

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

Official Minutes
October 18, 2023

Before calling the meeting to order, President Laura Babitt called for a moment of silence in honor of lives lost overseas as a result of Israeli-Palestinian conflict. President Laura Babitt called the meeting to order at 7:25pm. She reported that the Board convened to Closed Session at 5:30pm.

Roll Call

Board of Education:

Laura Babitt, President – Present
Ana Vasudeo, Vice President – Present
Ka’Dijah Brown, Director – Present
Jennifer Shanoski, Director – Present
Mike Chang, Director -- Excused
Katelyn Lao, Student Director, BHS – Present
Jhanai Dell, Student Director, BTA – Present

Administration:

Enikia Ford Morthel, Superintendent
Jill Hoogendyk, 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 the regular meeting agenda for October 18, 2023:
Brown/Vasudeo and unanimously approved 6-0

REPORT CLOSED SESSION

Vice President Vasudeo reported out on closed session:

3.1	Conference with Legal Counsel – Existing Litigation (Government Code Section 54956 (a))
	3.1.1 Viscomi et al v. JUUL Labs, Inc. This item was tabled for a future meeting. No action was taken.
	3.1.2 Workers Comp Claim This item was tabled for a future meeting. No action was taken.
3.2	Public Employee Appointment (Government Code Section 54957)
	3.2.1 Executive Director, Fiscal Services Motion to approve staff recommendation: Vasudeo/Chang and unanimously approved 4-0.
3.3	Collective Bargaining - Government Code Section 54957.6(a) (District Negotiator: Samantha Tobias-Espinosa) Board received an update and provided direction. No action was taken.
3.4	Superintendent Evaluation (Government Code Section 54957) This item was tabled for a future meeting. No action was taken.

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Superintendent Ford-Morthel opened up her comments in acknowledgement of the pain our community is experiencing and displaying in response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She seconded President Babbitt’s opening remarks reinforcing that we are a community whose mission is student-centered and highlighted the importance in holding and caring for one another during this time. She went on to share that a student-led walkout took place this morning, and clarified that this was not a BUSD sanctioned demonstration. She added that BUSD leadership and staff were present in support of student voices, and she appreciated the way in which students showed up. The Superintendent reinforced that BUSD stands against all forms of hate. She then went on to highlight this evening’s presentations, namely the Quarter 5 Literacy Report listed as an information item on the agenda. Lastly, she shared the passing of longtime BUSD educator Cliff Wong, and extended condolences to his family and friends.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

A total of speakers addressed the Board:

One comment on access to the staff bathroom at BHS.

One comment in support of reinstatement of COVID leave, separate from sick leave.

One comment sharing a personal story about growing up Jewish

One comment on student walkout and addressing safety concerns.

Six comments on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

One comment on gender neutral restroom access.

One comment asking BUSD to commit to teaching Palestinian history

One comment on a filed complaint.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Superintendent's Budget Advisory Committee	District English Language Advisory Committee
Audit Committee	Parent Advisory Committee
Sexual Harassment + Gender Advisory Committee	CTE Advisory Committee
African American Advisory Committee	PTA Council
BSEP/BERRA Planning & Oversight Committee	Equity and Excellence Advisory Committee

BSEP/BERRA committee co-chairs addressed the Board in support of the proposed BSEP Measure.

UNION COMMENTS

None

BOARD MEMBER AND SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Board directors provided individual comments.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion to approve the Consent Calendar:
Chang/Shanoski

The Board took a 6 minute recess at 6:32

DISCUSSION

BUSD Data Update (45 min)

Superintendent Ford Morthel, Director of Student Services Dr. Phillip Shelley, and Director of Berkeley Research, Evaluation and Assessment (BREA) Ruth Steele presented data around enrollment, attendance, graduation rates, A-G UC and CSU eligibility rates.

They highlighted that BUSD continues to outperform Alameda county and California in math and ELA.

In terms of literacy, the focus is on the implementation of new intervention supports created in response to last year's review and selection of a new curriculum.

In math, elementary students made significant gains and have surpassed pre-pandemic proficiency levels. At the secondary level, there is a post-pandemic recovery trend. Work to reach pre-pandemic levels continues as we wait for the new mathematical framework to launch. While there are areas of growth, there is still more work to do to address the achievement gap that persists in BUSD.

Next steps include implementation of a number of initiatives to address the infrastructure needed to realize the levels of academic achievement students are capable of.

BSEP Measure Renewal - First Reading (20 min)

Director of Local Resources and Partnerships Kathy Fleming presented the draft for first reading for the BSEP measure renewal. She highlighted the differences between the proposed and current measure, explained the timeline and plan to engage the community, and noted that the recommended tax rate landed at \$.54 sq feet per building. This item will return for Board approval.

EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENT

One comment on student walkout.

One comment thanking the District for its leadership during this time.

Two comments on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Two comments on student safety in light of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

EXTENDED BOARD COMMENTS:

Director Shanoski emphasized how important it is to display kindness to one another during this time.

ADJOURNMENT:

10:46PM