BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Donald Evans, Ed.D., Superintendent

Natasha Beery, Director of BSEP and Community Relations

DATE:

granted; the BSEP measure renewal must be both responsive to educational needs and an effective, equitable and sustainable investment of public funds.

<u>Budget Models</u>: As the community conversations progressed over the past year, a fiscal workgroup engaged in examining the implications of various program modifications, while incorporating numerous variables to create multi-

The measure renewal continues the Berkeley commitment to small class sizes, while ensuring that class sizes are implemented in a sustainable model for our elementary schools. The framework also unites the foundation of small class sizes with key supports for teaching, including professional development, classroom support, educational program evaluation, and expanded course offerings.

a. Small Class Sizes: Elementary School classes would be balanced at a school-wide average of 23:1 across K-5 grades. Secondary Schools (grades 6-12) would be balanced at a 28:1 district-wide average for each grade.

The first BSEP measure of 1986 reduced class sizes to 26:1 in the elementary grades and 28:1 in the secondary schools. In 1996, when State funds became available to provide financial incentives for districts to reduce class sizes in K-3 at 20.44 to 1, our district was one of the few to begin to meet that goal, thanks to BSEP funds. However, the imbalance of 20:1 in K-3 and 26:1 at 4th/5th grades has proved logistically challenging, as Berkeley schools are small, with many schools having cohorts of 3 classrooms per grade. This has lead to a choice of taking 60 students in 3rd grade and either putting them in combination grade (3rd/4th or 4th/5th) classrooms in order to meet the target of 26 students, or making the local decision to waive the 26 target at some schools and have two classes of 30 or more.

Two years ago, the State changed the K-3 class size reduction fund goal to 24:1, and also reduced the funding targeted to that goal. The guestion has been raised as to whether reducing class sizes is the most effective use of funds, and research on the issue has been mixed, with the key study pointing toward significant effects when class sizes were reduced toward 13 to 17 students. However, in Berkeley, both small school sizes and small class sizes remain an important community value. Class size is seen as one of the key ingredients for ensuring high quality, individualized instruction.

For the Measure renewal, by setting our goal to achieve class sizes at a 23:1 average across all elementary grades, not just K-3, Berkeley class sizes will continue to be below local and state averages, and significantly so in some grades. Balancing class size across K-5 has the following benefits:

- Eliminates the logistical issues with the 3rd to 4th grade jump in size,
- Reduces class sizes for the upper elementary grades,
- Returns a number of "flex" rooms to school use, and
- Is a more fiscally sustainable model.
- b. Support for Teaching: After the primary purpose of providing small class sizes has been met, funds may be used for purposes that are related to the overall goal of high quality instruction. This recognizes that class size is a

necessary, but not sufficient component of meeting the needs of a wide range of students. This resource is structured to provide additional supports for teaching, including professional development, as well as providing student achievement and program data to inform instruction, expanded course offerings to supplement the school day, and classroom support as funds permit.

The BSEP Planning and Oversight (P&O) Committee must review staff proposals for the use of these funds and recommend allocations on a yearly basis to the Board. Some of this programs are currently being funded by BSEP through separate resources, and include:

<u>Professional Development</u> - BSEP currently provides the funds for a professional development coordinator for the district, ensuring that programs and processes are consistently aligned with high priority goals. The BSEP funds also contribute significantly to numerous efforts for improving teaching and learning, including providing literacy coaching at all three levels in the K-12 system, building a teacher-led and teacher-run structure for professional learning at Berkeley High School, and supporting the ongoing development of instructional technology for classroom usage. Additionally, BSEP investments are developing and funding teacher leadership at the K-5 level in mathematics, English language arts, science, and elsewhere providing resources for teachers to discuss and work collaboratively on issues of equity and race and their impact on the classroom.

<u>Classroom Support</u> - If funding is available, additional staffing or program support may be provided to support teachers in meeting the needs of a wide range of students.

Educational Program Evaluation -This function was added to the

2.	Essentials for	Excellence		279	%	, O
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opportunities for students. While our schools sustain our investment in the arts in the coming years, we must continue to broaden both the cultural diversity of our arts programs and expand access to the arts at all levels of our K-12 progression. There has been considerable growth in participation in the middle school music program, and there are opportunities for students to participate in a widening range of options, including chorus and mariachi, alongside jazz and orchestra.

d. Instructional Technology: 3.25% of revenues would be allocated to providing instructional technology and access for students to computers and technology in schools. The increasing presence of technology in the classroom presents educators with expanded instructional opportunities, while also providing students with new options to engage with subject matter and demonstrate proficiency or mastery of that content. The current measure provides support for computer technicians who support classroom technology, as well as a small amount for materials at schools. Berkeley's public schools continue to increasingly integrate technology into our classrooms in order for teachers and students to take full advantage of tools that support creative teaching and enhance learning.

In addition to providing essential resources for our educational programs, our community has made it clear, both through our voter poll and stakeholder meetings, that there is a strong desire to invest in providing additional supports and services for our students and families. The Middle School Counseling and Family Engagement purposes of the 2006 measure have been moved out of disparate BSEP resources and, together with the "Student Achievement Strategies" purpose, now form a coalition of resources which can be directed towards providing effective supports that help students reach their highest academic potential, while addressing the needs of the whole child. These revenues may be allocated in flexible proportions within this allocation to programs for Cou

Measure Oversight, Communication and Translation

The proposed Measure structure continues the practice of including a small portion of the revenues (2%), before the remainder is distributed to the other purposes, to support the oversight of the measure, including staff support for