

## 12/9/25 P&O Questions

- 1. In California, how common is it for school districts to have their own data departments like BREA? The state provides a lot of data based on state testing and proficiency, why does BUSD need it's own data collection on top of that? Is BREA data used to evaluate teacher performance?**

*Yes, districts across California have dedicated teams handling data, research, evaluation, and assessment because it's mandated by state/federal laws and essential for instruction, accountability, and resource allocation. Larger and Medium districts have separate departments like BREA (some quite a bit larger). Smaller districts may combine some of these roles, but the functions are critical for using student data to improve learning and meet requirements. BREA does not evaluate teachers. We evaluate programs, not individual teachers.*

- 2. Is [mastery learning](#)—where students achieve a high level of understanding in a subject before advancing to more complex material—a goal BUSD has for all students?**

*Across grade levels, the expectation is that students work toward a strong understanding of grade-level standards and get the support they need along the way. Instruction is designed so that students are not simply moving through the curriculum, but are actually developing the skills and knowledge that the standards describe.*

*Teachers use clear learning targets, check for understanding throughout a unit, and make adjustments when students need more time or a different approach. So while you won't find a district statement that literally says "BUSD uses mastery learning," the underlying idea—students deeply understanding material before moving on—is part of how classrooms are meant to function.*

- 3. Does BUSD have a system to assess and achieve mastery learning for as many students as possible? If yes, can you please tell me more about it? Does BUSD have a system to assess and support students toward mastery?**

*Yes—several pieces of our instructional system are built around this idea, even if they aren't labeled as "mastery learning."*

*Here are the core components:*

### ***Standards-Based Teaching and Grading***

*Many classrooms and grade levels use standards-based rubrics and report cards. Instead of focusing on points, teachers look at what students actually understand relative to grade-level expectations. This gives clearer information about where a student is strong and where they need support.*

### ***Formative Assessment (Ongoing Checks for Understanding)***

*Teachers routinely use quick assessments, exit tickets, reading checks, unit tasks, and small-group conversations to see how students are doing. These aren't just grades—they're used to guide instruction, reteach, or extend learning. This is one of the biggest ways the district ensures students build real understanding.*

### ***Tiered Supports (RTI/MTSS)***

*Each school uses a version of MTSS/RTI—where teachers meet with support teams to look at student data and provide additional time, instruction, or intervention when a student isn't yet meeting expectations. This includes:*

- *small-group skill instruction*
- *literacy and math intervention*
- *behavior and social-emotional supports*
- *progress-monitoring to check growth over time*

*The goal is to catch learning gaps early and respond before students fall behind.*

### ***Differentiated Instruction***

*Teachers adjust pacing, provide different entry points into lessons, and create multiple ways for students to show what they know. Students who already understand the material can move into more complex tasks, while others can revisit or practice foundational skills.*

*The district does operate with the belief that students should develop a solid understanding of grade-level material—not just move through assignments.*

*The systems we already use—standards-based grading, ongoing classroom assessment, literacy and math intervention, and MTSS/RTI—are all designed to help as many students as possible reach a strong level of understanding.*

- 4. Should BUSD explore becoming a [Khan Academy District](#) to help more children achieve mastery learning? What are the pros and cons? Implementing mastery learning requires more from the adults in students' lives—perhaps parents and parent volunteers could complement BUSD staff efforts to help share this responsibility.**

*BUSD recognizes the growing research base around mastery learning and technology-supported practice models, including district-level partnerships such as a Khan Academy District. These models show promise when they are intentionally integrated with strong core instruction, targeted small-group support, and consistent adult guidance.*

*At the same time, the research is clear that mastery learning is not a self-directed or automated solution. Effective implementation requires clear instructional alignment, regular monitoring by educators, and sufficient adult capacity to respond to student needs. Any exploration of this model would need to examine how it complements—not replaces—BUSD's adopted curriculum, professional learning structures, and existing intervention and tutoring efforts.*

- 5. The VAPA presentation included a "room for improvement" that white students are over-represented in VAPA programs. What's a practical action item generated from that?**

*White students are "overrepresented" in 6th grade music, meaning that white students are enrolled at a higher percentage in 6th grade music than their percentage of overall 6th grade enrollment - by 7%. Overall visual and performing arts courses 6-12 white students are "overrepresented" by 4%. This does not mean that these enrollment rates need to be addressed specifically, but rather this year the k-8 music department's focus is engaging unengaged students. We have teacher-led professional development sessions on culturally relevant curriculum/ resource sharing, building positive relationships with students, strategies for note reading, motivation strategies and middle school music recruitment. Somewhere in the transitions or even prior to the 6th grade transition, focal students are losing interest at a disproportionate rate. It is important that the music teachers have regular conversations about continuous*

*improvement both as a department and as an educator. Last year, teachers participated in several workshops on normalizing racial dialogue. We are building off this in this year's professional development sessions and taking a closer departmental look at our data in order to bridge these gaps.*