

BSEP Excellence!

Planning and Oversight Committee Homework

- **Purpose:** To gather feedback on the current BSEP measure program areas
- **Directions:** Add comments to the document following the prompt for each BSEP Program Area
- **Reminder:** Do not respond to other comments

You can find documents on the [Planning and Oversight Committee Webpage](#), most recent documents for each program will be inked below

Program Area: High Quality Instruction

[Class Size Reduction](#)

[Professional Development](#)

[Program Evaluation](#)

[Classroom Support](#)

[Expanded Course Offerings](#)

What is working well and how do you know?

- We have been told by teachers that our smaller class sizes enable them to begin to give differentiated instruction and pay better attention to each child's needs.
- Class size reduction is the big payoff. Better for teachers and students.
- ECO: Drama at Willard has been fantastic. My child has participated this year and has been very happy with it.
- ECO: Chem labs. The additional support is crucial because the general BHS science program, as currently structured, does not provide students an adequate foundation and they need the additional help. Opinion is based on experience and talking with parents.
 - Ditto, I agree with this.
- Program Evaluation: For some time, program evaluation has been inconsistent within BUSD. Recent changes are very promising with respect to the planning and implementation. My opinion is based on serving on the P&O for several years.
 - Ditto, I agree with this.
- Class size reduction is a big selling point in favor of Berkeley Schools over other options. Key fact to emphasize that BSEP drives this and how large classes would be without BSEP.

What do you have questions about?

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- PD: What is the PD budget for districts of similar size and demographics in California?
- What is the entirety of the PD budget from all funding sources?
- PD: what are the goals of PD programs and how is the district assessing how those goals are being met?
- Program Eval: What is the Program Eval budget for districts of similar size and demographics in California?
- Classroom Support & U9: BSEP funds 5.0 FTE. Is there any evaluation to demonstrate that the BHS U9 program that was developed to support students, build community, and provide a smooth transition between eighth and ninth grade has resulted in better academic performance in grades 10-12, as opposed to before the program began?
- Class size goals do not match realities with children in class's of 30+
- Reducing small class sizes can improve student outcomes but only if schools can do so (i.e. hire the number of teachers needed) without affecting teacher quality. Teacher quality will vary greatly, particularly in a challenging marketplace where supply is low, especially for specialty teachers. Therefore, it is critical that teachers have not only ongoing PD, but one-on-one/real-time coaching, especially when they're onboarding. How much of this type of coaching happen now?
- The naming of this measure feels oddly dystopic as one could not imagine a Low Quality Instruction plan. As the purpose seems to be class size reduction why not just call it that?
- It would be nice if the district could create a "SnapShot" of how they define Excellence, that we can strive for and then use BSEP funds to pay for this, for example, All k-5 classes are capped at 22, we should have a Literacy coach for every 200 students, we should have a Math Coach for every 200 students, we should have music in all k-5 classes. Mild/Mod sped teachers have a caseload cap of 22, Mod/Sev has a caseload cap of 12. Each school should have 1 behaviorist, each school should have 1 counselor for every 300 students, there should be a nurse for every 100 students, ect. 1 Librarian for every 12 classrooms.. These are all examples, but we can do better. Lets define what we want the district to look like and then strive to fund that vision.

What ideas do you have to improve this program area? Are there any gaps that we should address?

- Class Size Reduction: silo Class Size Reduction as its own budget area as it is the primary purpose of the measure. It should be a separate category with no discretionary spending sub sections.
- Remaining HQI areas: Should either be grouped in one area with a percent allocation or have their own percent allocations to ensure budget control.
- Class Size Reduction Calculation and BSEP transfer to GF: The language in the E1 Measure that allows the amendment of the teacher template calculation is too vague. While there is a need for some flexibility in CSR to alleviate pressures to the GF when necessary, there needs to be some kind of limiting language that specifically identifies

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what the trigger is for when the calculation change is needed AND a requirement to “reset” the template after. Perhaps the measure can defer this to the bylaws.

