year. The only case in which funds remain with a particular school site is with Site Program Funds, which come from an entirely different BSEP resource.

Rep. Imani asked how sensitive and how responsive this planning is to factors like Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) or inflation. Director Beery responded that she has seen these factors swing in every direction over her 9 years in the district: we’ve seen surprisingly high COLAs, unexpectedly low COLAs, and also significant increases in costs due to enrollment, salary or benefit increases at various points. We do want to be extra cautious in the latter scenario, and wouldn’t want to have built in programs or positions we can’t live without, but risk running out of funds if revenue takes a downturn. We also don’t want to unnecessarily hoard money that schools/students need in the immediacy. Thought is given about adding new positions to our budgets, because we may be obligated to continue that promised employment to any employee hired to fill it. It’s easier to put in short term positions like Teachers on Special Assignment (TSAs), contracts, and materials. If we have money left over, we can’t use the fund balance for

positions, but we can look at investments without overstaffing. Rep. Randall noted that he understands a lot of books went out on loan and there is a fear that they wouldn't get returned, particularly the Spanish titles at Sylvia Mendez, Longfellow, and beyond. Director Beery explained that the committee will be hearing about the BSEP Library plan in upcoming meetings, she knows that Library Coordinator Jessica Lee is concerned about this and will be speaking to this in her plan. The Berkeley Public Schools Fund has offered to help as well to some extent, the BSEP Library budget might have fund balance to draw on, and we may have one-time funds for COVID relief that we may be able to use for some material replacement as well. There is an additional allocation from BSEP to Sylvia Mendez, Thousand Oaks, and Longfellow specifically for Spanish books and Director Beery will be sure to bring this concern to Ms. Lee as well. Rep. Randall also noted that Sylvia Mendez is seeing a lot of competition in hiring bilingual teachers, and asked if there is a way for BERRA resources to support bilingual education teachers. Director Beery will be sure to bring that question to HR before the '21-22 BERRA plan is brought to the P&O.

Mr. Reinhardt presented the [Draft 2021-22 Program Evaluation Annual Plan](#). One minor financial change proposed is to bring in more funds for statistical analysis, which is key when we start using quantitative data sets to evaluate programs, to make sure that the changes we see can be attributed to the program and have statistical significance. This is work his team can do but because it takes quite a bit of time, for certain pieces it would be nice to bring in a bit of extra help. He is currently questioning whether it makes sense to bring on more permanent staff, or perhaps to plan on short-term help on a more intermittent basis. Rep. Chabot noted that this committee has requested measurements of the efficacy of the spending it has approved, and asked if this statistical analysis would be able to answer these questions. Mr. Reinhardt answered that this component would bolster any research effort that BREA puts forth, though much of the work his department does now is to facilitate data generation at school sites. An effort at figuring out longitudinal studies that we'd like to begin would require a more statistical eye, and questions that people have about programs require a thoughtful approach to research. The additional statistical analysis would also help with using historical data we already have. Rep. Rabinowitz agreed that the committee has asked for this a lot and values this potential, though she wonders how even a full time staff person could take this on. She asked if there is any potential for budget managers themselves to receive PD or training to take on some of that evaluation to help feed it to BREA. Mr. Reinhardt responded that he wouldn't expect managers to be running analyses, but that he has started to work with principals and other District Office administrators to think about metrics that they actually want to use to evaluate their programs moving forward, to make sure they're in a position to gather those metrics and be effective. Managers can all take part in program improvement science that establishes desired outcomes and checks along the way. Rep. Kamdar asked, given the earlier recommendation to have caution when adding FTE to a budget, whether it makes sense to contract this work out. Mr. Reinhardt responded that yes, that's a potentially a viable solution, and they could also consider a research coaching position with the advantage of building more of the sustainable manager-led efforts mentioned earlier. He also noted that external contractors for educational research are quite expensive, running from \$20,000 - \$60,000 for one project. There is a balance in deciding how to spend funds to get the most value out for the district.

