

**BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUPERINTENDENT'S TASK FORCE ON SCHOOL ORGANIZATION**

2134 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way
Berkeley, CA 94704
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Minutes from the seventh meeting- November 24, 1992, 7:30 p.m.

REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

Don Larkin	Linda Leader-Picone
Janet Huseby	Candace Wang
Virgus Streets	Winston Ross
David Kakishiba	George Perry, NAACP
Sharon Strachan, BFT	Doris Fine, League of Women Voters
Jacki Fox-Ruby, BFT	Kathleen Lewis, UBA
Barbara Penney-James, UBA	Becky Wheat, Early Childhood Ed.
Ann Aoyagi, PTA	Monica Thyberg, BSEP
Dr. Nancy Spaeth, Assoc. Sup.	Burton Levy, Comp. Ed.
Sherrie Pugh, Facilitator	

REPRESENTATIVES ABSENT:

Emily Johnson, Special Ed.	Cris Barrere, BFT
Gretchen Carlson	John Santoro, Early Childhood Ed.
Tony Jimenez, UBA	Isidro Garcia, Bilingual Ed.
Jay Bradford, Transportation	Dorothy Dorsey, Public Employees Union
Linda Stevenson	

SITE REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

Jon O'Donnell, Cragmont	David Sheretz, Washington
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OBSERVERS PRESENT:

Agnes Farris	Kitty McLean
Ryan Prichard	Nancy Spatz
Stephanie Allan	Anne Ferrell
Connie Whitehurst	Anne Alcott
Michael Seals	Michael Taylor
Randy Ballew	Tesfaye Tsadik
Barbara Traylor	Sharon L.P. King
Randy Gee	Pamela Doolan
Keith Nomura	Michael Hammerquist

I. Introductions/roll call

2. Unresolved questions

Sherrie Pugh briefly explained census information (racial/ethnic shifts) that she had obtained from the City of Berkeley. Looking at ages 0-17, the largest increase between the 1980 and the 1990 census is in the number of Asian children. For 5-17 year-olds, it

increased from 7% to 11%. Numbers of black, white and latino children decreased: latinos from 11% to 10%, blacks from 32% to 31%, whites 50% to 47%.

Sherrie then asked for issues or unresolved questions that needed to be brought up before we began the main topic of the meeting.

Linda Leader-Picone said that in a future meeting, the Task Force needs to talk about the implications of Thousand Oaks restructuring grant, how the state guidelines that come with the awarding of the grant affect that school and the district as a whole.

Monica Thyberg mentioned that the Task Force needs to finish discussion on the topic of cultural inclusion models and how they interface with the integration plan. This is on the agenda for next week.

3. Presentation of a hypothetical K-5 model: Monica Thyberg

Notebooks containing maps and information from the On-Pass system were distributed for the Task Force to share and return at the end of the meeting.

a) Monica first explained what the On-Pass computer modeling program does and does not contain:

- The program contains the students in the Berkeley Unified School District, not students in the city at large.
- Currently the identifying information is student grade, race and residence.
- The program does not contain information about the approx. 1,200 students in private and religious schools. Although there is at present no racial breakdown of that number, Monica is of the intuitive belief that the racial composition is roughly similar to that of the BUSD schools.

The question was brought up that the 1990 census data for the city (5,000 white children, 4,700 black, 1,100 Asian, 500 other) seem to indicate a larger number in private school. Monica cautioned that the raw census data need analysis, citing the example that the numbers of Hispanics do not always add up because they are often identified in two ways (Hispanic/black, Hispanic/black, etc.)

- The program covers K-12.
- Programers have taken the data from the district's student information system.

b) Monica next reviewed population changes:

- In 1960 the total number of students was 15,761. In 1992: 7,962.
- There have been percentage changes:
 - In 1960, 60.3% of the district was white. 1992: 32.7%
 - " " 32% " " " " black. " 39%
 - In 1968, there were 7.5% Asians. In 1992: 8.3%
 - " " " " 3.4% Hispanics. " 10.9%
 - " " " " .1% Am. Indian " .3%
- The number registering as other has varied according to the "climate" in the schools .

c) Monica then explained the density maps:

- The small divisions represent planning areas, drawn to reflect areas of equal density, which do not straddle major thoroughfares.
- Comparison of the maps of white and black student densities shows that we do have continuing residential segregation.
- In this program all interdistrict transfers are shown as if the out-of-district student lived at the school itself. This is why planning areas containing a school appear to be relatively heavily populated by children.
- In discussing the current K-3 model, Monica explained that generous school capacities have been factored in. State of California standards are stricter: 32 to 35 students per classroom, less flex space. Berkeley has smaller class sizes, flex space for libraries, computer rooms, etc., necessitating a waiver from the state. At this time, however, with some schools all or partially closed, we do not have a lot of excess capacity at the K-3 level.

d) Monica next reviewed the inter/intradistrict transfer information (from 1991-92):

Interdistrict refers to students coming from schools outside BUSD; intra-district, to students transferring between schools within the district. Intra/inter-district transfers are not easily given.

