

**BSEP PLANNING & OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES  
March 23, 2021**

**P&O Committee Members Present**

Jerry Liang, *Pre-K Program*

Nicole Chabot, *Berkeley Arts Magnet*

Nimota Abina, *Cragmont (co-Rep)*

Jonathan Weissglass, *Emerson*

Heather Ball, *Malcolm X*

Weldon Bradstreet, *Rosa Parks*

Justin Randall, *Sylvia Mendez*

Heather Flett, *Washington*

Olivia Lim, *Longfellow Middle School*

Sarah Cline, *Berkeley High*

Aaron Glimme, *Berkeley High*

Esfandiar Imani, *Berkeley High (Alt)*

Josh Irwin, *Berkeley High*

Terry Pastika, *Berkeley High (Alt)*

Shauna Rabinowitz, *Berkeley High*

Martin de Mucha Flores, *Independent Study*

**P&O Committee Members Absent\*:**

Carla Bryant, *Oxford*

Shereen Katrak, *Ruth Acty (co-Rep)*

Nikhila Pai, *Ruth Acty (co-Rep)*

Vanessa Garza, *John Muir*

Prashant Jawalekar, *King Middle School*

Chetan Kamdar, *King Middle School*

Kate Jordan, *Willard Middle School*

*\*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:**

Brent Stephens, *Superintendent of Schools*

Natasha Beery, *Director of BSEP and Communications*

Max Eissler, *Director of Technology*

Pete Gidlund, *Visual and Performing Arts Supervisor*

Jessica Lee, *District Library 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 Chairperson Chabot conducted a roll call for members.

**2. Establish the Quorum/Approve the Agenda**

The quorum was established with 12 voting members present.

Chair Bradstreet asked for a motion to approve the revised agenda; Rep. Flett moved to approve the agenda, Rep. Abina seconded, the agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

**3. Chairperson's Comments**

*Nicole Chabot and Weldon Bradstreet*

Chair Bradstreet clarified that the committee's approval method should more accurately be recorded as being decided by unanimous consent. He also asked members to keep questions concise and on point given the evening's very full agenda.

#### **4. BSEP Director's Comments**

*Natasha Beery, Director of BSEP & Community Relations*

Director Beery explained that the documents presented this meeting will continue to be somewhat preliminary, due to the very pressing work of opening schools while district leaders are also dealing with budget conundrums. She and staff have worked to get draft documents completed in time for this meeting, but there have been and will continue to be many shifts before everything is finalized.

#### **5. Superintendent's Report**

*Dr. Brent Stephens, Superintendent of Schools*

Dr. Stephens shared his excitement at having students back on campus, and appreciation for the patience of the district's families and community. He shared that there is lots of positive energy at school sites, and there are still final elements to still stitch together in the coming days and weeks for further reopening. He expects the district to articulate final details for middle and high school reopenings by the end of the week. At the same time, leaders are looking solidly ahead to the Fall, with the full hope, expectation, and continued work towards a return to normal bell schedule and "normal life."

#### **6. Approval of Minutes**

*March 9, 2021*

Rep. Glimme moved to approve the [March 9, 2021 Draft Minutes](#), Rep. Flett seconded; the minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

#### **7. Public Comment**

Rep. Lim shared her concern about the need for continued support of socio-economically disadvantaged student populations participating in both distance learning and in-person learning, and asked for additional transparency around protection levels when schools reopen, to support everyone to feel safe coming back to school.

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

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

Dr. Stephens presented slides outlining the district's budget priorities and main budget elements under current consideration for SY 2021-22. He explained that this presentation represents a beginning collection of ideas, capturing options and collecting feedback to inform decisions ultimately to be brought before the School Board in late April and into May and June to finalize district budgets. See slides for details.

Rep. Flett asked if the district will leverage one-time funding to support communities choosing to stay in distance learning, for example through academic coaching and mental health services. Dr.

Stephens responded that yes, the district is working to assess availability of mental health providers and also pursuing work with a number of tutoring organizations as well as planning for a variety of expanded summer programming to be offered to students who are remaining in DL.

Rep. Pastika asked, with a lot of the one-time funding being put toward paying for staff positions, whether the expectation is that these positions will disappear after a year, or that the district will have to find funding after this year to sustain them. Dr. Stephens answered that this question is being considered. He is considering these priorities in a few different categories; the first is new priorities expected to continue indefinitely, another is taking advantage of the surge in resources to support recovery but which would only last for 2-3 years or so, and the last is short-term funding like tutoring for only the coming year. Rep. Pastika expressed concern not just about the sustainability of funding but also the projected district funding “cliff” projected if enrollment decline trends continue. Dr. Stephens acknowledged that the district is watching carefully to see if enrollment may rebound.

Rep. Liang expressed similar concerns about the many additional positions included in the slides, particularly supporting programs at BHS and in OFEE. He was also concerned about effectiveness in evaluating programs, noting that if the district is having trouble assessing existing programs, how it would evaluate these new programs as well. Dr. Stephens clarified that the slides contain more priorities than are possible to fund, they represent all ideas under consideration, but ultimately the work will be to winnow this list down based on the recommendations of advisory committees and staff, with the School Board having the final say.

