

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

Official Minutes
June 10, 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

Alper moved to approve meeting agenda without item 14.3 (Measure Y1 Update), and with item 13.3 (Measure G) moved from action to discussion. Motion seconded by Leyva-Cutler and approved unanimously 6-0.

REPORT CLOSED SESSION

Vice President Alper reported out on closed session:

Conference with Legal Counsel - Existing Litigation (Government Code Section 54956.9)

WC Claim No. 09BSD0108

Motion to approve staff recommendation:
Sinai/Appel and approved 5-0.

OAH Case No.2020030631

Motion to approve staff recommendation on this matter:
Alper/Leyva-Cutler and unanimously approve 5-0

OAH Case No. 2020010960

Motion to approve staff recommendation:
Alper/Leyva-Cutler and unanimously approved 5-0

Anticipated Litigation – Regarding costs of services provided to student - One matter.
Ed. Code § 54956.9, subd. (e)(2)

The board heard an update from staff and legal counsel on this matter. and two motions were made.

Motion by President Appel and second by Vice-President Alper to provide specific direction to staff. All voted in favor and the motion passed 5-0.

Motion by President Appel and second by Director Sinai to provide specific direction to staff. All voted in favor and the motion passed 5-0.

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

Berkeley Council of Classified Employees (BCCE)

Board heard an update and gave direction; no action taken.

Berkeley Federation of Teachers (BFT)

Board heard an update and gave direction; no action taken.

Public Employment (Government Code Section 54957)

Vice Principal

Motion to approve appointment of Salita Mitchell as Vice Principal of Longfellow Middle School, motion by Vice-President Alper, second by Director Leyva-Cutler, all voted in favor.agenda online

Reclassification Ceremony

TSA Gloria Munoz presented the 153 students who have been reclassified as english learners. Her presentation recognized the students for their accomplishment.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

A total of eight people addressed the Board:

Two comments in support of the BLM resolution.

One comment expressing equity concerns at Longfellow in the face of COVID-19.

Two comments advocating for the renaming of Jefferson.

One comment on the impact of COVID to the transportation department.

One comment on the decision making process for the reopening of school in the fall.

One comment urging the Board to actively address the disparity among Berkeley schools.

UNION COMMENTS

Linette Robinson, BCCE President expressed the concern of students and staff during these times and stressed the importance of the district being thoughtful in setting the tone for real change.

Matt Meyer, BFT President spoke in solidarity with all the millions calling for justice for George Floyd and others who have lost their lives at the hands of police brutality. He emphasized how important it is to become allies for students.

BOARD MEMBER AND SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Director Leyva-Cutler acknowledged all comments from the public tonight and expressed feeling hopeful as they move forward with deep commitment to address disparities across the district. She commended our students for taking a stance at their rally.

Director Sinai expressed appreciation for the Longfellow families who addressed the Board tonight. She shared that in her years of work with the school district, children of color continue to be failed as we have yet to experience the progress and change that we need. She added that the BLM movement is a result of years of racism and as we review the budget, it is important that funding is maintained for our AA success program. She noted that tonight's resolution is merely a small part of the many steps needed towards change. She also appreciated the BPSF for the money they have spent to house BUSD homeless families and for the many ways they have been supporting our community.

Director Hemp thanked all who spoke tonight and acknowledged the student leaders who organized yesterday's peaceful demonstrations. She shared that students have been having active dialogue about the current events and stressed the importance of listening to our young people.

Director Brown thanked all who spoke in public comment, especially Longfellow families. She stated that the word *equity* continues to be the measuring stick across school districts and challenged all to push further by moving from equity to excellence. She added that this can only be done when inequalities and blatant racism are boldly called out. She thanked Dr. Stephens for his major contribution to the BLM resolution and for his continued commitment, not just for equity, but for excellence also.

Vice President Alper said that we are living in a moment of great pain that necessitates us to confront racism head on. As a criminal attorney, he stated that police brutality goes beyond a police department, but truly stems from a systemically broken justice system. He thanked the Longfellow families for their words and advocacy during public comment, especially for their advocacy for a school reassignment plan. He expressed feeling proud that we are taking the first steps to right the wrongs represented by the name of Jefferson school.

Presdiern Appel thanked all who spoke about the racism that exists in our community. She shared that she spent some time learning the school renaming process, and about Thomas Jefferson and his relationship with African Americans. She stated that we now have the opportunity to right the wrong for our African American community and all of our students.

