

BERKELEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education
1231 Addison St., Berkeley, CA 94702
510-644-6206

Official Minutes
January 20, 2021

President Ty Alper called the meeting to order at 7:03pm. He reported that the Board convened to Closed Session at 5:30pm.

Roll Call

Board of Education:

Ty Alper, President – Present

Ka'Dijah Brown, Vice President – Present

Julie Sinai, Director/Clerk – Present

Laura Babitt, Director – Present

Ana Vasudeo, Director -- Present

Miles Miller, Student Director, BHS – Present

Administration:

Brent Stephens, Ed., D, Superintendent

Baje Thiara, Associate Superintendent, Educational Services

Pauline Follansbee, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services

Samantha Tobias-Espinosa, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources

Lyz Chairez, Recorder

OPEN SESSION

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Motion to approve agenda:

Brown/Babitt and unanimously approved 6-0.

REPORT CLOSED SESSION

Vice President Brown reported out on closed session:

Collective Bargaining - Government Code Section 54957.6(a) (District Negotiator:
Samantha Tobias-Espinosa)

Berkeley Council of Classified Employees (BCCE)

The Board heard an update and gave direction.

Berkeley Federation of Teachers (BFT)

The Board heard an update and gave direction.

Superintendent Evaluation (Government Code Section 54957)

This item was tabled for a future meeting.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

A total of 19 people addressed the Board:

One comment suggesting that students be given the opportunity to watch important events like today's presidential inauguration featuring BUSD's very own Kamala Harris as the first female Vice President of the United States..

Three comments in support of expanding the Office of Family Engagement and Equity (OFEE).

One comment on the middle school assignment process.

One comment urging for schools to not reopen.

Seven comments in support of opening schools.

One comment in support of a clear path to the two way immersion program.

Four comments asking for a comprehensive review of the English Learner master plan.

One comment expressing concern for lack of plan to reopen schools safely.

UNION COMMENTS

BFT President Matt Meyer reported that a recent survey of BFT members yielded over 450 responses with over 300 comments on what is working and what needs improvement. He noted that teachers report strong engagement. Next Monday's professional development will be an opportunity for teachers to share best practices. BFT continues ongoing negotiations with BUSD. Although public health officials have deemed it safe to reopen while in the red tier, BFT is proposing that schools reopen only after Alameda County has reached the orange tier. BFT believes that resuming in person instruction in the orange tier helps to better account for the inevitable lapses in risk mitigation adherence and reflects reasonable caution.

BCCE President Frank Hernandez shared that many BCCE members have been working throughout the pandemic in support of student learning. BCCE is in favor of resuming in person instruction as soon as it is safe to do so. To this end, BCCE continues its negotiation with BUSD.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) Co Chairs Patricia Rodriguez and Sagrario Zepeda shared their experiences as parents of English Learners in BUSD. Their

comments highlighted data indicative of the challenges bilingual students and their families face in their academic experience. On behalf of the committee, they shared some of the ways in which the district can provide support to this demographic.

BOARD MEMBER AND SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Student Director Miller encouraged his peers to use the public comment period as an opportunity to make their voice heard. He added that he shares in his peers' desire to return to in person learning, but the only way that can happen is if every student does their part to make sure COVID-19 positivity rates go down.

Director Vasudeo expressed her excitement for our country's newly elected Vice President, Kamala Harris. In response to comments about the need to update BUSD's EL Master Plan, she stressed that doing so is a top priority to the Board and to the Superintendent.

Director Sinai appreciated all who spoke this evening and commended all of the parents who take on positions of leadership. She announced that the City of Berkeley has launched a taskforce charged with reimagining public safety and is looking for members to join. She encouraged community members interested in this work to apply. She also announced that the District Facilities Subcommittee will meet on Jan. 28 and will hear an update on employee workforce housing.

Director Babitt shared that she attended the Longfellow Middle School information night and read aloud some of the questions addressed at this meeting for parents to consider as they are assigned to a middle school. In response to the community advocacy for the expansion of OFEE, she looks forward to hearing BUSD's proposal to expand and adequately staff this department.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion to approve the Consent Calendar:

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Update on BUSD's Distance Learning and Cohort Support Program (60 min)

Staff provided an overview on attendance, academic performance, and enrollment as it relates to distance learning. This presentation also included an update on the ongoing support for student learning by way of the student nutrition services, BUSD's cohort program, family support seminars, professional development and extended learning planning.

Questions and discussion followed.

Update on BUSD's Phased Plan for School Reopening (30 min)

Dr. Stephens provided an update on BUSD's phased reopening plans in adherence to the latest State issued guidance and in consideration of the County's current purple tier

status. He noted that these plans are also subject to ongoing negotiations with the District's labor partners. Questions and discussion followed.

Update on the Governor's January Budget and BUSD's 2021-2022 Budget Development Process (30 min)

Assistant Superintendent Follansbee provided an overview of key elements in the Governor's proposed budget.

Motion to extend open session to 11:20pm.
Alper/Brown and unanimously approved 6-0

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of BUSD's Middle School Assignment Community Engagement Plan (20 min)

Dr. Stephens provided an update on plans to reinstate the conversation with the community about looking at the middle school assignment process. This presentation included a proposed timeline for community engagement about middle enrollment for the 2022- 23 school year. The goal is to bring a final recommendation for the Board's approval in November of 2021.

Comments and discussion followed.

Motion to approve staff recommendation:
Sinai/Alper and unanimously approved 6-0

EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENT

A total of three people addressed the Board:

- One comment on data on free lunch program.
- One comment on the importance of supporting students' mental health.
- One comment on negotiations with BFT.

ADJOURNMENT

11:17pm