

Minutes

Student Assignment Advisory Committee

October 9, 2001

Persons Present: Roia Ferrazares, Derick Miller, Nancy Riddle, Lee Berry, Irving Phillips, Michele Lawrence, Noreen Axelson, Sheila ORourke, Bernadette Cormier, Sup Thanasombat, Ellen Murphy, Catherine Macklin, Julie Guthman, and Francisco Martinez.

The meeting was called to order at 7:19 p.m. 10 minutes were added to the end of the meeting for public comment.

Committee's meeting calendar

October 16, 23 and 30

November 6, 13 and 20

Committee's Board Charge

1. Alternative K-5 Assignment Plans will be developed by the new Student Assignment Advisory Committee for the 2001-2002 school year and beyond for consideration by the Board no later than the second meeting in November 2000.
 - a. A plan with multiple factors that includes the use of race.
 - b. A plan with factors excluding the use of race.
2. Committee formation and process will adhere to the following guidelines:
 - a. The committee will include parent representation from each of the affected elementary K-5 schools.
 - b. The committee will develop the alternative student assignment plans by October 31, 2000.
 - c. There will be at least one community forum.

In receiving its charge, the Committee will be provided with all relevant law affecting the legal parameters within which the committee must make its recommendations so as to comply with existing law.

Committee's Mission

The mission of the Berkeley Unified School District Elementary School Assignment Plan is to place all students in an integrated environment reflecting Berkeley's diversity in order to ensure equal access to: a strong core curriculum; enriched learning experiences; and individual, community, social and educational resources that promote success in a rapidly changing multi-cultural society.

Committee's Work Summary

Committee members briefed the Superintendent about the work performed thus far. Berkeley Unified currently has two elementary student assignment plans (magnet and non-magnet). The current non-magnet school plan maintains elementary schools diverse. Some schools have larger "other" ethnicity student populations. However, this is due to the fact that some of these schools offer language programs. Language programs are voluntary and students must request to be there. At the December 6, 2000 Board meeting, the Committee recommended that the student assignment zones need to be re-examined every ten years; it will be ten years in 2005. The District should make a bigger effort to inform students in the flatlands about early student assignments. Student assignments are done in early March to compete with private schools. Most parents who submit early Parent Preference Forms received their choice of school. Parents are satisfied with the current student assignment system. Last year the Committee had a public forum and the overwhelming majority supported how assignments are done. The Committee stressed the importance of school equity.

The magnet student assignment plan uses three socio-economic bands. However, the bands have not been used to assign students thus far. The bands run roughly along West, Central and East Berkeley. During spring the trial runs were conducted applying the magnet assignment plan to the non-magnet schools. However, ten-year-old census data was used. The Committee is waiting for the 2000 SES census data. The Committee concluded that it could not recommend a band assignment plan relying on ten-year-old data.

The Committee was also informed that a new case (*Connerly v State Personnel Board*) may affect our present student assignment system. This case will be provided to the Committee since they have not seen it. The Committee reiterated that the community values racial diversity. The challenge is going to be to comply with this recent case and still maintain student diversity in our elementary schools.

The meeting adjourn at 9:20 p.m.