



BUSD Middle School Student Enrollment Policy Community Engagement Plan, 2021

January 20, 2021

Brent Stephens, Superintendent

Dear BUSD Community Member,

At its meeting on January 20, 2021, the Berkeley Unified School District Board of Education directed the Superintendent to develop a plan for further engaging the Berkeley community on the topic of middle school student enrollment. This plan, originally designed for last year, was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Elements of the 2021 community engagement will include a review of a variety of indicators, including demographic information about BUSD's three middle schools; outcome information about student learning; and educator, caregiver, and community input.

The purpose of this nine-month engagement process is to inform the Superintendent's recommendation to the Board of Education about the middle school student enrollment policy. Included in a possible Board decision about middle school student enrollment could be:

- Adjusting the current middle school enrollment system to more closely match policies for elementary enrollment. Possible adjustments could include:
 - Leaving the current middle school enrollment policy in place
 - Creating attendance zones for all three middle schools, drawing from the same methodology as BUSD's elementary schools
 - Creating "feeder patterns" for each middle school - a cluster of elementary schools that would feed into a designated middle school
 - Creating "neighborhood" middle schools
 - Including a sibling preference for future middle school assignments

- Demographic projections for the population of school-age children
 - Phase In Options
 - Transportation Options
- Altering or ending Longfellow Middle School’s status as a “Choice” middle school

This engagement plan contemplates a Board decision about the enrollment policy in November, 2021. However, a number of factors could affect this timeline, including the desire for additional input from community and stakeholder.

The Board of Education has discussed the topic of middle school student enrollment in several previous public meetings. A list of these meeting dates is below:

Links to these presentations to the Board of Education are below:

Board of Education Meeting Date	Link
April 10, 2019 Item 15. Initial Discussion About Possible Middle School Rezoning - Discussion	April 10, 2019 Board of Education Meeting Agenda
June 12, 2019 Item 18. Update on Plan to Explore Revision to Middle School Assignment Process - Discussion	June 12, 2019 Board of Education Meeting Agenda
March 12, 2020 Presentation to the Board on a Community Engagement Plan for Middle School Enrollment. <u>This engagement plan was postponed due to the pandemic.</u>	March 11, 2020 Board of Education Meeting Agenda

Equity Principles for Community Engagement

BUSD is committed to taking steps to ensure equitable participation in this process. This is to say that the plan must differentiate for factors that can inhibit participation in school events, such as speaking a language at home other than English; the need to work at times when school events typically take place; access to technology; and the effect of “white space” on

people of color ¹.

To this end, this plan proposes a number of online affinity-based meetings, deliberate equity-centered norms in the meetings, and facilitation moves designed to ensure that all participants are heard. At school sites, the active involvement of staff from BUSD’s Office of Family Engagement and Equity will support parents who may not have equitable access to the school to be meaningfully engaged.

Community Engagement Overview

The following graphic represents an overview of the Middle School Student Enrollment Policy Community Engagement Plan. Efforts to engage the Berkeley community are organized into five strands: (1) District-Wide Communication, (2) Community Feedback, (3) Stakeholder Advisement, (4) Community Meetings, and (5) Educator Engagement.

