

BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADOPTED MINUTES

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MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING
 Wednesday, December 15, 1993
 Berkeley Community Theatre
1930 Allston Way
 Berkeley, CA 94704-1180

CALL TO ORDER

1. Roll Call

President Shaughnessy called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and the Board recessed to Closed Session, in the Board Conference Room of the District Administrative Offices, 2134 Martin Luther King Junior Way, Berkeley, California.

MEMBERS PRESENT: President Elizabeth Shaughnessy
 Vice President Irene R. Hegarty
 Director Pamela M. Doolan
 Director Pedro A. Noguera, Ph.D.
 Director Miriam Topel
 Student Director Winston K. Ross*

Superintendent LaVoneia C. Steele, Ed.D.,
 Secretary

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

2. Recess to Closed Session and Reconvene

- a. Student Expulsion Pursuant to Education Code Section 35146
- b. Personnel Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957
- c. Litigation Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9
- d. Negotiations Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6

The Board reconvened to Public Session at 7:40 p.m., at the Berkeley Community Theater, 1930 Allston Way, Berkeley, California. President Shaughnessy reported that there was nothing to report from Closed Session. She then requested that roll call be taken again.

*The Student Director does not attend Closed Session.

MEMBERS PRESENT: President Elizabeth Shaughnessy
Vice President Irene R. Hegarty
Director Pamela M. Doolan
Director Pedro A. Noguera, Ph.D.
Director Mirian Topel
Student Director Winston K. Ross

Superintendent LaVoneia C. Steele, Ed.D.,
Secretary

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

AGENDA REORDER

UNION REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. Jacki Fox Ruby, President, Berkeley Federation of Teachers, addressed the Board on behalf of the teachers' union and the Union of Berkeley Administrators (UBA), regarding the lack of a teachers' contract.

AGENDA REORDER

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Steele acknowledged the teachers who were in attendance and she responded to comments made by the Berkeley Federation of Teachers' President. She stated that: "We value our teachers as well as all of our other staff and we would like to give a raise in salary but funds are not available at this time. In addition, Berkeley's administrator/teacher ratio is relatively low compared with other districts. The State average for unified school districts is 6.17 administrators for every 100 teachers. In the Berkeley Unified School District, it is 5.26 administrators for every 100 teachers. In Alameda County, 12 unified districts have a higher ratio of administrators to teachers than Berkeley. Only four unified districts in our county have fewer administrators per every 100 teachers."

AGENDA REORDER

16. Approval of Recommendation Regarding School Organization and School Building Decision

Superintendent Steele made the following remarks regarding this item:

"Good evening members of the Board, teachers, principals, parents, community members, students, and future students..."

16. Approval of Recommendation Regarding School Organization and School Building Decision (continued)

"Tonight marks a milestone in a long...sometimes arduous process...to determine how to tie together the rebuilding of our schools with a grade configuration and integration plan that will best serve the needs of all of our students. When we developed our Strategic Plan in 1991, we acknowledged that our integration program was not working as well as it should...we acknowledged that our students were not achieving as much as they should. We put together a Strategic Plan to address those and other issues. Now, after many months, a plan has emerged.

"As I have said before, a perfect plan...or one that everyone agrees is perfect...is probably not possible. But, I truly believe that the K-5--Three Zones plan...at which we have arrived after many months of study and after hundreds of hours of community meetings...is the best one for our city and for our students. I believe this plan addresses those issues that are most important to each of us:

- "• This plan creates and ensures a very tightly monitored integration plan at every school. No longer will we have schools that are shamefully out of compliance with the Board's and the community's long-held goal of plus or minus five percent. Those of you who read the papers Tuesday probably noticed the article about the study showing that many of America's schools are sliding back into racial segregation. That will not happen in this District. This plan will assure that it will not happen.
- "• This plan also provides for children in our District to be at a school long enough to involve their parents in that school...long enough to provide stability and recognition of each child's needs and personal growth.
- "• This plan reduces the time spent on buses and creates fairness because white children as well as African-American children will be bused in the early grades. Because this plan places two elementary schools in West Berkeley, no longer will African-American children be the majority of children bused during their primary school years.
- "• This plan enables teachers and principals to assess and evaluate their curricula and their teaching, as children will take exams in the fourth grade at their own school.

