

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

Official Minutes
July 1, 2020

President Judy Appel called the meeting to order at 7:03pm. She reported that the Board convened to Closed Session at 6:00pm.

Roll Call

Board of Education:

Judy Appel, President – Present
Ty Alper, Vice President – Present
Ka'Dijah Brown, Director/Clerk – Present
Beatriz Leyva-Cutler, Director – Present
Julie Siniai, Director -- 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 SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

At the request of President Appel discussion item 13.1 (Fall Planning Update) was moved to precede action items.

Motion to approve agenda as amended:
Alper/Leyva-Cutler and approved 5-0.

Alper reported out on closed session:

REPORT CLOSED SESSION

President Appel reported out on closed session:

Conference with Legal Counsel - Existing Litigation (Government Code Section 54596.9(a))

OAH Case No. 2020040574

Motion to approve staff recommendation

Alper/Brown and approved 4-0 with the following votes:

Judy Appel, President – *Yes*

Ty Alper, Vice President – *Yes*

Ka'Dijah Brown, Director/Clerk – *Yes*

Beatriz Leyva-Cutler, Director – *Recused*

Julie Siniai, Director – *Yes*

Anticipated Litigation – Regarding costs of services provided to student - One matter.
Ed. Code § 54956.9, subd. (e)(2)

The Board heard an update on this matter; no action was taken.

Public Employment (Government Code Section 54957)

Director, Human Resources

Motion to approve the appointment of Glendaly Gascut-Rios as the Director of Human Resources:

Appel/Brown and unanimously approved 5-0.

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

Berkeley Federation of Teachers (BFT)

The Board heard an update on this matter; no action was taken.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

A total of 13 people addressed the Board:

Six comments urging district to consider student safety first before reopening schools

Seven comments in support of defunding BPD and removing them from school campus

BOARD MEMBER AND SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Director Brown thanked all who participated in public comment in support of resolution on revising police in our schools, and those who shared concerns about the reopening of schools. While this is a challenging and unprecedented decision, she reassured the public of the Board's commitment to making the best decision for our community.

Director Sinai thanked all who actively participate in School Board and City Council meetings. In terms of the resolution calling for the reenvisioning of police presence in BUSD, she clarified that the resolution specifically refers to the School Resource Officer who is an actual police officer and whose position is funded by the City of Berkeley. This position is different from the School Safety Officer position and Berkeley High is the only BUSD campus with a School Resource Officer. Sinai added that any efforts to have police fully removed from our schools cannot proceed without engaging the student community. She read aloud newly added language to the resolution since it was first presented. With respect to the spike in Covid cases, Sinai went on to express her shared concern with the community when it comes to student safety and well being. She noted the research that shows how students, particularly Black and Latinx students, are impacted the longer they are out of school. COVID has ignited conversation around health and educational disparities across the country for the first time. She stressed the importance of being careful and thoughtful as we move forward, all while recognizing that we are in the middle of a serious pandemic. She concluded her comments with a reminder to the community about the importance of continuing to social distance and wearing masks.

Director Leyva-Cutler thanked Director Sinai for her comments. She said that the district is working diligently to establish the appropriate procedures that ensure the safety of our students and staff should schools reopen. She thanked the community for the emails and letters to the Board providing input about fall planning and school reopening. She also thanked those who expressed their support of the resolution on reenvisioning police presence not just in our schools, but in the city of Berkeley. Ultimately, this resolution supports the safety and wellbeing of our students. She looks forward to these conversations in the fall, and most importantly, she looks forward to hearing from the students. She also looks forward to BPD's contribution to this dialogue. She concluded by thanking Director Brown for her work on this resolution.

President Appel announced her appointment of Solomon Orland to the City's Youth Commission. She thanked members of the public for their comments tonight, and Director Sinai for her clarification of BUSD's arrangement with BPD with respect to the SRO. She also thanked Director Brown for her additions to this resolution. She assured the community that our student health and safety are paramount as plans to reopen move forward.

Superintendent Stephens acknowledged the hard work of staff that formed part of the leadership of BUSD that met weekly, took a huge volume of information at one time and made decisions for fall planning and school reopening. He also thanked BFT partners who are working beyond their contractual year to plan ahead. He acknowledged BHS Principal Erin Schweng who is finishing her time with BUSD after 22 years, as well as Director of Schools Maggie Riddle who is retiring this year after decades in Berkeley. He welcomed Sean Mansinger as the new director over the Special Education department, and Glendaly Gascut-Rios as the new Director of Human Resources.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion to approve the Consent Calendar:
Leyva-Cutler/Sinai and unanimously approved 5-0.

DISCUSSION

Update on Fall Planning

Superintendent Stephens noted that there are several updates since this was discussed.

Director Beery reported on the spike in COVID-19 cases, which has halted modifications initially scheduled for implementation on June 29.

Superintendent Stephens said that the plans included in this presentation are contingent on the amendment or lifting of the current shelter-in-place order. AB 77, a trailer bill to accompany this year's state budget, calls for a school calendar of 130 days with some flexibility for daily instructional hours by grade. The bill also makes amendment to the Ed code describing how distance learning should be happening. Dr. Stephens read aloud some of the language included in the bill. His presentation included a possible schedule that will allow students to attend in person by groups, in addition to a possible schedule that would only be implemented should SIP restrictions be lifted. Staff will continue to identify how to proceed with other factors, including field trips and sports.

Questions and discussion followed.

ACTION ITEMS

Recommendation to Discontinue Names of Jefferson Elementary School and Washington Elementary School

Denaming a school is the first step in the name change process.

Motion to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to dename Jefferson and Washington schools:
Appel/Alper and unanimously approved 5-0.

Motion to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to dename Washington:
Brown/Leyva-Cutler and unanimously approve 5-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Partial Bond Implementation Schedule for Longfellow Middle School

Executive Director of Facilities John Calise said that this update was in response to the Board's request to identify projects to be prioritized at Longfellow. Based on the feedback received during the Facilities Master Planning process the community requested new fencing and concrete retaining wall, new gates, auditorium modernization, a garden update conducive to outdoor learning, and a new digital marquee on Derby Street.

Questions and discussion followed.

Update on the Implementation of City of Berkeley's 2016 Measure Y1, "Vote 16"

Margaret Prinzing explained that the passing of Measure Y1 in November of 2016 did not itself establish the right of 16 and 17 year olds to vote in their local school board elections. Instead, it authorized City Councils to pass an ordinance to allow youth to vote with the following conditions: no City funds can be used, all systems and procedures are technically ready, City elections can still be consolidated with county elections, and there is no increase to election costs for the City. The purpose of this initiative is to give young people a voice concerning how their schools are run and, on a broader scale, to increase voter participation overtime. Implementing Measure Y1 will require an agreement between the City, the Registrar of Voters, and the School District. She said that having no direct precedent poses a challenge to Implementation efforts. The City of Berkeley is looking at how San Francisco implemented non-citizen voting for School Board elections and is meeting with the Alameda County Registrar of Voters to address some of the issues including voter registration and voting integrity. Currently, the Registrar's system for tracking voters lacks the capacity for the creation of a separate database that only includes Y1 voters, but the software company is open to adapt its capacity to accommodate this need. Next steps include learning more about a possible software update and finding out if ROV can acquire and use the update, determining whether the ROV meets the criteria for the implementation of Measure Y1, and for the City Council to decide to adopt an ordinance allowing youth to vote in School Board elections.

Questions and discussion followed.

EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENT

A total of two people addressed the Board:

One comment on the impact of distance learning on special education students

One comment on making all three middle schools more equitable.

ADJOURNMENT:

10:53pm