Rep. Chabot observed, relating to the proposal to expand OFEE, that there have been ongoing questions in the P&O as to the effectiveness of certain programs, and asked that those questions be reviewed and resolved before making significant further investments in those same programs. Dr. Stephens responded that the hope is to have goals and metrics for these new funding priorities in place before they are expanded.

**9. 2021-22 Annual Planning Updates: High Quality Instruction: Professional Development, Program Evaluation, Classroom Support, Expanded Course Offerings**

*Natasha Beery, Director of BSEP & Community Relations*

Director Beery briefly summarized the multiple programs funded from High Quality Instruction (HQI); the Committee has seen prior presentations on potential uses of this funding for next year. This update focuses on potential changes alluded to in Dr. Stephens’s budget priority presentation earlier in the meeting. In a normal year these plans would be up for a vote of approval from the P&O at this time, but we are still in the planning phase given all the factors Dr. Stephens described. She noted that the HQI documents have, where appropriate, projected fund balances through the end of the measure, recognizing that this information has been of particular interest to the committee.

Director Beery first presented the most updated [Draft 2021-22 Professional Development Plan](#). She noted that the Annual Plan templates have a new category highlighting any changes over the prior year. All potential add-ins are listed and the total cost of staffing is calculated with these additions. She referred committee members to review the most recent [HQI budget overview](#)

[document](#), which shows the impact of increased costs in subsidiary budgets to the overall HQI fund balance projected through the end of the Measure.

Director Beery then presented the most updated [Draft 2021-22 Program Evaluation Annual Plan](#) document, as well as the newly-combined [Draft 2021-22 Classroom Support and Expanded Course Offerings](#) document. She noted that neither Classroom Support or Expanded Course Offerings have a manager/director/supervisor, as these are not programs per se, rather these are simply resources to increase staffing for specific purposes outlined in the measure language.

Regarding the projections of the HQI fund balance, she noted that the district does not want to start our next BSEP tax measure with a rate increase, so deficit spending needs to be planned accordingly. Rep. Pastika asked when the committee will vote on this budget, and Director Beery answered that the hope is to have a final version for approval on April 13. At least some of the items in these Plans really need to move forward, as they are embedded in building out master schedules for middle and high school. Also, the district needs to start hiring soon for new or unfilled positions. The hope is to bring it back to the P&O 4/13 so that the Plans can then go to the School Board on 4/21 for their final decision.

#### **10. 2021-22 Annual Planning Updates: Student Support: Student Achievement Strategies and Counseling**

*Natasha Beery, Director of BSEP & Community Relations; Dr. Brent Stephens, Superintendent of Schools*

Director Beery presented the most updated [Draft 2021-22 Student Achievement Strategies](#) Annual Plan document. Again, this plan is still in process, with newly-integrated aspects from Dr. Stephens's earlier slides. Unlike the subsidiary HQI budgets, Student Achievement Strategies does have a set allocation of revenue, and a discrete beginning and ending fund balance to project outward. Currently it looks as though this budget may have enough resources to address reallocating some additional funds to Counseling as allowed in the BSEP measure language.

Director Beery also presented the most updated [Draft 2021-22 Counseling Annual Plan](#) document. This is the other portion of the overall 7% of BSEP revenues allocated to Student Support and shared with Student Achievement Strategies described above. The P&O will be seeing these plans and budgets again at the 4/13 meeting.

#### **11. Preliminary Recommendations for 2021-22: Essentials For Excellence: Libraries, Music/VAPA, Instructional Technology**

*Jessica Lee, Libraries Coordinator; Pete Gidlund, Visual and Performing Arts Supervisor; Max Eissler, Director of Technology*

Ms. Lee presented the [Draft 2021-22 Libraries Annual Plan](#). This budget has been increasing its fund balance over the past several years, and she is looking at ways to make use of that balance to expand the reach of the Library Program. She focused her presentation on the new additions to the Plan for the coming year, see the document for details.

Rep. Chabot noted that classroom libraries will also take serious losses of books due to items not being returned through distance learning, and asked how classroom teachers might get help to

refill their personal bookshelves. Ms. Lee answered that there are several options, including a Donors Choose focused grant opportunity, which she sent to library staff that day to share with teachers. Another resource is the Berkeley Public Schools Fund (BPSF), and classroom teachers can also look to a resource for funding classroom libraries from Ed Services. Director Beery added that perhaps the district may not have to take BPSF up on their generous offer to replenish school library books, if the COVID funding can be used. This could allow BPSF to address other needs, like replenishing teachers' classroom library books. This is a conversation that we will continue to have. Rep. Glimme noted that many teachers' classroom library books come from site-specific PTA fundraisers, which have and will continue to be impacted by school closures.

Mr. Gidlund presented the [Draft 2021-22 VAPA Annual Plan](#). He focused his presentation on changes for the coming year, emphasizing his work to position all Music/VAPA events, programs, and offerings through an equity lens. See document for details.