- Agreed
 - Given the on-going request for more objective outcome information to assess areas of progress or continued needs of support, the Program Evaluation section of BSEP needs to have its own percentage allocation, or at a minimum, an increased budget line.
 - The Professional Development has grown exponentially: in 2017/2018 the budget was \$854,050 to the 4/25/23 budget presented as \$2,340,028. Moreover, this is not the entire PD budget for BUSD as many individual budgets have additional PD, so the total PD budget is unknown. The additional issue is that it is hard to assess what the core priorities of PD budgeting should be without a district strategic plan. If PD continues to be a designated category in the new measure, re-evaluation of the budget size is warranted and the addition of a percentage allocation vs. discretionary amount.
 - Class sizes – in some cases we have very small class sizes because sites/teachers were unwilling to do combo-classes. This is unrealistic and not the intention of this measure. We should have framework for in which cases combo classes are required vs 2 mini-classes and the cost that entails.
 - Break out PD budget from Class Size Reduction as they don’t appear to be closely related.
 - More modeling on how declining enrollment may impact Class Size Reduction going forward. Do we need more funds here, less?
 - The Program Evaluation section of BSEP needs objectives outcomes to measure and report on publicly that look at student outcomes rather than operational or perceived quality
 - PD budget should be its own line item and conditional on student outcomes rather than given budget size.
 - When we talk about PD, we tend to lump it into a single category – would be great to break it down by topic areas and modalities, i.e. real-time coaching, 1:1 teacher-coach support, presentations on topics, etc. What types of PD benefit teachers the most? Which type and in what subject areas would they like more of?
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Program Area: Essentials for Excellence

[Instructional Technology](#)

[Music/VAPA](#)

[Library Program](#)

What is working well and how do you know?

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- The Music/ VAPA program is excellent. Very impressed with the outcomes achieved over the course of the E1 Measure. It would be outstanding if some of the planning that was used to set and achieve goals/ outcomes in the Music/ VAPA program could be transferred to HQI and Effective Student Support areas. My opinion is from serving on the P&O.
- The Library Program is outstanding. My opinion is from serving on the P&O.
- Instructional Technology has improved over the course of the measure. My opinion is from serving on the P&O.
- These are very visible items that BSEP funds that have strong community support and I feel that we should center these to the extent possible in communications.
- Its amazing we offer such breadth of music options for so many of the students
- When are we going to see VAPA become more Visual (fine arts) and Performing Arts - that includes theatre programs - we are woefully lacking in this arena at BHS and not every kid is a music (jazz/orchestra) kid... Dance classes are seeing less enrollment and potentially cuts. Theatre can bring all of those elements into one place - music, dance, singing, acting, tech! We have the built out space at BHS now the community (and staff) needs to come together to show support!

What do you have questions about?

- What is the split in spend between music vs other visual or performing arts?
- Given the growth of importance of technology vs when this measure was first passed, do we need to realign our % spend towards technology? Are we underfunding this area vs needs?
- Of all the areas, technology is the easiest to measure outcomes for and should include clear objectives to be met for all investment.
- Scheduling of the technology advisory committee is currently out of sync with the budget submission process such that the committee cannot fully weigh in on the budget asks . these time frames should be adjusted to ensure all budget requests come from the current committee's priorities
- Does each school site/classroom have the same types of technology infrastructure available? Has there been a comprehensive master plan to upgrade to the latest technology infrastructure? Perhaps this is worth studying.
- Does the district have a strategic plan regarding use of educational technology/remote and personalized learning to expand learning opportunities and modalities for kids? Would love to see one.

What ideas do you have to improve this program area? Are there any gaps that we should address?

- It needs to be a financial priority that all BHS students have access to a chromebook.
 - 100% agree. Otherwise they are all doing their work on their phones. Not a good way to model screen usage - or not using phones during classes...
- Measure outcomes not efforts

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- Directly connect student achievements to funding priorities
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Program Area: Effective Student Support

[Counseling and Behavioral Health](#)

[Student Achievement Strategies](#)

What is working well and how do you know?

- Rtl teachers are critical in providing tier 2 support
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What do you have questions about?

- I would assume every level of school – elementary, middle and high school – should have social/emotional counselors available on site. Most of our counselors are Academic. How do we clarify the difference by site, and understand what our current staffing levels are for academic vs mental health counseling by site?
- Is there a way to increase the number of counselors (and other sources of academic support), especially at the middle school level where we will have a large cohort of “post COVID” kids moving through during the next funding round.
- Why reduce SSC’s funds to support the IT teams efforts rather than pursue the gap in funding elsewhere?
- What are the success metrics tied to TSA’s? Are these clearly defined in advance for any of the current TSA’s and what principles should be developed to ensure future TSA’s are meeting specific student needs?

What ideas do you have to improve this program area? Are there any gaps that we should address?

- It is my understanding that SSCs *are required* to contribute a portion of funds to provide for Rtl, and/or Lit coaches. To me, that circumvents the purpose of the SSC portion of the E1 Measure to provide discretionary funding to each school. Either the new measure should reassess the amount given to the individual schools to deduct the required allocation of Rti/ Lit Coaches and transfer that amount into the Student Achievement Strategies so that the amount of funds that the SSC have are truly discretionary OR have the BUDS Administration clearly state there is no mandate, and have that documented some place for future reference.
- BSEP pays for several TSA (Rtl/ Lit Coaches). During COVID, TSA’s were converted to classroom teachers to re-open in-person classrooms. When asked about reimbursing

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BSEP for funds that were supposed to be spent on providing RtI or Lit Coaching, the response was no, because the funds were in fact spent on the RtI/ Lit Coach position, but what changed was the focus of the teachers at the discretion of the Superintendent because of an emergency. Understanding COVID was an emergency, it did highlight the need that there needs to be some kind of policy or process to safeguard that funds slotted in a certain manner get used for that purpose.

