

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

Official Minutes
October 21, 2020

President Judy Appel called the meeting to order at 7:11pm. 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

Motion to approve agenda:

Brown/Alper and unanimously approved 6-0.

REPORT CLOSED SESSION

Vice President Alper reported out on closed session:

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

BSD Case No. 202021-14

Motion to approve staff recommendation:

Alper/Brown and approved 5-0.

BUSD Case No. 202021-15

This matter was pulled from the agenda.

Conference with Real Property Negotiators (Government Code Section 54956.8)

District Negotiator: John Calise; Negotiating Party: City of Berkeley; Property: Multiple Properties; Under Negotiation: Use Agreement

Board discussed and gave direction. No action was taken.

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

Berkeley Federation of Teachers (BFT)

Berkeley Council of Classified Employees (BCCE)

Local 21

Union of Berkeley Administrators

Board discussed and gave direction. No action was taken.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

A total of seven people addressed the Board:

Two comments against reopening schools for in person learning.

Two comments in favor of resuming in person learning.

One comment on CDC reports of increases within this past week. Keep students and staff safe by delaying all reopening plans.

One comment suggesting an expansion of phase 1 as part of proposed plan for reopening schools.

UNION COMMENTS

BFT Vice President Janine Weddell shared BFT's goal to find a path forward that is safe for everyone and meets the needs of students and their families. Ms. Weddell reported that the agreement reached earlier today between BFT and BUSD provides an extensive and detailed set of measures to protect the health and safety of all members, students and their families. The agreement ensures that every person will have access to essential protective equipment, and includes protocols for testing and screening, contact tracing and reporting. Other elements include social distancing, mask requirements for students and staff, standards for ventilation and air filtration, sanitizing and disinfecting protocols, plans to isolate sick students, limits on visitors, leave for employees who test positive, and adherence to public health guidance. If phase 1 plans prove to be successful, we can move forward another increment. If not,

we can pull back. Going back and forth between in-person and distance learning is not a desirable outcome. Clear, consistent communication is crucial as the community watches BUSD's course of action closely in order to decide whether they feel comfortable returning to the classroom. It is a complicated task to address all details across the wide range of students and classes. Moving forward, BFT agrees that some of the best practices include continued transparency about challenges, learning from the pilots, and taking our time to get this right.

BOARD MEMBER AND SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Director Julie Sinai thanked everyone for joining the meeting tonight. She will reserve her comments on school reopening until after the presentation.

Director Beatriz Leyva-Cutler shared sad news concerning the passing of Guadalupe Mora, an ECE teacher and called for a moment of silence in her honor. She went on to announce her appointment of Annabelle J. to the City's Youth Commission

Director Miles Miller stated that it is important to him to move full speed ahead with the accommodations necessary for when we reopen. Even if we don't have a sense as to when we can reopen, the plans should be in place and ready for full implementation by when that time comes.

Director Brown thanked all attendees and appreciated the comments made during the public comment period, particularly Ms. Howell's comment around equity and learning gaps. She shared that as a teacher she knows up close and personal the challenges presented by distance learning both socially and academically. She expressed her respect and appreciation for members of the community who continue to advocate for school reopening. At the center of all of these changes are our students, who will be directly impacted by every decision that we make. It is important to remain student-centered.

Vice President Ty Alper appreciated all those present tonight. He acknowledged the high stakes and complexities surrounding the decisions that will need to be made. He looks forward to the discussion this evening on school reopening.

President Judy Appel offered congratulations to BFT President Matt Meyer on his new baby son. She thanked Director Brown for her comments concerning equity. She too wants to appreciate Ms. Howell's comments during the public comment period. The wide variety of perspectives and ways families are being impacted based on language, class and other factors have become evident. It is important to be aware of how distance learning is exacerbating inequities we have been grappling with for years.

Superintendent Brent Stephens thanked all those present this evening and those who have been writing to him and the Board with a variety of perspectives around distance learning, reopening and the pandemic. He encouraged the community to continue

engaging with BUSD. BUSD is listening as it takes into account a variety of perspectives and attempts to present a measured approach to all the needs in the community.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion to approve the Consent Calendar:

Alper/Brown and approved unanimously 6-0.

