

2020 Vision Planning Group Meeting
Friday, October 2, 2009
8:30-11:30am, Greenlining Institute
1918 University Ave., Berkeley

MINUTES

Present: M. Fraker, M. Miller, S. Casal, N. Maizlish, A. Gallegos-Castillo, K. Hemphill, C. Campbell, J. Sinai, B. Huyett, L. Caronna, J. Slemph, K. Johns, T. Schear, N. Sanchez, M. Porter, S. Jo, B. Green

Absent: V. Cary, L. Gallegos-Diaz, W. Robinson, N. Smith, F. Woytak

Materials:

9/25/09 Meeting Materials

6th-8th Grade ACET Recommendations

1) Call to Order

N. Sanchez called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m.

2) Public Comment

N. Sanchez presented public comment via email from Priscilla Myrick, ACET Team Grades 6th-8th

Subject: Does Berkeley need another charter school?

Dear Superintendent Huyett and BUSD Directors:

Tonight the BUSD school board is considering a charter high school, REALM, to be sponsored by the District. BUSD does not need a charter school. Charter schools are legally open to all California residents. A BUSD-sponsored charter school will tap into limited public resources in terms of facilities and parcel taxes intended for Berkeley public school students, as well as drain ADA state money. Moreover, Berkeley already has one charter high school--CalPrep, run by a partnership between Aspire public schools and UC Berkeley--sponsored by the Alameda County Office of Education.

BUSD rejected sponsoring CalPrep last year. In 2008 Superintendent Huyett met with Don Shalvey (CEO, Aspire Public Schools) to discuss whether BUSD might sponsor CalPrep (California Preparatory Academy, a partnership of UC Berkeley and Aspire Public Schools, serving grades 7-12). Superintendent Huyett rejected the proposal for BUSD to sponsor CalPrep.

Mr. Shalvey wrote in a letter to Superintendent Huyett, "In our conversations on April 19th, 2008 you made it clear that your and your Board's vision for Berkeley Unified School District does not include direct involvement in any charter school activities, and I fully respect that decision."

Although I am not in favor of charter schools in Berkeley, at least Aspire Public Schools had a track record in terms of successfully establishing and running schools that improved student achievement. On the other hand, the organizers of REALM, led by the principal at B-Tech, do not appear to have a track record in terms of successfully leading a secondary school. B-Tech is in the 5th year of Program Improvement under NCLB. None of the students at B-Tech test proficient in either English language arts or math. B-Tech enrolls only about 120 students and has a graduation rate of 54%. According to the 2009 Accountability Progress Report presented to the BUSD board at the last meeting, B-Tech's API declined 106 points. The school board should be critically appraising this dismal performance.

Furthermore, CalPrep's Aspire has successfully partnered with the UC Berkeley School of Education. UC Berkeley is currently running a \$15 million private capital campaign to support building a CalPrep facility on or adjacent to the campus.

If Berkeley students wish to attend a charter secondary school, the school is up and running at St. Joseph the Worker school at 2125 Jefferson Avenue, Berkeley, and any Berkeley student may apply. The full charter application is available from the Alameda County Office of Education.

Why not have students interested in a charter school option apply to CalPrep? BUSD does not have the resources to continually reinvent the wheel. Berkeley does not need another charter school.

Sincerely,
Priscilla Myrick

B. Huyett responded to this public comment by mentioning that no official proposal had been submitted by CalPrep. He also stated that there are staff working on the curriculum of alternative high school with the project-based tech center. There are discussions on facilities and finances as well.

Huyett stated that the school board is ready for a joint session on November 3. He also recapped the school board meeting on September 30 for the planning team. The board is open to doing REALM; they see the need and what it would do for young people in Berkeley. The willingness to do it is there but the question is *how*.

K. Hemphill agreed that the board had reached a consensus on REALM. They still need to have more discussions around the timeline, facilities, and finances. Hemphill asked what the current B-Tech students who are not part of the 100 9th graders that REALM will serve will do.

B. Huyett added that a lot of startup money is needed for a new school. Typically the model is around \$800,000 for three years.

J. Sinai watched meeting on television and was interested in the response of middle school principals. There were a lot of questions but not a clear position from them about having a separate program. Sinai also thought of the ripple effect on other facilities of any decision being made.

J. Slemp stated he could not be more supportive of the concept. Slemp said that Victor Diaz has done an excellent job and that the current system must be changed to include more choices and options.

M. Miller added that students at CalPrep are still struggling and that a fair number of them were in summer school this year; around fifty to sixty students.

