

MEASURE

A+News

**December 4
Workshop #4
Jefferson School
10:00am -
12:30 pm**

When will the decision about grade configuration and school reorganization be made?

The Board is expected to make its decision about grade configuration and determine which buildings will be used for what grades at the Board meeting to be held on December 15.

What information will the Board and the District use to make these decisions?

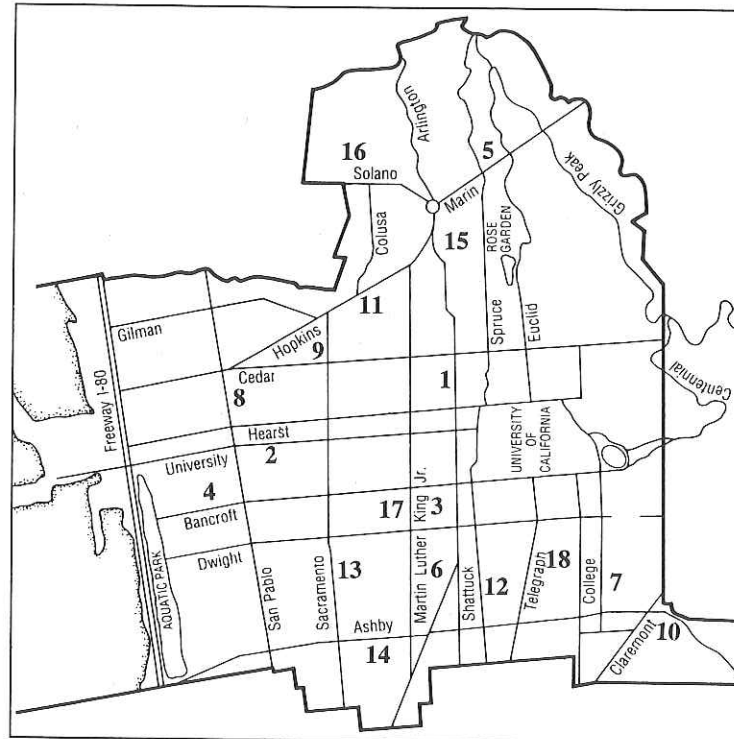
The Board will make its decision based on information from numerous sources, including the Superintendent's School Organization Task Force (SOTF); reports provided by educational and architectural consultants; information and comments from more than 70 meetings with parents, church and civic groups;

School Organization:

Down to the Wire

The last city-wide workshop on school organization will be held in the auditorium of **Jefferson Primary School on December 4 at 10 a.m.** District staff will present detailed information on enrollment options for kindergarten through eighth grades to

members of the Board of Education, who will evaluate how each option serves the educational needs of Berkeley children and reflects the desires and



School Locations

1. Arts Magnet/Whittier
2. Berkeley Adult School
3. Berkeley High School
4. Columbus
5. Cragmont
6. East Campus
7. Emerson
8. Franklin
9. Jefferson
10. John Muir
11. King
12. LeConte
13. Longfellow
14. Malcolm X
15. Oxford
16. Thousand Oaks
17. Washington
18. Willard

Bright Ideas from A+News

and discussions with principals, teachers, and staff.

How quickly will the District implement the plan?

That depends on which plan is approved. If the New Zones plan is approved, it could be finalized relatively quickly. The other plans would be phased in over a period of between one and four years. A detailed implementation plan will be prepared by staff within 60 days of December 15. That plan will focus on both District-wide and site-based needs associated with phasing in the plan.

How will these decisions affect children who are already in school?

To the extent possible, all children currently enrolled in Berkeley schools would remain at their present school. For example, a student who is currently enrolled in 1st grade at Emerson but is no longer in the Emerson zone following reorganization, would remain at Emerson through 3rd grade.

When will schools be rebuilt?

Architects for Thousand Oaks and Columbus have been selected and those schools are scheduled to be built by 1996. Other schools, that might undergo extensive renovation would be completed over a 10-year period.

nity and school staff.

Following this final workshop, members of the Board will meet on December 8 to continue their discussion of these options as well as any variations in these plans that may surface during the workshop. The Board is expected to make final decisions on grade configuration, integration, and utilization of school buildings on December 15. The workshop and Board meetings are open to the public.

The Board's decision will culminate a 15-month research process as well as an intense, four-month community process that included more than 55 informal house meetings, presentations to 15 church, civic, and business groups, 3 city-wide workshops, 2 Board roundtable discussions, and ongoing meetings with principals, teachers, and staff at each school. The dual purpose of these meetings has been to inform the community about issues involved in school organization and building plans, and to give parents and other residents an opportunity to ask questions and express opinions about Berkeley's schools.

From several possible plans described in June and modified over the past months, four are currently under consideration by the Board. In all but the "Mosaic" plan, grade configurations would conform throughout the District. That is, schools would be either K-3, 4-6, 7-8; or K-4, 5-8; or K-5, 6-8. Under the Mosaic plan, some schools would be K-3, some K-4, some K-5, some K-6, and middle schools would be 4-6, 5-8, 6-8, and 7-8.

The passage of Measure A and plans to rebuild and rehabilitate school facilities provides the District with an opportunity to look at the current enrollment system as it has evolved over the last 25 years, and determine whether it can be improved. As the District has examined new enrollment methods and grade configuration it has focused on:

- minimizing busing,
- achieving integration goals that are consistent with Board policy,
- maximizing student achievement by creating schools of optimum size and with facilities that foster student learning,
- improving parental involvement and providing greater coordination among schools and staff.

A brief description of each plan follows on page 2, along with some strengths and weaknesses of each.

Imagine a system of shuttle buses transporting students to after-school enrichment programs or resource centers. Picture clusters of schools located near the Marina where all students in kindergarten through 8th grade would be bused in order to take better advantage of a concentration of resources like science labs and art studios.

These were only two suggestions contained in four models for school organization that graduate students from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology presented at the November 6 Board workshop.

While many of MIT's suggestions are too costly to implement, their proposals for the location of middle schools and ways to foster better communication across grades have prompted lively discussion at the District. The "crescent" zone plan, one of MIT's presentations, is being researched further by District staff. In all four models, the District was encouraged to better utilize city resources.

The students are part of MIT's "New American School Design Project," which is funded through a grant from the Trust in Diversity.

The students will produce a document, "Planning for Berkeley Schools" in February.