ACTION ITEMS

Approve Phased Elementary Reopening Plan

Dr. Stephens prefaced this presentation as a follow up to the discussion at the October 7 meeting when the Board voted to begin a phased reopening plan by focusing first on small cohort supports. He reported that over the weekend, Alameda County moved down from the red to the orange area of restrictions. Members of the community who would like greater detail on these updates can access the BUSD COVID-19 Risk Reduction Dashboard. It is updated every Monday and can be found on BUSD's website. Superintendent Stephens emphasized that all school reopening planning assumes that community transmission rates remain stable or continue to decline. There is still the possibility of a rise in transmission rates and in the level of imposed restrictions at the city and county levels that will call for a readjustment of our planning. School reopening plans also assume the use of a hybrid model in which only half of the students are present at a time. Due to the complexity of the task, the new target date to begin phase 1 is now November 9, a change from the October 26 target date presented two weeks ago. This will include cohorts of 8 students with strict bubble groups at four elementary sites.

At the request of the Board, staff surveyed families and staff to gauge their level of comfort with returning to in person instruction. Responses indicated that a majority of staff prefer to work on campus for in-person learning when there is a vaccine for COVID-19. In contrast, a majority of families indicated being ready for their child/children to return to campus for in-person learning as soon as possible and in a hybrid model. Dr. Stephens noted that the number of families who wish to stay in distance learning will have an impact on BUSD's ability to create a hybrid learning model.

Dr. Reinhardt walked the Board and viewing public through a survey conducted among 3200 families across all schools and grade levels on their experience with distance learning this school year. He noted that the number one area of concern was students' social and emotional well being. In comparison to a parallel survey administered last

school year, there are some improvements, particularly in the areas of student engagement and student access to materials.

Dr. Stephens went on to address phase 2 of the reopening plan which involves moving from small cohort groups supports to a hybrid model in which larger groups of ECE and elementary students are served both virtually and in person with a January 13 target date. Questions and discussion followed around the amount of students in the initial cohorts, staffing for in-person learning, and January 13 as the date for reopening.

President Appel moved to approve Jan 13 as a target date, not a set date, with an opportunity for the Board to vote on set date once all of the criteria on the Dashboard has been met. Motion seconded by Director Brown and carried on a 6-0 vote.

Approve Allocation of Learning Loss Mitigation Funding/COVID Equity Fund

Associate Thiara said that on oct 7 the board was provided with an overview of funding to BUSD as a result of COVID 19.

Director of Programs and Special Projects Michelle Sinclair reviewed some of the information shared when this was last presented on October 7. She then went on to provide an overview of each funding source and all expenditures related to COVID-19. Combined, BUSD received \$6 million which must be spent and cannot be carried over.

Motion to approve allocation of the Learning Loss Mitigation/COVID equity funding: Alper/Sinai and approved 6-0.

First Reading of Amendments to BB/E 9150: Student Board Members

Dr. Stephens explained that the amendment allows two BTA students to be elected, instead of just one, to serve on the School Board with the idea that one of the two attends any particular meeting. This is a request from Principal Weber. This policy will come back for action.

First Reading of Sweatfree Contracting Policy

Director Leyva-Cutler explained that the purpose of this new policy is to guide the district in its procurement of goods, and ensures that it does not support unethical entities whose values are contrary to those of BUSD. This policy will come back for action.

Approval of and Public Hearing for the Resolution Confirming Sufficiency of K-12 Textbooks (Time Certain: No earlier than 9:30PM)

President Appel opened the public hearing for this item at 9:47pm.

No one came forward.

President Appel closed public hearing at 9:47pm.

Motion to approve the resolution confirming sufficiency of K-12 textbooks:
Alper/Appel and unanimously approved 6-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Update on Jefferson Renaming

Director Natasha Beery reported that since the Board approved to dename Jefferson on July 1, the Superintendent's Advisory Naming Committee held a first school meeting on September 11, and a second meeting to launch name suggesting on September 17. A total of 69 names were narrowed down to a short list of names which committee members rated. Ultimately, seven names remained:

Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Ruthy Acty, Ruby Bridges, Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the SF Bay Area, Yoshiko Uchida, Betty Reed Soskin, Maya Angelou.

Sequoia and Ohlone are being considered as honorary names for parts of the school.

EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENT:

Three community members addressed the Board:

One comment in support of reopening schools and on the challenges single parent households face

One comment asking that a completed reopening plan be in place before allowing students to return to campus.

One comment on Jefferson renaming process

ADJOURNMENT -10:20PM