16. Approval of Recommendation Regarding School Organization and School Building Decision (continued)

"• This plan enables the District to support a much-needed change for our District and encourages an energizing, revitalization boost for all of us as we work together to make it a success. I invite the Board to work closely with the staff in the next few months as we hammer out final details.

"• And last, this plan allows us to go forward with construction so we can see the results of our Measure A dollars.

"Tonight I am asking the Board to approve that recommendation.

"Berkeley has set high standards for its schools and expects its students to excel. Sadly, too many of our children are not doing as well as they should. Test scores are unacceptably low for many of our minority students. Educators in our District, (our principals, and many of our teachers) believe changing our grade configuration from a K-3, 4-6, 7-8 to a K-5/6-8 has the potential to foster better academic achievement, and I agree. They say the transition between grades three and four is developmentally detrimental to children. 'If only we could keep them a year or two longer we could really get somewhere,' many principals have told me. Educators also believe parents tend to become more involved in their children's schools when their children attend them for a longer period of time, or when siblings can remain at the same school so that busy parents don't have to divide their time and energy between two PTAs or two back-to-school nights.

"For older students, middle schools have proven to be more effective academically than two-year junior high schools. In our own district, King Junior High became a middle school unexpectedly...as a result of the Loma Prieta earthquake. Columbus sixth graders were moved into King and the results have been positive.

"For those of you who did not attend last week's meeting, I would like to briefly explain the K-5--Three Zones plan. In this plan the city is divided into three zones. Each zone runs from the hill areas of town to the flatland, each zone is balanced racially and each zone contains a diverse socio-economic population. Within each zone there are several K-5 schools and one 6-8 middle school. Parents will have the option of prioritizing their first, second, and third preference for a K-5 school within their residential zone, but students will be assigned to their school based on maintaining racial balance within each school.

16. Approval of Recommendation Regarding School Organization and School Building Decision (continued)

"As currently drawn, the North zone would include the following K-5 schools: Jefferson, Columbus, Thousand Oaks, and Cragmont. The Central zone would include Oxford, Washington, and Whittier. The South zone includes LeConte, Emerson, John Muir and Malcolm X. King Junior High will become a 6-8 middle school in the North zone, Willard will become a 6-8 middle school in the south zone, and a third middle school, possibly Longfellow, East Campus, or West Campus, will be rehabilitated to serve as a middle school in the Central zone. Staff will fine-tune this map over the next two months.

"This plan will require the development of a Parent Information Center to help families understand the system and their options within it. We believe that recent state legislation requiring Districts to provide parent information will enable us to defray costs of the Parent Information Center through the Mandated Costs Reimbursement Program. Indeed, any plan we adopt--including staying exactly as we are--would require, under state law, that we provide parent information above and beyond what we provide now.

"Our K-3 principals are eager to convert their schools from K-3 to K-5. Indeed, all of our principals agree that K-5, 6-8 is the best configuration for learning. Many parents are happy to see this change, although my recommendation has been seen as more difficult for parents at Arts Magnet and Malcolm X. I know that the community of teachers and parents at those schools have developed some excellent programs. I would like to reassure them that those kinds of programs will continue and will receive District support. Because Malcolm X will undergo the greatest change in the District--something parents and staff there are understandably worried about--the District will make a special effort through additional support to encourage the continuation of programs they feel are strong and the development of new programs appropriate to that school. Malcolm's teachers and principal will be given staff time to design, plan, and propose a program for their school.

"This plan offers something new: a family of schools within each zone. I would encourage each 'family' to work collaboratively and to combine their resources to develop more and better enrichment programs for their zones. Arts programs, for instance, should be available to all students, not just those whose parents have enrolled them in a magnet school or who were lucky enough to be assigned to Malcolm X. With schools located relatively close to one another within a zone, I believe it will be possible to establish certain programs at each school and also within each zone.

16. Approval of Recommendation Regarding School Organization and School Building Decision (continued)

"For example, a choral and orchestral program could be coordinated zone-wide so students could study and perform music at their school site and with other students in their particular zone, including their sister 6-8 school. I would like to explore this kind of collaboration within zones for other types of enrichment programs...art, drama, science, and technology.

