

**Statement from 4/13/21 P&O Meeting
BUSD BOD 4/14/21 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 advisory body comprised of representatives of every school in the District that makes recommendations to the School Board on BSEP and BERRA, two special tax measures passed by Berkeley voters that supplement school funding.

- BSEP generates an additional \$32 million for the District over the baseline property tax, with majority of funds going towards supporting smaller class sizes and teaching.
- BERRA supports teacher and staff recruitment and retention.

This is an overview of P&O questions and comments to BUSD staff at last night's meeting.

Dr. Stephens provided a budget overview that included how decreases in student enrollment may significantly impact General Fund revenue by about \$8M if it does not rebound. A question was asked about the causes of the overall decrease of ~ 700 students and ~224 unduplicated students to understand if it was likely to persist throughout the rest of the Measure, and if so, how would BSEP would be affected.

We then turned to BSEP budgets. The P&O has already voted on the teacher template, which is a formulaic calculation to reduce class size and is the largest single BSEP expenditure, about ~\$15M/ of the ~\$32M of BSEP revenue.

The rest of the BSEP funding is allocated across ten budgets. The Superintendent, BSEP Director, and the program managers make recommendations for how to spend a specified share of BSEP dollars based on what the Measure says funds can be spent on and on District goals.

The P&O did things differently this year in three ways:

- 1) Due to the need to revisit budgets several times based on this unusual academic year, the P&O saw several drafts of individual budgets over the past two months. Rather than parsing budget approvals out over earlier meetings, the P&O was asked to review the final drafts together and take action on all ten budgets last night, totaling more than \$13M. These approved plans will come to the Board on April 21.
- 2) In response to P&O questions, each budget included a summary that highlighted, among other items:
 - Proposed changes in each budget from the prior year;
 - Other revenue streams that support the proposed expenditures;
 - Sustainability of spending through the end of the Measure given that certain budgets are in a planned deficit spending mode;
 - How diversity, equity and inclusion are supported; and
 - What data/ metrics are used to report outcomes and qualitative benefits.
- 3) Also in response to P&O questions, we heard a presentation about the overall sustainability of for the remaining 3 years of the measure, specifically looking at the planned deficit spending that is currently happening. It was noted that in the High Quality Instruction budget, which is what 66% of what BSEP funds are spent on, a reduction in discretionary spending of about 5% of the budgets (around \$300,000/year in total) may be needed. We reviewed options for how to achieve a balanced budget by the end of measure, which will depend on Cost of Living increases, enrollment and costs.

So, given the three points above, the kinds of questions asked and comments made were:

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- An appreciation for the inclusion of data/ metrics in the budgets, but several questions, again, asking for clarity as to how the District objectively assesses the impact of spending decisions on students.
- More information was asked for on the re-organization of the District's program evaluation department and how that might impact BSEP.
- Question on the TWI Math Support and Sylvia Mendez, Thousand Oaks and Longfellow schools, how that support is allocated among the schools, and comments about parent advocacy at Sylvia Mendez regarding budget cuts.
- And questions about expenditures supporting African American and LatinX students at BHS and the intersection with school site funding.

The next work the P&O is going to tackle involves two budgets falling under BERRA and carryover funds from the prior measure.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide this brief recap. P&O meetings are open to the public and we invite any of you, as well as members of the public, to attend.