

Berkeley Unified School District
Resolution in Support of Distance Learning Options for Students in the Berkeley Unified
School District
Resolution No 20-040

March 19, 2020

WHEREAS in the past six days the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD), the Bay Area, and the State of California have seen a remarkable turn of events in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, including:

- March 12, the decision by the Berkeley Unified School District to close all Berkeley public schools by Monday, March 16;
- March 13, the Federal Declaration of Emergency that suspends entry of foreign nationals seeking entry who had been physically present within the prior 14 days in certain jurisdictions where COVID-19 outbreaks have occurred and institutes Federal quarantines for individuals evacuated from foreign nations;
- March 16, the Shelter-in-Place order issued by City and County Health Officers for six Bay Area Counties, including Alameda County;
- March 16, the proclamation by Governor Gavin Newsom of a State of Emergency, in which he urged all California residents that “we must rise to the challenge facing our state with every tool at our disposal and without a second of delay”,
- March 16, the Governor’s Executive Order that directs California state health and social services agencies to redirect resources and staff, focusing on providing technical assistance and supporting compliance with core health and safety requirements for caregivers and the cared for,
- March 17, the passage of SB117 appropriating \$100 million for local education agencies to purchase protective equipment and supplies and provide labor related to cleaning school sites,
- March 17, the guidance from the California Department of Education urging California schools to adopt distance learning practices while also conforming to the requirements established in federal law for the education of students with disabilities,
- March 18, the Governor’s Executive Order N-30-20, waiving the requirement for state-wide standardized testing under Education Code section 60641(a),
- March 18, a video conference by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond offering additional clarification and detail to over 8000 administrators and education professionals about the previous day’s CDE guidance to schools; and

WHEREAS the Governor stated in his March 17 address to the State that he believes that many California schools will remain closed for the remainder of the school year, thereby

dramatically altering the educational experience for millions of California youth and their families; and

WHEREAS, BUSD has a strong and dedicated corps of classroom teachers, Special Education teachers, teachers on special assignment, counselors, instructional assistants, administrators, and other school and district staff who believe deeply in supporting students to learn; and

WHEREAS, on Monday, March 16, made online home learning resources available to families on its website, berkeleyschools.net, and many BUSD educators are already offering a variety of learning experiences to their students; and

WHEREAS, Berkeley educators are affected by these school closures and shelter-in-place orders;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that

- 1) The Berkeley Unified School District Board of Education directs the Superintendent and staff to continue their work to offer support to students and their families while they are required to be at home, and during the full period of school closure, so long as this period is determined by the Superintendent and Board to be necessary;
- 2) That district staff shall work with all possible speed to address the present disparities between students and families with respect to access to computers and the internet by dispersing available devices from Berkeley schools, purchasing additional devices, and advising families on how to secure free or low-cost internet options;
- 3) These home learning supports shall, to the extent possible, provide students with opportunities to master grade-level and course-specific content, and will include opportunities for individual work and projects, suggestions for the use of appropriate online educational resources, feedback from teachers, guidance to parents/caregivers, and to the extent possible, opportunities for live interaction with the teacher and classmates;
- 4) These supports shall, to the extent possible, provide students with special needs, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, forms of specialized support designed to permit access to these ongoing learning opportunities;
- 5) District staff shall, to the extent possible under the current shelter-in-place orders, develop a program of online professional development for all BUSD teachers about online technologies that support student learning, including resources related to grade-level and course-specific content;

- 6) The Superintendent and staff will continue to closely monitor the evolving guidance from the California Department of Education, the US Department of Education, professional organizations, as well as federal, state, county, and city health authorities;
- 7) As additional information becomes available from the State, the Superintendent shall continue to communicate with staff and the community to clarify practices related to grading, assessment and feedback, course credit and grade-level promotion, and high school graduation;
- 8) The Superintendent and staff shall work cooperatively with the Berkeley Federation of Teachers to account for the challenges faced by teachers in these unparalleled circumstances so that teachers may in turn offer support to students and families;
- 9) The Superintendent and staff shall solicit feedback from BUSD teachers, administrators, and families about the district's distance learning efforts, recognizing that the transition of more than 800 classrooms from a school setting to distance learning will occur in stages;
- 10) The Superintendent and staff will work with teachers and administrators to continually review and improve the district's support for efforts to offer educational experiences and resources to students who must remain home.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Governing Board of the Berkeley Unified School District at an emergency meeting held on the 19th day of March 2020, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Ka'Dijah Brown,
Clerk, Board of Education
Berkeley Unified School District