Upon the observation of a Task Force member that approximately 10% of K-6 students attend schools other than those assigned them, Monica explained that this was largely for reasons of childcare, proximity to parent's workplace, participation in bilingual or bicultural programs at certain schools, attendance at magnet schools and, currently, because students at the closed schools were given the option of attending a school of their choice.

One Task Force member pointed out that the data would be more interesting if we knew which neighborhoods the kids were transferring out of, rather than which schools. Monica agreed but explained that, unfortunately, the computer program was still too primitive to pick out that kind of information.

e) Presentation of- and questions about- a hypothetical K-5 model:

The model assigns students to a neighborhood school and shows all schools open (including Cragmont, Columbus, Franklin, but not Hillside.) There has been no attempt to balance students by race: if we had K-5 neighborhood schools, this is what they would look like. Boundaries are determined by giving the parameters to the computer, which then "grabs" the neighborhoods closest to a school. Next, since boundaries overlap, Monica, to make sense of the results, numerically balanced the school populations as much possible, taking into consideration the distance from the residence to the school and allowing generous capacities: a library, office, resource room, special ed. room (but not child care) at each school.

With all schools open, space in BUSD is only 61% utilized. If one does not allow for such use of space as libraries, etc., this number drops to around 40%. The State of California standard is that there should be 85% classroom space and 15% for other uses, including special ed. This will need to be taken into consideration during the planning process. If we build new schools, we will be held to the state standards. For our older schools, we have waivers.

Monica reviewed figures showing what the racial percentages at each school would be using this model and how those figures compared with the desired percentages.

In response to a question, Monica explained that she had tried out approximately 25 K-5 models, of which this one was representative.

An observer pointed out that it would perhaps be better to call the model being presented the neighborhood school model, rather than a K-5 model. Monica replied that, although that statement was correct and although the racial census would probably be much the same for a K-8 or K-12 configuration, she did base this particular model on certain age groups and it is for that reason that it is designated K-5.

Monica mentioned excerpts from minutes of School Board meetings from 1981 relating to school attendance zones which were then being adjusted.

Data on a hypothetical 6-8 model (to fit with the K-5 model) will be forthcoming.

Monica suggested that, rather than worry about minor boundary adjustments, the Task Force should concern itself with broader implications. Requests from the group will be recorded and synthesized to produce other boundary models.

George Perry felt that a factor that would be of interest would be to look at how funds come into a school site now and how they would come in with a K-5 configuration: there might be substantial differences. Monica pointed out, however, that the model presented was hypothetical and, in the case of a real model, an effort would be made to equalize funding.

Two observers expressed interest in knowing the student density within a quarter mile of the schools. The Task Force could then decide if this information could help in planning, especially in planning of transportation. Monica agreed and pointed out that, since some schools will be closed (for work) during the phased building process, each year there will be a different set of schools and a different number of capacities based on the grade configuration. She reminded the group that School Board policy considers walking distance to be one mile.

Virgus Streets wondered if it were possible to factor in SES (socio-economic status), since it is more of an indicator of educationally relevant variables than race. Monica replied that the only legal document available to determine this type of information is the Chapter 1 report. The data is protected by confidentiality laws and is in a form not directly corresponding to the form needed by the On-Pass program. It can be done, but it needs a lot of manual correlation.

In response to questions about the jr. high schools, Monica explained that the map for the hypothetical 6-8 model was drawn to balance the numbers of students at the two jr. highs, taking into account the natural divisions created by major thoroughfares, but not taking into account which K-5 schools would feed into the 6-8 schools. The two jr. highs, such as they are now, have the space to accommodate the additional sixth grades.

Replying to the question of whether the On-Pass program was available to Task Force members, Monica explained that, although it could not be given out and was extremely difficult to use, she was willing to work one-on-one with people having this kind of computer knowledge.

Associate Superintendent Nancy Spaeth pointed out that, even though the K-5 model shows 13 schools in operation, the Berkeley school district does not need 13 schools. Right now we're operating with two of these sites closed. Over a ten-year period, some are going to be closed for rebuilding. There needs to be a certain fluidity in the concept of who is going to go to what school. At the end of the ten-year period, unless we have an increase in enrollment, we don't need 13 schools.

4. General Discussion on Grade Configuration

A desire was expressed to move beyond discussion of the K-5 model, which, although it had been requested at a previous meeting, did not seem to answer many of the questions asked. Monica suggested that the real question was perhaps not what K-5 schools look like, but how do we have K-5 schools and maintain integration?

An observer wanted to see a discussion of the over-all philosophy behind the models, consideration of the implications of neighborhood schools and a sorting-out of priorities. The first priority seems to be that of racial balance.

Janet Huseby commended Monica for her work in preparing the evening's informative presentation (general applause) and suggested that we should proceed to discuss grade configuration in terms of education.

A question was asked of Kitty McLean about the academic reasons behind the current K-3, 4-6 configuration. Kitty replied that the advantages were twofold: first-paired, integrated schools allowed shared busing; secondly- it allowed the school district to concentrate offerings (orchestra, for example) at certain grade levels. It is more efficient to concentrate resources to target special groups of kids at a certain age levels.

Sherrie Pugh then had the group break up into three smaller discussion groups to discuss grade configuration, with the proviso that discussion of grade configuration would begin the next meeting.

Most group discussion ended around 9:45 p.m.