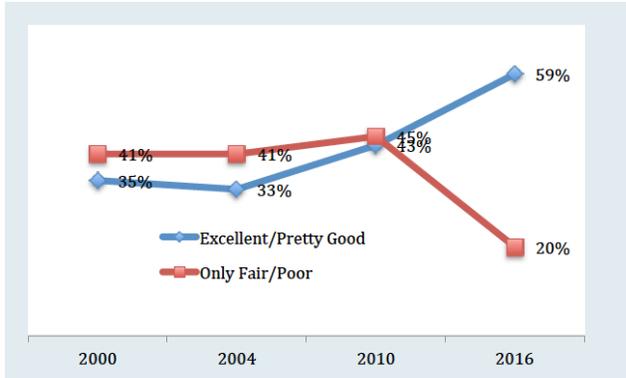


## Highlights from February 2016 Voter Poll

### A. Approval Ratings for Berkeley Public Schools

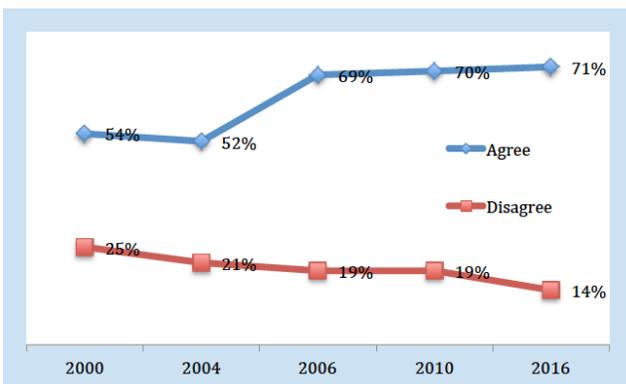


*Please tell me if you think the Berkeley Unified School District is doing an excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor job of educating students.*

There has been a dramatic and positive change in job ratings for the Berkeley Unified School District over the past several years. As shown above, throughout the last decade the District's positive ratings slightly exceeded its negative ratings. By contrast, in the 2016 rating there is a three-to-one positive (59%) to negative (20%) rating, and 21% who cannot rate the district. This result is nearly identical to what was found in the brief September 2015 voter survey. Among those who are parents of children under 18 years old the approval ratings are even higher, with 72% positive, 18% negative.

### B. Making a Difference

When asked about reasons for supporting the BSEP measure, and whether the local funding for the schools was worthwhile, a very high proportion agree that the money for the schools has made a difference. Seventy-one percent of voters agree, with 14% who disagree and 15% who are not sure.



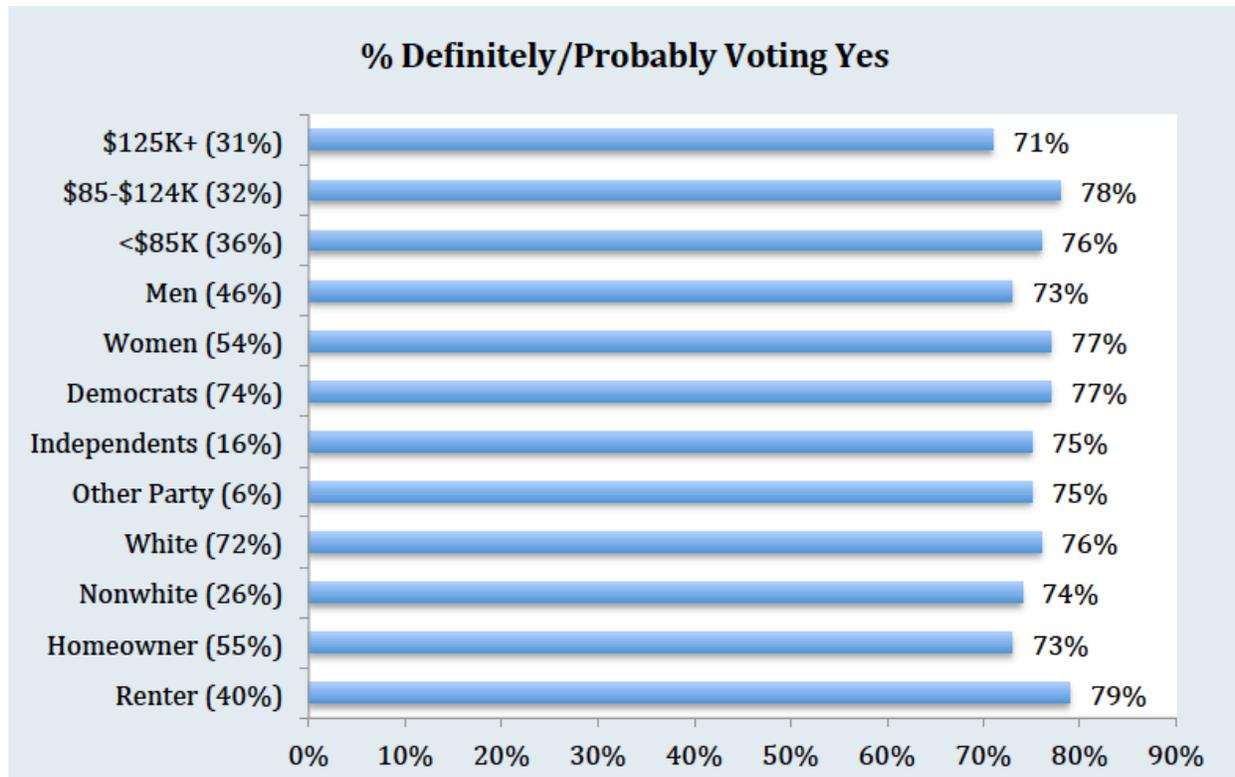
*In general the extra money we pay in Berkeley for our schools has been worthwhile since it has resulted in better schools."*