Rep. Glimme reminded the committee that this is a perennial ask over the last 20-plus years. Generally, the committee frequently would like much more specificity from data than is likely to

be generated even with unlimited funds. He noted that the number of factors present for each student is extremely large, and teasing out usable conclusions about a particular program with statistical significance requires vast investments. Reading educational research, you will quickly come to see that the cause and effect that we'd like to see isn't possible to generate on real world students in real world situations. He cautioned committee members from going down this road too far, hoping for information that the district likely won't be able to generate. He feels it would be much more useful to help teachers and administrators to understand what's happening in their schools, more than building up hopes for conclusions that we likely can't produce about specific portions of district-wide spending. Mr. Reinhardt agreed, sharing that he has been working with principals to think about the most impactful pieces of information available, and the coaching he has tried to do around research and improvement in classrooms is around these pieces.

Rep. Pastika confirmed that this budget will be presented again before the committee is asked to vote on it. She shared that it would be helpful to hear, when this budget comes back, what changes Mr. Reinhardt sees either fundamentally or operationally compared to what's been done in past years. Particularly she was interested in budget line items that may be the same from the previous year, but for which different approaches or implementation might be planned. Mr. Reinhardt shared one example from the current year: his team has been focusing on generating reports and finding daily large discrepancies in the identification of students, cleaning up how the data is entered and tracked through our system to improve data quality without any increase in staffing levels.

Lita Martinez presented on the [Draft 2021-22 BSEP Professional Development Annual Plan](#). She shared that there has been significant momentum around abolitionist teaching this year, which is a highlight of the PD program currently, including engaging Math, Literacy, and Response to Intervention Coaches around this same framework, with that alignment moving into this Spring and through next year. Regarding the overrepresentation of African American and Latinx students in Special Education, the district is working with RT Fisher around building an African American Success framework, which will continue through the coming year. She has also started inquiry work with Math Teacher Leaders, looking at student data and formative assessment data. The district is working on expanding gradespan collaboration time, especially around how we prepare students to come back onto campus and how we're thinking about trauma-informed practices and social emotional learning given COVID and its associated challenges. She is also looking at how teachers can continue that work in gradespan groups across sites.

Rep. Ball asked how feedback is solicited from staff and teachers, and how that feedback is used. Ms. Martinez responded that for all district-wide professional development, she sends surveys asking what staff want and feel they need. Many staff have been asking for work on subject integration, bringing topics and subjects together, because in distance learning they have less instructional time with students, and that the PD offered has been supporting that work. Then, after collaboration sessions participants engage in feedback on the provided PD, which is used to inform the next PD offerings. This information is also shared with administrators.

Rep. Pastika observed that the working assumption of these plans is that school will be in-person full time in 2021-22. She asked if the current labor negotiations will impact what may happen in the Fall. Director Dean responded that the district has been in ongoing negotiations since June, and that everyone is hopeful to get students in school five days a week, though that won't be

finalized one way or another until this Summer. Rep. Pastika asked if these budget would come back to the P&O if there is a major departure from that expectation of in person schooling. Director Beery answered that it is necessary to pass budgets at this point even with uncertainty, because the budgets have to actually be built out and set up in the district's financial systems to allow the district to hire and employ staff through Summer and moving into the Fall. It is possible that there could be revisions, with anything major being presented to the Steering Committee if it falls outside of the regular P&O calendar. We have to build some kind of model, and a lot of what's going into them is adaptable, as we saw with this year's budget as COVID upended the plans built pre-pandemic for the '20-21 school year. Some suggestions or new additions are included both to address the challenges of right now and to be ready for our next challenges.