"This is only one possibility, but I believe this configuration opens the door to many others. As Jefferson's principal, Marian Altman, stated at our last workshop a week and a half ago: 'We have been through change before and we can do it again.' To that I would like to add, it is time for change and we welcome the challenge and opportunity to make them.

"This is a new beginning. One that inspires us to recommit our funds, our energy, and our creativity to making this school district the best in the nation. To borrow from the Malcolm X School slogan, 'Together we can.'

"I encourage members of the Board to not only approve this plan tonight, but to work with me, our principals, our teachers, and our parents. Then tomorrow...we can all roll up our sleeves and get to work on what is most important for our students: Academic achievement."

PUBLIC TESTIMONY regarding #16:

Mr. Frank Brown, President, Berkeley NAACP, reaffirmed the NAACP's support for the Superintendent's recommendation.

Mrs. Arrietta Chakos, Legislative Liaison, read the following letter from Congressman Ronald V. Dellums:

"I understand that the Berkeley Board of Education will have on its agenda a discussion on the recommendation of the Superintendent to reconfigure and restructure the Berkeley schools. This recommendation is reflective of the District's decades of school desegregation experience and move towards the conceptualization of integration.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY REGARDING #16 (continued)

"Whatever decision the Board of Education makes, I would like to express my continued support for maintaining and achieving the best education that can be provided for our children within the rich environment of integration. Though there are no blueprints to achieve this goal, I am heartened by the process of community involvement in articulating the importance of integration and the courage to make changes. As you are well aware many in the community were initially very suspicious of the potential adverse impact that any reorganization would have on the District's commitment to maintain integration. Any solution chosen by the Board of Education will have to satisfy this community concern, a concern I fully share.

"My staff and I will work closely with the Berkeley Unified School District and the Board of Education to facilitate any federal assistance available towards educational priority and its implementation to maintain integration. Sincerely yours, Ronald V. Dellums, Member of Congress."

Twenty-five other speakers, including Berkeley City Council Member Maudella Shirek, addressed the Board regarding school organization and school building decision. Public Testimony was followed by Board comments.

BOARD COMMENTS regarding #16:

Director Pedro A. Noguera stated that: "I think we have to find a way to increase the options that people have. To say that people are stuck in the school they are in, that is the way it is, is an old system that cannot be upheld any longer. People are looking for alternatives. They are looking for schools that are more responsive because more and more our schools are the last resort that a community has.

"We heard tonight people talking about schools providing suicide intervention, about schools providing gang intervention about the great services that we expect and that schools increasingly have to provide. I think we want schools to provide these services and to figure out how we are going to find the resources to provide these services and so I would like to see that put into the plan.

BOARD COMMENTS REGARDING #16 (continued)

Director Noguera (continued)

"I would like to really emphasize that we need a policy, and I think the Superintendent's plan does this, that is going to re-integrate this District and reconfigure sections of this community that our District can, in fact, provide quality education and integrated schools. So, I present you with an amendment tonight and I hope that the Board will consider it.

- "1. In the phased implementation, I would like the Superintendent to come back to us with specifics on the cost of implementation and how schools will be affected.
- "2. I would like for the Superintendent to figure out a transition plan that makes sense.
- "3. I would like for us to do some evaluation based upon whether or not schools that become K-5, in fact do achieve racial balance.
- "4. I would like for us to look at the finances of implementing the transition.
- "5. I would like for us to commit to putting additional resources into the flatland schools."

Vice President Hegarty:

- "1. We need specifics on costs: Transportation and public information, as well as administrative costs and especially staff development, with sources of funding identified (I agree with Miriam that we should not assume that this will come out of the general fund). We should also not assume that our usual staff development days will be sufficient.
- "2. How will teacher and staff assignment/choice be implemented? Teachers and staff should be included in the planning process.
- "3. We should provide extra support, if necessary, for the flatland schools (i.e., Malcolm X, Longfellow, and Columbus), in order to ensure their integration and to equalize any disparity in socio-economic level of students as compared to other schools. This support could be in the form of additional moneys, additional staff, and additional programs, if we can find outside assistance, but could also be first choice in teacher selection, a deliberate attempt to stack the deck in favor of these schools.

