

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

Official Minutes
December 16, 2020

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

Roll Call

Board of Education:

Ty Alper, President – Present

Ka'Dijah Brown, Vice President – Present

Julie Sinai, Director/Clerk – Present

Laura Babitt, Director – Present

Ana Vasudeo, Director -- Present

Miles Miller, Student Director, BHS – Present

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 the agenda:

Brown/Miles and unanimously approved 6-0.

Newly elected Director Laura Babitt was sworn in by Mark Numainville.

Newly elected Director Ana Vaseduo was sworn in by former School Board Director Beatriz Leyva-Cutler

Annual Organizational Requirements

Approval of New Officers for 2021

Director Sinai moved to appoint Ty Alper as President and Kadijah Brown as Vice President. Director Laura Babitt seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Director Alper moved to appoint Director Julie Sinai as the Board's clerk. Motion was seconded by Director Brown and carried unanimously 6-0.

Approval of Meeting Calendar for 2021

Motion to approve the board meeting calendar for 2021:
Sinai/Miller and unanimously approved 6-0.

Approval of Committee and School Assignments

Motion to approve committee and school assignments:
Brown/Babitt and unanimously approved 6-0.

REPORT CLOSED SESSION

Vice President Ka'Dijah Brown reported out on closed session:

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

Motion to approve staff recommendation:

Sinai/Vasudeo and approved 3-0-1:

Ty Alper, President – *Yes*

Ka'Dijah Brown, Vice President – *Yes*

Julie Sinai, Director/Clerk – *Absent*

Laura Babitt, Director – *Abstained*

Ana Vasudeo, Director -- *Yes*

BUSD Case No. 202021-15

The Board heard an update; no action was taken.

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

BCCE

The Board heard an update; no action was taken.

BFT

The Board heard an update; no action was taken.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

A total of 12 people addressed the Board:

Five comments opposed to the phased reopening plan

Two comments congratulating Directors Babitt and Vasudeo on their election to the Board.

One comment in support of phased school reopening approach.

One comment addressing the need for time for collaboration between teachers and behavioral interventionists.

One comment congratulating Vice President Brown on her new role as Vice President.

One comment in advocacy for additional resources to adequately and safely reopen schools.

One comment advocating for the revision of the EL master plan.

UNION COMMENTS

BFT Vice President Janine Waddell congratulated newly elected directors. Ms. Waddell went on to provide an update on negotiations concerning phase 2 of a hybrid learning model. BUSD and BFT have met five times in the last two weeks and are scheduled to meet again tomorrow. At the center of BFT's proposal is a request for return to in-person instruction to be voluntary for teachers. Just like everyone else in the community, teachers have their own health concerns and are experiencing a number of circumstances that create additional concerns about resuming in-person instruction. Developing a testing plan for students is essential. While BFT is in support of a plan for a hybrid learning model, Ms. Waddell noted that no plan will satisfy everyone. BFT looks forward to reaching agreement on a proposal that gets us closer to reopening schools with the safety of students and staff at the forefront.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

P&O Committee representative Terri Pastika explained that the committee has reviewed the BSEP and BERRA budgets which account for more than 20% of BUSD's budget. Given its role in reviewing critical budgets, the committee would like to be more proactive in providing routine updates to the Board on the questions and discussions taking place at the meetings. Ms. Pastika reported that at last night's meeting the committee discussed BSEP funding and its importance to the district, discussed when planning should start and what the role of the P&O looks like. She noted that these meetings are open to the public and encouraged the community's participation.

BOARD MEMBER AND SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

Student Director Miller congratulated Directors Vasudeo and Babitt. He encouraged the community to continue social distancing and wearing a mask as we enter the holiday season.

Director Sinai congratulated the newly elected directors and welcomed them aboard. She also congratulated Vice President Brown on her new role and thanked President Alper for his continued leadership. She appreciated Ms. Rivas for her public comment on the EL master plan and looks forward to seeing this work happen. She concluded her remarks by stressing the importance to stay home and follow CDC guidelines this holiday season.

Director Vasudeo thanked all who came out, particularly the educators who took time out to be here tonight. She looks forward to working with the District on the EL master plan. for coming out. She also thanked Ms. Rivas for her comments on the EL master plan.

Director Babitt thanked all who participated tonight. She encouraged families to look into Kwanza this holiday season and learn the principles of this tradition.

Vice President Brown thanked all who spoke this evening. She expressed her excitement to have Director Babitt and Director Vasudeo join the board. She thanked Director Babitt for encouraging the community to learn about Kwanza and shared that she is particularly excited about the principle about collective work and responsibility as it applies to the manner in which this Board operates.

President Alper read aloud language from the resolution approved at the last meeting calling that educators be deemed essential and are prioritized to be vaccinated. He looks forward to working with this new board and is excited for the expertise and experience that both Director Vasudeo and Director Babitt bring.

Dr. Stephens extended his welcome to Director Babitt and Director Vasudeo. He introduced Steven Jimenes-Robb as the new Title IX Coordinator and District Compliance Officer. Dr. Stephens announced that last week both past and present BUSD employees gathered to celebrate the coming retirement of Jay Nitschke, who has served the District as the director of technology. He went on to note that the consent calendar contains a calendar of the meetings scheduled to take place for the development of the 2021-22 budget. He encouraged the community's participation in the upcoming public forums.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion to approve the Consent Calendar:

Miller/Brown and unanimously and approved 5-0-1:

Ty Alper, President – Yes

Ka'Dijah Brown, Vice President – Yes

Julie Sinai, Director/Clerk – *Yes*
Laura Babitt, Director – *Abstained*
Ana Vasudeo, Director -- *Yes*
Miles Miller, Student Director -- *Yes*

ACTION ITEMS

Update on School Reopening, Pre-K and Elementary Schools

Dr. Stephens shared that the large amount of information presented on the complexities of trying to reopen may overshadow the emotional commitment of staff to reopen. He reassured the community that staff feels the community's desire to have schools reopen and is committed to continue the work necessary to get there. Most notable about the community transmission rate is news that the stay at home order has been extended throughout the county for the next three weeks. With respect to the tiering system, we have gone back to the purple tier. BUSD continues with its commitment to proceed with its cohort model. Most recently BUSD has confirmed three cases. A plan for student testing is still being finalized as staff continue to make contact with possible testing companies. Dr. Stephens went on to report that the district's proposal to BFT includes reopening pre k programs at 50% capacity for full and half-day programs while maintaining distance learning for families who choose it. For elementary, the proposal is to reopen TK-5 in a hybrid model with distance learning in the morning and in person instruction in the afternoon. Questions and discussion followed.

President Alper proposed that the Board give direction to staff to continue moving planning forward towards as full a reopening as possible, in spite of being in the purple, so that the District would be ready as soon as possible to have students on campus for as much in-person instruction as possible. The Board unanimously agreed to give this direction.

EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENT

A total of 9 people addressed the Board:

Two comments advocating for schools to reopen and utilize outdoor spaces to allow cohorts to begin in person instruction for families who want it

One comment in support of proposed hybrid model and in support of reopening schools.

Two comments expressing concern on the hybrid model not meeting all student and family needs

One comment advocating for the expansion of phase 1 reopening plans.

One comment in support of reopening school for younger students.

One comment opposed to school reopening.

ADJOURNMENT

9:11PM