N. Sanchez suggested that another place to look at was CiviCorps Academy. CiviCorps serves Berkeley students on the Oakland border and is now finally seeing an increase in test scores among African American 10th graders in math. Last year was the first time they saw a significant gain

3) Summary of Last Meeting/Review Minutes

J. Sinai added an edit to the Birth-5 ACET Recommendations Discussion Highlights. The Birth to 5 ACET team focused on short term solutions rather than long term and the team had agreed to focus the recommendations based on long term.

4) Planning Team Membership

J. Sinai spoken to Trina Ostrander from Bayer Health Care and the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce. Ostrander is currently on vacation but will return after two weeks. She has agreed to join the planning team.

5) Recommendations Discussion

The planning team reviewed the *6th to 8th Grade ACET Team's* recommendations. (See document)

Highlights of discussion:

A. Gallegos-Castillo introduced the recommendations by explaining the process of the Middle School ACET team. They identified major issues going on in middle school years and analyzed them by topic areas. The topic areas most salient out of the recommendations are: culturally and linguistically responsive systems, family partnerships, out of school time, creating caring adults, an integrated database to keep us accountable, and measuring success with similar indicators.

- Connect caring adults who aren't as interested in being tied to a job with students
- Create opportunities for employment development for adults who want to work with students but haven't had the opportunity to do so. (Paraprofessionals)
- Create a pipeline for staff from the city who need professional development to be teachers and partnering with other groups to help us, ie. San Francisco Unified School District, Project Pipeline, etc.
- A more diverse staff is necessary to help Middle School students form positive self identities
- Look at best practices about recruiting, retaining, and improving the diversity of staff who work with kids and partner with other organizations and schools who are doing it
- Recruit students in high school and support them getting their teaching credential
- How robust will the support be in addition to recruiting qualified teachers of color? How will they live in the Bay Area and not be set up for failure?
- Looking at the pilot program at BCC with BHS students who are interested in becoming teachers
- A value statement must be made that it is not okay to lose middle class black families in Berkeley. What is it about the community that doesn't attract people of color?
- What mechanisms can promote and increase affordable housing? What are the best strategies being proven in other areas? Julie noted that there will be discussions about housing development at city council meetings over the next few months. The next meeting is scheduled for October 27.

- Do the current standards for teachers reflect what 2020 Vision is about? If not, then make it clear. Use a rubric that's common for city and school district workers.
- Find the best standards that define cultural competency and what excellence looks like in Berkeley
- It is acknowledged that city staff are only as good as how much their department leaders hold them accountable
- Superintendent and administrative leaders of the district are entering into a fine training program with administrators and principals on supervision and standards.
- There is a tendency to try to *over* "Berkeley-fy" standards that already exist. What are the standards within the professions in the City? When someone is hired, are there standards of practice and are they evaluated upon?
- Resources and support must be given to ensure follow through on measuring accountability
- Middle School is a critical time when students identify self-concept, identity, and racial identity. It is important to support positive identity development for students of color
- These supports will also positively change the way white students think of their fellow classmates. School culture reinforces students' identities amongst themselves, ie. there's a reason why students of color aren't in AP classes although they're qualified. It is important to unpack the assumptions of white students who believe that people of color are incapable of high achievement. (Fundamental meta theme)
- We must be strategic in how we roll out these issues to the community in order to avoid backlash for rechanneling resources (ie. BHS Redesign).
- Supporting students of color does not mean reinforcing white guilt for students, but helping them to understand and address privilege.
- Integrating our schools and having diverse people does not change relationships. We must create real relationships across race to model and lead.
- Recommendation 4a. *Develop a city bond measure for 2020 Vision to strengthen system for parent partnership* should be changed to parcel tax, not bond.
- A district handbook is required by law, but there are inconsistencies in how materials get distributed. Not all parents get the information and some need translation
- Along with the orientation handbook to parents, it would be a good opportunity to include other services (city or major) that are not just school focused.
- Ensure families have access to information specific for middle school, since there are studies that show parents stop being engaged after elementary school. We need to keep parents engaged at the middle school level.
- Considering the differences between pushing and pulling. There are around 3,000 kids that are the targets of our efforts. We need to compare a more targeted outreach vs. just putting things out there.
- Looking at the Pique model for education classes for bilingual parents as an effective form of outreach. (This will be worked on by the Family Partnerships Subcommittee)

- Infuse every strategy with a cultural lens. It is not just about mailings or giving someone a flyer.
- The strategy must not be to “fix the victim.” Empower families and people of color to take leadership roles at schools so that can change the culture as well.
- K. Hemphill briefly introduced a project that she and Beatriz Leyva-Cutler will be asking the school board to support. It is regarding discipline in middle schools and data on detentions, suspensions, expulsions, etc. T. Schear asked K. Hemphill to write a recommendation based on the project.