### B. Support for Measure

When initially questioned about the measure, 70% of voters would definitely or probably vote yes on the BSEP measure renewal. Another five percent were undecided but leaning towards a yes vote, with 15% voting no and 10% undecided and not leaning one way or the other. An

independent poll conducted for the City of Berkeley by a different research firm to assess support for various City measures also included a question about the BSEP measure, but asked the question somewhat differently – this yielded a lower level of support (66%) and a higher number of undecided (19%), and about the same number saying no (14%).

Support for the tax is fairly consistent across most demographics. There is no significant difference in support across demographic or political differences, including household income, gender, party, white/non-white and homeowner status.



There are some differences in support by age, parental status, student status, and year of home purchase. Support for the tax is lower among those who have purchased their home prior to 1984 and among voters over age 55. Support is higher among parents and among students. When race/ethnicity is examined more closely, there is higher support among Asian and non-Latino white voters, and lower support from Latino and Black voters. However, the number of respondents in several of these groups is small and the differences may not be statistically significant.

#### D. Effect of Learning More about BSEP

The measure actually gained strength even after voters heard about concerns such as class sizes or tax increases, along with more detail about how the funds will be used. After the respondents hear more about the tax measure, support grew from 70% definitely or probably voting yes initially to 73%, and from 75% yes including leans to 78% with leans after additional

information. The highest growth is a 13 point increase among Black voters, and a 17 point growth among No-Party Preference (NPP) voters. The No-Party Preference voters were also those who knew least about the school district in the preliminary question about whether the district is doing a good job.

E. Importance of BSEP-Funded Programs

	<b>Ext. Imp</b>
<b>Support for struggling students</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>School libraries</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Teacher training</b>	<b>53%</b>
<b>Small class sizes</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Encouraging parental involvement in schools</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>Computers and other learning technology</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>School counselors</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Before- and after-school programs</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Classes in the arts, drama, and dance</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>Music instruction</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>Evaluating academic programs to see which ones are working and which are not working</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Funds that each school can spend based on the priorities of the teachers and parents at that schools</b>	<b>33%</b>

*On a scale of 1 to 5, how important would you say each one is in providing students with a quality education?*

The voter poll asked respondents about various components of the current BSEP measure as priorities. In conversations in the community, we often find that many people tend to think of BSEP as primarily an “enrichment” program, and are unaware of the many student supports that the measure also funds. The “student support” question was added to gauge its importance to Berkeley voters, and as it turned out, “student support” received the highest number of “extremely important” responses. Black and Latino voters, the youngest voters, and the strongest supporters of the tax rated helping struggling students at the very highest levels.

Currently BSEP funding provides supports for struggling students in various ways - including literacy coaches, Response to Intervention (RtI) staff, providing proportionately higher staffing and site funding for the continuation high school, targeted outreach through family liaisons, and many tutoring, mentoring and other student supports as part of the school discretionary funds. For the next measure, it may be important to specifically call out some of these purposes, and ensure that people are aware that the BSEP-funded programs are intended to help all students reach their highest potential – through interventions which assist students who are struggling in various ways, through academic, behavioral, and social-emotional support, and also through equitable access to enrichment opportunities such as libraries, music, visual and performing arts, technology, and before and after school activities which can help all students find the support, motivation, and pathways to excel in school.