

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

Official Minutes
February 3, 2021

President Ty Alper called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. 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

Sinai/Miller and unanimously approved 6-0.

REPORT CLOSED SESSION

Vice President Brown reported out on closed session:

Conference with Legal Counsel - Anticipated Litigation – Regarding costs of services provided to student - Ed. Code § 54956.9, subd. (e)(2) (10 minutes)

BSD Case No. 202021-20

Motion to approve staff recommendation:

Brown/Sinai and approved 5-0.

Public Employee Discipline/Dismissal Release (§ 54957) (5 min)

The Board heard an updated and provided direction; no action was taken.

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

Berkeley Council of Classified Employees (BCCE)

This item was tabled to extended closed session.

Berkeley Federation of Teachers (BFT)

This item was tabled to extended closed session.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

A total of 32 people addressed the Board:
20 comments in support of reopening schools.

Seven comments in support of not reopening until the vaccine is available

One comment on the mental and physical impact on students due to distance learning

Two comment in support of the EL master plan asking for a consultant to take it on.

One comment on the calendar impact on BCCE members

One comment in support of expanding OFFEE

UNION COMMENTS

BFT President Matt Meyer expressed feeling hopeful as COVID cases continue to decline and vaccinations continue to be made available. BFT feels confident that the anticipated access to the vaccines will positively impact BUSD's school reopening timeline. BFT looks forward to its members gaining access to the vaccine. In the meantime, BFT and BUSD are working together to serve our most vulnerable students and discussing ways in which they can provide direct student support by way of small cohorts.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Terry Pastika addressed the Board on behalf of the BSEP Planning and Oversight Committee. She reported that the committee concluded its review of the BSEP budgets and provided the committee's recommendations.

BOARD MEMBER AND SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Student Board Member Miller referred to the discussion that took place at the last meeting regarding distance learning, saying that he had hoped for a more constructive conversation. He added that he is all for following the science as plans for reopening

move forward, and is hopeful that the district will implement actions to adequately address the learning gaps students have experienced.

Director Ana Vasudeo thanked all who came out tonight. To all parents advocating for schools to reopen, she reassured them that she hears and empathizes with them as a parent of a kindergartener who needs additional support. She expressed being disheartened by the anti-educator sentiment among the community and reminded the public that many of our educators are also parents in BUSD. She added that addressing student learning loss is a priority for the district.

Vice President Ka'Dijah Brown thanked all who addressed the Board during public comment, particularly those who advocated for an expansion of the Office of Family Engagement and Equity (OFEE), and those who commented in favor of reopening schools. The Board is committed to ensuring that the work that needs to be done and the conversations that need to be had are taking place. She concluded her comments by acknowledging February as Black History Month.

Director Julie Sinai appreciated everyone who came out tonight and spoke on important issues including school reopening, the EL Master Plan, and OFEE. The Board is committed to having the district and its labor partners reach an agreement for the reopening of our schools as soon as possible and in the safest manner possible. She thanked Latinos Unidos of Berkeley for surveying its community as it is critical to hear from communities who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID. She concluded her comments by announcing that the Feb 17 School Board meeting will feature an update on BUSD's workforce housing.

Director Laura Babitt encouraged all to check out the BHS PTSA websites to access a number of resources including a math survival toolkit for students. She announced that the Black History Oratorical Fest will be held in April. With respect to school reopening, Ms. Babitt thanked the Superintendent for leading important conversations on this issue. She has found that across the various perspectives surrounding this matter lies a theme of fundamental distrust. It is important to work together as we adopt a solution oriented approach.

President Ty Alper appreciated all of the people who came out tonight. He acknowledged the frustration expressed by the community about reopening schools. As he reiterated that we cannot reopen until an agreement is reached between the district and BFT, he also clarified that the district's position is one that believes we can reopen our schools safely when allowed to do so by our public health officials. Even so, the district must engage in a negotiations process with its labors partners as plans to reopen proceed. While the availability of vaccines represents hope for a possible full reopening in the fall, the district is not in charge of vaccines. In the meantime, the district has advocated for educators to be prioritized as vaccines become available.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion to approve the Consent Calendar:
Brown/Babitt and approved unanimously 6-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2021-22 Budget Update and Discussion of Priorities (25 min)

The discussion of priorities was tabled for a future meeting.

Assistant Superintendent Pauline Follansbee provided updated projections based on the Unduplicated Pupil Percentage (UPP), and an overview of multi-year projections. The district will continue to engage with various advisory committees and other key stakeholders to move this budget development process forward.

Vice President Brown excused herself at 8:45pm.

Questions and discussion followed.

Annual Report of Revenue and Expenditures in FY 2019-20 and First Interim 2020-21 of the Berkeley Public Schools Educational Excellence Act of 2016 (BSEP/Measure E1) (25min)

BSEP Director Natahsa Beery provided an update on the BSEP's budget. Her presentation highlighted the status of BSEP funded projects as well as a review of revenue and expenditure for each resource.

Questions and discussion followed.

Update on the Homeless Outreach Program for Education (HOPE) for McKinney-Vento Students (20 min)

Director of Student Services Dr. Phillip Shelly presented an update on the supports and resources in place to ensure that McKinney-Vento (MV) students have the same access to public education. His presentation highlighted data relative to BUSD's MV student population. Questions and discussion followed.

ACTION ITEMS

Approve Allocation for EL Master Plan Facilitation Support (20 min)

Director of State, Federal and Special Projects Michelle Sinclair provided an update on plans to revise the district EL Master Plan which was last updated in 2013. Ms. Sinclair walked the Board through the proposed community engagement process and

associated timeline. Staff is seeking approval to obtain contracted services to support the development of the revised plan.

Motion to approve staff recommendation:

Babitt/Vaudeo, and approved 5-0:

Ty Alper, President – *Yes*

Ka'Dijah Brown, Vice President – *Excused*

Julie Sinai, Director/Clerk – *Yes*

Laura Babitt, Director – *Yes*

Ana Vasudeo, Director -- *Yes*

Miles Miller, Student Director, BHS – *Yes*

Extended comment:

Six community members addressed the Board during this second public comment period:

Four comments in support of reopening schools

One comment in support of a revised Master EL plan

One comment in support of a hybrid model.

The Board recessed back to closed session at 10:30pm.