- Evaluate how much of the TSAs are performing admin versus direct student support functions and consider focusing BSEP funds to the greatest extent possible on in-school functions, with perhaps the general fund picking up more central office positions.
- TSA's should only be funded by the GF. The spirit of BSEP is for direct student support rather than district wide administration
- Additional support and funding for clubs and student affinity groups
- How might we add additional programming focused on meeting the students where they are with many of the core youth issues including sex ed, drug use and overall body health?
- The high school wellness needs to be also found in community building. The student body as a whole needs to heal and events that bring them together as whole and in special interest groups (clubs, leadership, etc) are very key. There needs to be more support for this - not only from the admins but from the financing of these priorities. The student body has an Activities Director at a 1.0 and a Student Body Accounting Tech at .6. That is not enough to support a student body that is getting more and more active - thank goodness! The ASB needs the full support of a 1.0 FTE accountant at the site (which is how this was funded for decades until a long time accountant retired and then the FTE was reduced). There are fiscal and ed code compliance issues and it needs to be considered very seriously.

Other Comments and feedback

- We have heard that the level of BSEP support from the community surpasses the level of support in other districts that have similar measures. Can we have context for how BUSD's measure compares to others.
- The accountability measures within E1 are focused on where the funds are spent and does not adequately address accountability from the impact/ efficacy standpoint. The new measures needs to explicitly expand the accountability provision to include some kind of efficacy element. In response to on-going comments from the P&O, there has been progress in developing goals that assess efficacy, which is great. However, those goal developments are not mandated within the measure. Given the level of funding provided via BSEP, there must be a meaningful accountability corollary that includes

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measurable goals, reporting out to the public of measurable goals, with a primary focus on student achievement strategies and what is currently HQI.

- Another option to systemically increase meaningful accountability outside of the measure, that would directly impact the measure, is for the Board to adopt, prior to the voters voting on the BSEP renewal, a comprehensive strategic plan that includes:
 - 1) a publicly available “funding map” that outlines all funding sources that support district initiatives so the District has, in one place, the “big picture” of everything funded and the sources - including private funding such as PTA, SSC, and various nonprofits such as Berkeley Schools Fund and the various nonprofits at BHS. This is crucial as, by design district funding is such that multiple funds often support one thing
 - It is also crucial as different funding sources create programs to try to address the same issues, but we don’t know what each other is doing, likely resulting in inefficient spend and lower overall efficacy
 - 2) adopt clear priorities with correlating goals/ objectives and how those will be measured/ assessed and released to the public annually, and
 - 3) For any *new expenditures* beginning in 2024, establish a clear set of criteria required that dictates how the spending, from whatever source, specifically fits into the strategic plan, what kind of evaluation for efficacy will happen, and by when.
- Consider a small percentage of funds in BSEP that could be used for any of the areas BSEP funds. This would allow more flexibility for funding decisions when cuts need to be made.
- Given the decrease of number of students in the district since this last measure was passed, together with the annual COLA that was – I believe – always maximized, the tax rate should be held constant, at maximum. An argument could be made the tax rate should be lowered.
- 2 questions received from a parent not on P&O but who asked me to voice for them during BSEP renewal discussions:
 - 1) Given the fungible nature of BUSD budget funds, how will BUSD credibly assure voters that BSEP funds will not be used to backfill holes elsewhere in BUSD budgets created by a cash reparations program?
 - 2) Given that the reparations task force is scheduled to issue its report in January, only a few weeks before the start of absentee voting for the BSEP measure, will BUSD’s advance public opinion polling for BSEP include questions to measure the potential impact of reparations on voter intentions?
- Process question: on this document and in general as P&O Committee, are we being asked to evaluate whether the BSEP funds are being used as they are intended or are we being asked to assess the quality of program areas?
 - This feels like such an important clarification. As a new member on the committee, this was totally unclear. It felt mostly like our role was to rubber stamp past spending without any evaluative function.

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- Going forward, all funding from BSEP must be tied to measurable student outcomes rather than efforts or quality initiatives. These must be reported on publicly, in historical context, and should address open issues including 1) How are BSEP funds being used to close the learning gap due school closures from the pandemic, 2) How are students directly benefiting from these measures; 3) why do we know that benefit is a sustainable true benefit for the students; 4) How are we measuring these benefits and optimizing for improving them; 5) What the end goal (success metrics) will be and how do we know when we've reached them.