

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

Official Minutes  
May 20, 2020

President Judy Appel called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. She reported that the Board convened to Closed Session at 5:30pm.

**Roll Call**

Board of Education:

Judy Appel, President – Present  
Ty Alper, Vice President – Present  
Ka'Dijah Brown, Director/Clerk – Present  
Beatriz Leyva-Cutler, Director – Present  
Julie Siniai, Director -- Present  
Estella Hemp, Student Director, BHS – Present  
Edwin Castro-Romero, Student Director, BTA

Administration:

Brent Stephens, Ed., D, Superintendent  
Baje Thiara, 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**

At the request of President Appel, item 11.9 - Approval of Sustainability Plan Development Contract, and item 12.1 - Approval of 2020-2021 BSEP Student Support Budget and Program Plan, were pulled altogether.

Motion to approve agenda as amended:  
Appel/Leyva-Cutler and approved 6-0.

**REPORT CLOSED SESSION**

Vice President Alper reported out on closed session:

Conference with Legal Counsel - Anticipated Litigation - One (1) Potential Case  
The Board received update and discussed this matter, no action was taken.

Collective Bargaining Government Code Section 54957.6(a) (District Negotiator: Samantha Tobias-Espinosa)

Berkeley Council of Classified Employees

The Board received update and discussed this matter, no action was taken.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

A total of two people addressed the Board:

One comment on behalf of the construction bond oversight committee reporting the committee's unanimous approval of BUSD's audit as all findings were in compliance with Measure I requirements.

One comment concerning summer learning student opportunity

**UNION COMMENTS**

BFT President Matt Meyer acknowledged our teachers for all of their hard work and dedication as we adjust to distance learning. He stressed the importance of thinking ahead into the next school year and how it will look like relative to social distancing, while at the same time taking into consideration how we will reach all students in a meaningful way.

**COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

VP of Equity and Inclusion on PTA Council Thanked BUSD for creating an engaging space for families via town halls. She requested that the upcoming Spanish town hall be texted out in Spanish and aired on facebook live in an effort to reach as much of the Latinx community as possible.

**BOARD MEMBER AND SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS**

Director Sinai expressed deep appreciation to all administrators, teachers and staff who are working hard to adjust to distance learning; as well as to students and their parents/guardians. She reported that Oakland will include in its November ballot a measure that will allow 16 and 17 year olds to vote in school board elections. She requested an update to the Board at a subsequent meeting around the implementation process in BUSD. She reported that she is not holding office hours, but encouraged the public to reach out via email.

Student Director Hemp shared that fellow seniors have expressed a need for clarity around what are the new expectations for graduation given change to distance learning. She responded to their concerns by working with Principal Shweng to send out information to BHS seniors about graduation requirements.

Director Leyva-Cutler thanked Director Sinai for her suggestion of a Vote 16 update. She also thanked Ms. Vaucedo, who addressed the Board during public comment for

her feedback for the upcoming Town Hall in Spanish. She looks forward to all of the planning for the next year.

Vice President Alper thanked all staff and teachers for all of their work as we anticipate a year that will demand so much more work with far less resources. He expressed the Board's commitment to students and their families. He looks forward to the upcoming update on plans for next year.

President Appel shared that she has been spending a lot of time participating in a number of CSBA trainings. She said she is hopeful that the values embedded in the Berkeley community will drive all decision-making.

Superintendent Stephens thanked Director Hemp for her leadership and advocacy on behalf of her peers. He acknowledged this year's graduating class of seniors who will experience the first ever televised graduation commencement. He announced that the District has partnered with PCAD to host a town hall to continue discussing the impact of school closures on black students. This will be followed by Town Hall in Spanish on May 28 at 6:30am. He thanked BUES families, teachers, staff, colleagues.

## CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion to approve the Consent Calendar:

Brown/Alper and unanimously approved 6-0.

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

### COVID-19, Distance Learning (VAPA and DigiTech), and Fall 2020 Planning

Natasha Beery provided an update on COVID-19. She noted that we are expecting an update from the State Superintendent of Instruction tomorrow concerning possible variations across districts in the next school year that will be difficult to implement amid budget cuts. At the regional level, the SIP order is still in place. Beery referenced a number of resources for families to remain informed. She went on to provide a brief overview of feedback received at the last town hall concerning social distancing rules and how newly implemented guidelines will impact other departments, like transportation. Her presentation highlighted some of the more frequently recurring words during town hall. I

Coordinator of Library Services Jessica Lee shared that upon finding out the news of school closures back in April she worked with teachers and site librarians to get as many books as possible out to students. That particular day 14,000 books were checked out. She thanked the BPSF for their commitment to help compensate for any of the books that may be lost or damaged. Book recommendations are constantly being sent out to students to promote reading. Professional development has been focused on instructional technology, including hours of training for educators to refer to on their own time.

VAPA Director Pete Gidlund provided an update on distance learning within the visual arts program. He played aloud a musical piece that had been recorded during quarantine, as well as a video of teachers leading virtual music classes. Resources created by teachers and their tutorial videos have been made available for students. Questions and discussion followed.

Superintendent Stephens provided some preliminary planning for Fall 2020. He remarked that schools will continue to be impacted by Covid-19 in 20-21 and it is highly possible that we will not be able to open our schools by August. Since the last update, the Governor's roadmap has been updated with guidelines from CDC. Criteria to reopen includes a number of community-level conditions required to be met and maintained before a district can decide to reopen its schools. The ability to quickly set up safe and efficient testing sites is among the community-level criteria. School district-level conditions will also have to be met before deciding to reopen, including a District's capacity to provide PPE for students and staff alike. He noted that BUSD currently does not meet all of the criteria required to reopen its schools. He explained that the plans for fall 2020 are part of what he refers to as a "most likely scenario". He hopes that more concrete guidelines and direction for moving forward come about in the next week, and noted that social distancing would greatly impact transportation capacities. Next steps include a survey that will go out to query both families and staff about their level of comfort returning to campus, if at all. Principals will be asked to continue to solicit feedback on a distance learning plan for each grade level.

Staff is recommending that Jun 8-12 be dedicated to teacher-student collaboration. A second request is being made for a similar planning period from Aug 17-21. Questions and discussion followed.

#### **Governor's May Revise and BUSD Budgeting Process**

Assistant Superintendent of Business Services Pauline Follansbee and Superintendent Stephens presented projections for budget reductions and updated the Board and changes in the state budget and the resulting impact on the General and LCAP budgets. Their presentation highlighted pre COVID-19 proposals for budget planning. The Superintendent noted that the potential solutions are still in vetting stages and represent a packet of about \$2 million in reductions. The May Revise will call for further cuts.

Assistant Superintendent Follansbee shared highlights from the Governor's May revise of the budget, noting that we are in a state of financial crisis and the Governor is seeking federal financial relief via the Heroes Act to avoid projected deep cuts. An August budget revise is expected.

Superintendent Stephens added that BUSD is faced with identifying over \$8 million in reductions to the General Fund and an additional \$1 million to the LCAP fund over the next year. This is an exponentially higher cut target in comparison to from previous years where BUSD reduced \$5 million over a period of three years.

Questions and discussion followed.

ADJOURNMENT:

10:33pm