Rep. Chabot asked for information about the major spending from the PD budget and the status of a fund balance. Director Beery clarified that PD does not have its own separate fund balance, as it shares a fund balance with all of the HQI budget, including Expanded Courses Offerings, Program Evaluation, and Classroom Support, and spending in all these budgets contribute to overall drawdown of the HQI fund balance. The PD Plan does include a possible addition of a TSA working on the district's EL Master Plan, though that would likely only be for a single year rather than an ongoing position. Director Dean explained that another proposed addition is funding for TK-8 Professional Learning Communities, which are groups of grade-alike teachers, using uniform criteria to come together to design lessons or assessments, and then reconvene afterwards with the resulting student work. The goal is to see which students, from which classes, succeed at different concepts, identifying effective methods and resulting in teachers educating each other on best practices in real time. It takes a great deal of PD to effectively implement this practice.

Rep. Rabinowitz asked about PD for classified staff, particularly Instructional Specialists (IS), who often work one-on-one with students and have a huge impact on their learning. Director Dean answered that IS staff do participate in PD at school sites weekly on Wednesdays. Also, this past summer Ms. Martinez put together four weeks of training before the school year started, which all IS staff were invited to. PD leaders make every effort to invite IS staff to all offered trainings, and when it's possible and appropriate they are paid hourly. Rep. Rabinowitz observed that as the district works in advancing equity, if equity training isn't extended to classified staff that will reduce our ability to fix equity issues; problems will arise if it's not a universal discussion. Ms. Martinez agreed and shared that the district had massive participation when the January PD offering was extended to all classified staff. Now the district has a new Coordinator of Classified PD, as well, with whom she will collaborate to offer opportunities for classified staff to integrate into ongoing PD to systematically implement the shifts we're talking about.

Director Beery presented the [Draft 2021-22 Classroom Support Annual Plan](#), and explained that the Classroom Support purpose is included within the HQI budget, sharing available funding with PD, Program Evaluation, and ECO purposes. This measure was constructed this way for flexibility to shift funds as needed, and specifically Classroom Support has been used when the GF or LCAP funding couldn't sustain an existing program, or to support a new program like the Universal 9th grade (U9) at BHS, SpEd teachers, middle school math support, etc. Director Dean explained that the main charge of middle schools is to prepare students for high school, and to do that some students need extra support in literacy and math. So this draft budget shows a proposal to fund additional FTE (staffing) to support reading and math teaching. Her experience has been

that if we can place struggling students in smaller classes that focus on both re-teaching and previewing lessons, students show greater progress in their core math and reading classes. We may see more students below grade level after this year, unfortunately. Director Beery clarified that staff will be bringing more drafts to the P&O with further information for additional readings and discussion. Rep. Rabinowitz recalled when the Writer Coach program was operating at all three middle schools, and feels that it is a huge loss that it isn't any longer. She felt that this was a critical piece that supported student development in both writing and generally toward high school readiness. Director Dean agreed that the independently-run program was beneficial, and clarified that it was not the district choosing to eliminate the program, as sites had allocated funding for it, but an issue of the volunteers not coming through as promised. She agreed that it was value added, and perhaps it's time to look at that again if the organization has recovered from its previous difficulties.

Director Beery presented the [Draft 2021-22 Student Achievement Strategies Annual Plan](#), and explained that this purpose is supported by the BSEP funding that also supports Counseling. This plan includes more funding for Literacy Coach salaries, and also funds TSAs and portions of the African American Success Project. There is an interest in supporting Black Studies and enhancing high school offerings by funding specific coaches, and another consideration is a proposal to restore funding to a math coach position (previous funded by BSEP, subsequently moved into LCAP funding, and now removed from LCAP due to lack of funds in that resource). This budget has a small fund balance, though not a lot, to draw upon. She will work with the Superintendent, Ed Services and Michelle Sinclair to figure out what BSEP can fund, what LCAP needs support with, and we will see a few changes when this is brought back to the committee in two weeks.

14. For the Good of the Order

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. This will be combined with the summary the committee approved from the 2/23/21 meeting. Rep. Rabinowitz moved to approve the summary for the Board, Rep. Flett seconded; the summary overview was approved by acclamation.

15. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 8:36 p.m.