BUSD Middle School Student Enrollment Policy: Community Engagement Plan, DRAFT DATE: January 20, 2021											
Phase One: Data Review and Issue Identification						Summer and School Opening		Phase Two: Recommendations and Decision			
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
Board of Education	Board of Education Meeting: Overview of MS Enrollment Engagement Plan				First Presentation to the Board of Education on Key Issues				Board of Education Meeting: Discussion of Phase 2	Board of Education Meeting: Discussion of Second Recommendations	Board of Education Meetings (x2): First and Second Readings of MS Enrollment Action Item
District-Wide Communication			Initial Overview Communication to BUSD Community	Additional Outreach to Elementary Schools		Share first presentation of Key Issues with the BUSD Community		2019-2020 Recap Communication to BUSD Community	Summary of Board Discussion		
Community Feedback			Seek Feedback on Engagement Plan via survey			Seek Feedback Key Issues			Seek Feedback via survey	Seek Feedback on Engagement Plan via survey	Seek Feedback on Engagement Plan via survey
Stakeholder Advisement		Establish Middle School Enrollment Advisory Group			MS Enrollment Advisory Group meets to interpret feedback and name issues in current assignment system				MS Enrollment Advisory Group meets to review summer feedback and first preliminary recommendations		
Community Meetings			First Set of Community Meetings: Each Elementary Attendance Area, and Parent Engagement Committees (DELAC, PAC, and PTA)						Second Set of Community Meetings: Each Elementary Attendance Area and Parent Committees (DELAC, PAC, and PTA)		
Educator Engagement				Faculty Meetings; Classified Staff Are Invited					Faculty Meetings; Classified Staff Are Invited		
Examples of Key Tasks	Project Manager Search	Secure Project Manager	Prepare OFEE Liaisons	Prepare Advisory Group materials	Begin to develop options for Enrollment Models	Prepare Recap Communication	Prepare for second set of community engagements	Incorporate Board feedback into options for enrollment models			
	Prepare demand and placement data	Establish Milestones	School Messenger Email	Prepare Key Issue Document		Collect and Summarize Feedback Data	Prepare presentation of options for community feedback	Analyze feedback from community and parent committee engagement			
	Review previous MS enrollment studies	Create Historical Overview of MS Enrollment	Printed Notice to ES Families								
	Prepare principals and staff	Create Survey Instrument	Collect and Summarize Feedback Data								
		Create Core Equity Principles	Refine Enrollment Models								
Notes											November 2021 is the latest possible date for a decision about the 2022-2023 school year

¹ Black in White Space, Elijah Anderson, Penn Institute for Urban Research, May 21, 2018. Available at <https://pennur.upenn.edu/publications/black-in-white-space>.

Key Elements of the Middle School Student enrollment Policy Community Engagement Plan

1. District-Wide Communication

At key moments in this process, the Superintendent will share with the broad BUSD community updates on the status of this work. At the outset, this document will be translated and distributed as an overview of the total process so that members of the community are of the variety of opportunities to provide input.

Translated advertisements for community meetings will be distributed to parents through email, and in elementary schools, printed flyers will be distributed to students to take home.

2. Community Meetings

At two points in this engagement process, BUSD plans to hold two rounds of community meetings at each one of the district's three middle schools. Around the same time as these meetings, the district will also convene a number of affinity-based gatherings in an effort to ensure that all members of the Berkeley community have offered input on the options for middle school enrollment. These meetings will include meetings for Spanish-speaking families, the TWI community, and African American students. In total, the district envisions that each of these two rounds will consist of six community gatherings - three large meetings at each middle school and three affinity-based meetings in locations that are most likely to support families' participation.

These rounds are meetings planned for April-May and again in September-October.

3. Community Feedback

At several key junctures in this process, the district will broadly solicit feedback from the community, through surveys after both the a first and second recommendation to the Board of Education by district staff; and by maintaining a specific email address dedicated to feedback about middle school enrollment.

The district will send out these draft recommendations through School Messenger, and will utilize liaisons from the Office of Family Engagement and Equity to solicit feedback from families who may need support to respond.

All communications will be translated into English and Spanish.

4. Educator Engagement

To accommodate educators' schedules, the district will meet with teachers and classified staff from Longfellow, King, and Willard in separate meetings. These will be scheduled in collaboration with each school principal and leadership team.

5. Middle School Enrollment Advisory Group

For the purpose of securing ongoing advice on the overall implementation of this plan, and to support the development of draft and final recommendations to the Board of Education, the district will form a Middle School Student Enrollment Advisory Group that will meet throughout the engagement process. The Advisory group will consist of

- Community Members (4)
- Middle School Principals (3)
- BFT and BCCE representatives (1-2 each)
- BUSD Staff, including the Enrollment Office (3)
- Superintendent

The Superintendent will propose to the Board of Education a slate of members for this Advisory Group. Meetings of the Advisory Group will be open, advertised, and open to the public.