5) Process Break

School Board and City Council joint session on Recommendations: Nov. 3rd

C. Campbell suggested that the team keep the momentum going for November 3rd and October 21st. November and December should be times for stakeholder community discussion and it would work with the city and district’s budgets.

The team agreed that there needed to be a timeline and budget process for January and spring to build into the plan.

B Green asked how the public would be educated and how the system of getting it to them to absorb and discuss would work.

L. Caronna stated that there needed to be an internal process to evaluate how to adopt, organize, pay for, etc. the recommendations and how to frame what we’re asking for. We cannot tell the community that this is where we’re going without knowing if we can even do these things.

J. Sinai noticed that the team does not have shared outcomes besides the impact statement. The team needs to come to council with a draft of goals and specific strategies; a concrete proposal to the school of shared goals from the city and schools. We need approval on concrete and specific strategies that are going to apply, even if we don’t know the about the implementation.

T. Schear stated that we needed to frame the meta themes and what we think is impacting the achievement gap to address in the strategies.

The recommendations document will contain an impact statement, targets, metrics, benchmarks, and big picture and priority strategies. A document containing specific, actionable items will be presented to the City Council and School Board in January.

N. Sanchez added that the document will also include program priorities, data that informs the current discussion, and major decisions made in the last year. It will make clear how the entire process came about and the number of people who have weighed in on it.

K. Johns reminded the team that we want public input on different pieces as they relate to them to give the community focus and a way to participate in the process.

N. Sanchez asked the team if they were genuinely committed to getting public feedback from the proposals and making relevant changes to them. The team needs to tell the community what they can expect from them and when.

L. Caronna agreed, but stated that she is concerned about the final document. The final document needs to be real and actually look at ways of moving money and programs. With that intent we need to take time with the leadership in ACET teams and make sure people are on board to make that happen.

J. Sinai stated that the challenge of taking it out to the community is describing the pathway of how the recommendations came about. It is not infrequent to have the same people from the community showing up to discussions. Does the team have bottom lines about things? There can be input on priorities and strategies, but if changes are made to the basic fundamentals, the whole thing will get shaken up.

S. Casal suggested the team turn to thought leaders to ask for assistance on how to deal with these issues. (Professor at UC Berkeley)

T. Schear stated that the group would have to have a hard conversation about the limitations of resources and what we can and cannot do. The community will push that, so what is this group really willing to change?

N. Sanchez asked this group if it trusts itself and each other, and understands how we got this far. Before going out with a unified voice, we need to trust each other's leadership and that we are ensuring a good process.

N. Sanchez summarized that the group likes the idea of rolling out a draft of the recommendations on October 21st to everybody- the city, school board, community, etc. This draft will include a set of pointed questions to ask for people's input.

November 3rd starts the campaign of making sure that people who want their voices heard start getting input. Right now, there is an overwhelmingly positive response to 2020 Vision but we haven't taken it into the pockets of resistance who have been allowed to hijack processes in the past. This is too big and important for one person to hijack the process. The 3rd is the rollout date to the city council and school board for the study sessions, and the 21st is the deadline for the draft.

In January, there will be action items, a lot of participation, managing people's expectations, and going to the city council and school board with specific items.

C. Campbell asked if the draft should go public after the 21st.

The Alliance can send it as an attachment to every councilmember, since they need to receive it before anyone else. They are able to receive it as a direct email.

J. Sinai will poll the council to make sure there are enough members who can attend the Nov. 3rd study session. The location is tentatively set at Longfellow Middle School; 7 pm. BTV is wired for Longfellow but only students know how to work the technology. The study sessions will be more formal than a regular community meeting but less formal than a voting meeting. Public comment is limited.

S. Casal cast in a strong vote to hold the session at Longfellow as it is better for community access. Casal believes the city hall and school board meeting spaces are oppressive environments.

J. Sinai emphasized the need to mobilize people to be there, especially ACET members.

N. Sanchez stated that the team would come up with a date for a general community meeting to host and tell people about on the 3rd. The Alliance will convene the meeting so that it is not on any one agenda.

The team used the gradients of agreement to reach a consensus about a study session on the 3rd.

Agreements with reservations highlighted the interest of seeing the details of recommendations draft.

The team agreed to move forward with the joint study session for Nov. 3rd.

Next Meeting:

Friday, October 9th, 8:30 – 11:30 am. Planning team meetings will be held every Friday at the same time until further notice.

11:35 a.m. Meeting adjourned