Rep. Liang asked if the VAPA spending and available fund balance were sustainable for the last three years of this measure, as well as whether it is ever the case that additional BSEP funding can be secured later in the life of the measure. Director Beery answered that budgets cannot overdraw their available fund balance and/or revenue, as no additional allocations are made during the measure's life. She noted that some of the expenses in this draft plan are not ongoing but rather one-time, for example the \$100,000 item for sheet music scanning. Mr. Gidlund added that there are items included that could also be funded elsewhere, or which could become self-funding. Director Beery noted that the costs for music coaching at BHS could potentially also be paid from one-time COVID funds.

Director Vasudeo asked about the plans to support struggling 4th grade students who began music instruction during the school closures. Mr. Gidlund explained that there are plans for a "pre-loading" program for incoming 4th graders in '21-22, and that in a normal year at larger elementary schools his program offers a 5th grade "restart" class for students who struggled in 4th grade. In '21-22 when students return, the plan is that half of all 5th grade music classes at each elementary school will be "restarts" so that students can build back up if they had struggled.

Director Eissler presented the [Draft 2021-22 Technology Annual Plan](#). He noted that in his short time in the position, he hasn't made many changes from the previous year's plan. The few changes are highlighted in the document. The overall goal is to provide enough support for all schools that each has equal access to software tools and technology support from his staff.

Rep. Pastika asked, regarding fund balances in general, if there is a point at which unsustainable programs are cut or reduced to ensure that the funds will last through the end of the measure, and what the process is in determining those adjustments. Director Beery answered that she, BSEP managers, and district Fiscal and Ed Services staff are constantly evaluating fund sustainability, all the more as we draw nearer to the end of a measure. They look at what is paid from deficit spending, and if it isn't sustainable, discuss removing expenses from that budget. These conversations are ongoing, and programs or positions may disappear or alternate funding may be found. There is a constant focus on not overbuying and not overcommitting, because once we have programs or positions in the district it is almost certain that they will add value and we will want to keep them. Further, we may end up in a situation in which the district owes people jobs once they've been established. So managers have to be cautious with additions, constantly

reviewing needs and costs, monitoring changes in available funding, and tracking what expenditures may be moving between funding sources (GF, LCAP, BSEP, etc.).

Rep. de Mucha Flores appreciated the inclusion of Puente and other student services in budget priorities. He asked if there are plans to continue to add math support specifically for the district's Latinx student population and, separately, for English Learner students. He also appreciated the changes to how budgets and plans are now presented and how they address equity and inclusion. He offered feedback that when we reference already-used metrics along with racial stratification, and asked how district leaders are measuring whether students feel like they belong within the district and its programs, asking if the district is supporting students seeing themselves as belonging. Also, he expressed that BIS and BTA tend to need the most support for their student populations, and favored justifying support based on need regardless of enrollment numbers.

Director Beery referred the question around math instruction to Dr. Stephens. Speaking on the needs of BIS and BTA, we do look to funding those programs holistically, rather than on a per-pupil basis from BSEP, as we see in Library services and site fund allocations. She also agreed that these conversations shouldn't just focus on learning loss, which only takes into account how students are scoring, but we need to talk about how kids come back and whether they feel a part of a community, and also address what to do if they didn't feel included in the first place. This is a major topic of conversation right now.

Dr. Stephens explained that the presented budget priorities represent the current process of collecting ideas, which do include specifics around math though not specifically for Latinx students. He encouraged Rep. de Mucha Flores to contact him with ideas that could be included in this process moving forward.

Rep. Randall shared that as the committee has been looking at all the different available pots of funding, it calls to mind that there have been email threads started across the district to take the measure of PTA funding shortfalls due to the pandemic and school closures, which will specifically threaten salaried positions that PTAs have been funding at many schools. He shared that the SSC at Sylvia Mendez is working to figure out how they might help cover PTA shortfalls for staff salary funding, which seems to be happening throughout the district. Dr. Stephens answered that he was aware of PTA discussions about supplies funds, but was not yet aware of this conversation around funding salaries. He will want to know more details. Ms. Perez shared a document [summarizing planned '20-21 PTA funding](#), which had been prepared for and shared with last year's P&O as a part of the overall Site Plan presentation, and which summarizes all positions to be funded by PTAs this school year.

## **12. 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. Rep. Bradstreet moved to approve, Rep. Chabot seconded; the summary overview was approved by unanimous consent.

Several committee members offered praise for the new Annual Plan format.

Chair Bradstreet clarified the formal procedure noting that it isn't required for procedural approvals like minutes and agenda approvals to ask for motions and seconds. He suggested it could save time during meetings to simply ask for any objections and then approve.

Rep. de Mucha Flores shared that community colleges received some funding which will go to dual enrollment students including students at BHS, and he will share more information on that as it's coming through to support students who will be moving into the community college system. He also noted that next month is diversity, equity, and inclusion month, and local community colleges will be hosting speakers on these topics and will open opportunities to BUSD partners to participate.

### **13. Adjournment**

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