

Statement

Good evening, my name is Nicole Chabot. My colleague, Weldon Bradstreet, can't join us tonight as he is simultaneously Chairing the City of Berkeley Disaster and Fire Safety Commission. Together we are the Co-Chairs 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, provided **\$50MM** to our District this past 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 schools. BSEP pays for $\frac{1}{3}$ of our total teaching staff - that means **130 teaching positions** allowing us to have smaller class sizes than would otherwise be possible. BSEP also pays for 100% of our libraries, most of our world class music program, visual and performing arts, tremendous help for struggling students, and countless other programs we consider core to our district.

The Planning and Oversight Committee is a dedicated group of up to 48 parents and staff who meet 10-12 times per year to help steward the funds so generously paid by our taxpayers.

This past year our team spanned from brand new members learning the complicated BUSD budget, to our longest serving member, Berkeley High School Chemistry teacher Aaron Glimme, who has loyally served on BSEP since 2006. We estimate his contribution of time to be over 450 hours of meetings spanning 18 years. We value and appreciate his dedication and the well of knowledge he brings to the P&O.

This past fall the P&O began meetings in September, earlier in the school year than usual, to help develop the next BSEP Measure for the ballot. Specifically, we spent significant time forecasting to align on the right tax rate, and working to include language requiring "metrics" as part of the measure.

We were thrilled Measure H, which funded BSEP for another 8 years, passed with an 88.3% "yes" vote, and we are sincerely thankful to the Berkeley voters and taxpayers for funding this critical resource. With the new measure we project to be able to continue the current level of programs. However, with rising costs, we do not anticipate having excess funding to add more programs without reducing others.

This year, after many years of requests, the P&O was able to start to implement metrics as a more robust part of our department reports with the goal of better aligning budgets with outcomes. We are looking forward to continuously improving in this area. Specifically we have found

1. Metrics should be used with a wide lens, showing us where our gaps are, as opposed to being pulled only selectively to support our assumptions. In our own meetings we found

that when we review metrics without presuppositions, the data can teach us and lead us towards better work for all our students.

2. While we are beginning to institutionalize metrics, we still have opportunity to better tie those metrics to outcomes. While we acknowledge this can be difficult, we will continue to work in this direction as we believe metrics, and outcomes, should be used as an important component to drive forward-looking budgeting, and thus we look forward to further developing this as part of our review process in the 2024-2025 school year.
3. We also want to express our appreciation and support for the District's similarly expanded use of outcome-focused metrics in their wider district work.

After reviewing all plans and spending recommendations, the P&O Committee ultimately approved all 13 BSEP budget recommendations for 2024-2025, and we recommend this Board approve those budgets as well.

In closing, we sincerely thank the taxpayers of Berkeley for their support of BUSD. We thank the members of the P&O for their hard work again this year. We thank the budget managers for their thoughtful presentations and plans for the upcoming school year. And most sincerely we thank Kathy Fleming, the Director of Local Resources and Partnerships, and Danielle Perez, BSEP Program Specialist, for their work year round stewarding our taxpayer funds.

Thank you, School Board, Superintendent, and Administrators, for your attention and consideration this evening.