

## **Planning and Oversight Committee Statement to the Board**

*Verbal statement to be delivered by Co-Chairs on 10/18/23*

Good evening, my name is Weldon Bradstreet. My colleague, Nicole Chabot, is joining us by video conference. We are the Co-Chairpersons of the BSEP and BERRA Planning and Oversight Committee. As our name states, the P&O Committee is charged with overseeing BSEP and BERRA - two supplemental property tax measures passed by Berkeley voters that, combined, will provide \$48MM to our District this fiscal year.

BSEP stands for the Berkeley Schools Excellence Program and it is fundamental to BUSD. It provides almost 20% of the District's budget and supports many programs we all expect within our district. BSEP pays for 1/3 of our total teaching staff - that's **extra** teachers allowing us to have smaller class sizes. BSEP also pays for 100% of our libraries, most of our world class music program, visual and performing arts, and countless other programs we consider core to our district.

BSEP is on the ballot for renewal in March 2024 and it is essential that it passes with strong community support. As a group, the P&O Committee meets 2 to 3 times each month reviewing budget reports and ensuring that BSEP funds are spent according to the terms of the measure. In preparation for this renewal, the P&O Committee held a series of targeted discussions to review updates to the new measure.

The P&O Committee supports the renewal of the BSEP Measure on the March 2024 Ballot with the following considerations: (to be highlighted by P&O Committee Co-Chair Nicole Chabot)

**NICOLE – START TALKING HERE**

Thanks, Weldon.

- **The first consideration we reviewed was the proposed Tax Rate.**
  - The P&O has reviewed multiple financial models. We recognize the increased starting tax rate of the new measure but support a \$0.54 initial tax rate given that historical cost increases have outstripped the annual COLA over previous 8 year measures. Hence a 54 cent tax rate will be necessary to maintain our current program levels.
- **The second consideration discussed by the P&O is language supporting Accountability within the measure.**

- The P&O has discussed for many years the need to clarify our scope of oversight to include analysis and metrics of programs funded by BSEP. This concern was also voiced at our community input events. The P&O **strongly supports** the addition of the phrase, *“including project metrics”* be added to the new measure. This **language has been submitted for your review tonight.**

Further, the P&O reiterates its recommendations from our statement made on May 24, 2023 that the District

1. develop a strategic plan that covers the entirety of what we are trying to achieve in our District
2. adopt a district-wide system of objective metrics to evaluate all programs, regardless their funding source
3. define a funding map that outlines all sources of revenue coming to the district, the total cost of each program, and the totals we are spending against each strategic goal

These efforts will make us better stewards of the funds so critical to our district, and enable us to ensure we are spending in a manner that drives the results we are looking for.

We sincerely thank the taxpayers of Berkeley for their support of BUSD, and hope the entire community will approve the critical renewal of BSEP in March 2024.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.