BOARD COMMENTS REGARDING #16 (continued)

Vice President Hegarty (continued)

- "4. We must take whatever time is necessary for proper planning before beginning wholesale changes.
- "5. Location of a third middle school has not been decided, and that decision will need to be done openly and carefully, with full notification of neighborhoods, etc.
- "6. The District should consider the possibility of one, K-8 school and/or one citywide magnet program. This might be at Arts Magnet (although not necessarily). This might be a possibility for Malcolm X School.
- "7. Impact on existing successful programs should be considered and ways to adapt them to new grade configurations should be explored (e.g., Arts Magnet program, Gilbert & Sullivan, 4-6 instrumental music, etc.).
- "8. How will inter-zone transfer requests be handled? What about choice of middle schools?
- "9. We need a full implementation plan that includes a timeline, budget, and identifies staff to implement the changes.
- "10. We need to have the Measure A Capital Improvements Manager hired before we can properly plan implementation."

Director Topel: "With Pedro's amendment; with Irene's contingencies and some of my own as well. To make this plan work it is going to be necessary for the District and the Board to make a commitment to provide the additional support and funding in time and interest that is going to be necessary to make our flatland schools-- Malcolm X, Longfellow, and Columbus, excellent and desirable schools. We need to give special attention to those flatland schools so that they may be attractive to parents.

"If this plan is to work, it needs to be carefully phased in based upon funds already committed and available to do that implementation. I think that is a key aspect of the phase-in. I cannot make a commitment that burdens the General Fund at this point. We will have to find funds from other sources.

"I want staff to prepare a plan of phased implementation that matches funds which have been secured and does not burden the General Fund.

BOARD COMMENTS REGARDING #16 (continued)

Director Topel (continued)

"I want the District to make a commitment to work with the Malcolm X staff to preserve the programs at that school. And, I also believe that the planning process, which is going to take place between now and March, should include a planning team composed of principals, teachers, Board Members, as well as District administrative staff, including the newly hired Director of Capital Projects.

"I think the process should also include a series of ongoing meetings between principals, including at least one meeting between the principals in each of the proposed zones."

Director Doolan stated that: It is important that the District move toward a workable plan for all our students and get behind staff to implement the plan."

President Shaughnessy stated that: "A K-5; 6-8 grade configuration is in the best interest of the District."

In additional, the Board inquired about the following:

1. Cost of transition;
2. Funding source for the plan;
3. Detailed plans for implementation of the plan;
4. Possibility of K-8 and magnet schools;
5. Would this plan racially balance the schools?
6. How would training for staff be implemented?
7. Additional staff development days would need to be scheduled.

Motion: Directors Shaughnessy/Doolan and approved unanimously on voice vote:

To approve the Superintendent's recommendation regarding school organization and school building decision, as amended by Director Noguera and incorporate the contingencies submitted by Vice President Hegarty and provisos by Director Topel.

AGENDA REORDER

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ADOPTION OF CONSENT CALENDAR, ACTION ITEMS (continued)

6. Adopt Resolution No 6032: Resolution Supporting and Endorsing the Passage of AB 1045

Motion: Directors Doolan/Hegarty and approved 5-0-0-(1) on voice vote:

To adopt Resolution No. 6032.

AYES: Directors Doolan, Hegarty, Noguera,
Shaughnessy, Topel
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: (Student Director Ross)

ADOPT CONSENT CALENDAR, ACTION ITEM: MEASURE A

7. Adopt Resolution No. A71: Authorization To Award Bid for Washington Transition Housing and Upgrade to Existing Portables and Installation of Utilities

Motion: Directors Hegarty/Noguera and approved 5-0-0-(1) on voice vote:

To adopt Resolution No. A71.

AYES: Directors Doolan, Hegarty, Noguera,
Shaughnessy, Topel
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: (Student Director Ross)

APPROVE ACTION ITEMS

8. Decision on School Configuration of the 6-7-8 Grades

Motion: Directors Hegarty/Doolan and approved 3-2-0-(1) on voice vote:

That a third 6-8 Middle School be developed and that the school be located at Longfellow. All other elementary schools will be K-5 as per the Board decision of December 15, 1993.

AYES: Directors Doolan, Hegarty, Topel
NOES: Directors Noguera, Shaughnessy
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: (Student Director Ross)