Superintendent Stephens said this is an opportunity for all to deeply self evaluate our individual stance relative to racism and to advocate to end it. As an institution, our stance begins by actively listening to the voices that have been most historically excluded from decision making in this district. Secondly, we are required to take a stance of committing to making data informed decisions as opposed to making decisions based on anecdotal stories or opinions. He extended his gratitude to all instructional staff for all the work they did over this last quarter to prepare for the next year.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion to approve the Consent Calendar:
Leyva-Cutler/Sinai and approved 5-0.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Resolution 20-064, In Support of Black Lives Matter
Motion to approve Resolution 20-064:

Superintendent Stephens thanked Director Brown for her invaluable input in the development of this resolution. He explained that the resolution calls for a number of action items representative of BUSD's commitment to equity. Among the actions is the posting of a Black Lives Matter banner inside the board chambers and launching the Black Joy campaign to celebrate the experience of black students, families, staff and community members.

Director Brown stated that while she is excited for the conversation around this resolution, she is concerned that this conversation will be overshadowed by the desire to rename Jefferson elementary. She explained that the name change is important but the actual process is a multistep one requiring robust community engagement and adherence to BUSD's renaming policy. The actions included in the resolution can be implemented more immediately.

President Appel explained that she brought up the renaming as part of a solution and expressed her agreement with Director Brown about the importance of not overshadowing this conversation as it represents an opportunity to rethink the way we communicate with our students and families.

Director Leyva-Cutler suggested adding the following to include more action on the part of the Board:

Be it resolved that BUSD's school board encourages district wide participation in Black Lives Matter at school week from Feb 1 by discussions in class classrooms and at school board meetings

Be it resolved that BUSD will address the excellence and equity resources and achievement gap at longfellow through actions that directly improve the academic outcome for students of color.

Sinai suggested amending current school name changing policy to ensure that the renaming of Jefferson is expedited. She also suggested adding something around training for teachers and principals to help elevate and support the capacities of our Black students. She suggested adding the following:

Be it further resolved that the BUSD board of directors recognize the importance of disrupting business as usual and using this opportunity to ensure our budget elevates the excellence for black students and their families, and mandates training across the organization including board members, administrators, teachers and staff.

Staff will provide updates to the Board on progress made with actions included in the resolution.

Motion to approve the BLM resolution inclusive of tonight's amendments and with the understanding that staff will provide quarterly updates to the Board:
Appel/Alper and approved 6-0.

Approval of 2020-2021 BSEP Student Support Budget and Program Plan

Director Beery shared the investment to the mental well being of our students as part of the counseling budget. Superintendent Stephens added that since a preliminary budget was presented, there are some changes in response to the likelihood of a downturn in revenue. Dr. Stephens and Director Beery will review BSEP programs for any possible savings and will come back to the Board with an update at a subsequent meeting.

Motion to approve:
Leyva-Cutler/Alper and approved 6-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Fall 2020 Planning Update

Summary of recent staff and family feedback about the fall

Director Natasha Beery provided an update on COVID-19, noting increase in hospitalizations.

Dr. Stephens added that staff has been closely following the guidance provided by the various local and state public health agencies. He reported that staff and families were surveyed last week relative to their level of comfort with reopening schools. Director Beery shared the results.

2020-21 Budget Update

Assistant Superintendent Follansbee reported that BUSD is required to make a \$7.72 million reduction to the General Fund in 20-21. She walked the viewing audience through the loss in funding in various programs, including a \$300k reduction to adult education. She added that the Cares Act calls for districts to allocate a percentage of their funding to private schools.

With respect to new expenses, Dr. Stephens provided an overview of anticipated COVID-10 related costs including mental health services for students, investment in technology and in tutoring support, elementary school day camp, employee training, cleaning and protective wear, and nursing services for a total of \$1.4 in new expenses.

He noted that because there are many unknowns including the amount of relief the district will receive and when it can expect to receive it, staff has taken a three-tiered approach to identifying rescutons. Tier 1 reductions can be implemented now; tier 2 reductions can be made when we know more about the state budget and any available relief.; and tier 3 reductions can be implemented when we know about the 2020-21 budget He walked the board and viewing audience through the proposed reductions within each tier. Staff will present proposed reductions and a first reading of the budget at the June `17 special board meeting.

Questions and discussion followed.

ADJOURNMENT:
11:20