

Donald Evans, Ed.D., Superintendent
Natasha Beery, Director of BSEP and Community Relations
Valerie Tay, BSEP Program Specialist
December 9, 2015

Election, Diversity and Activity Report for School Governance
Councils, Berkeley High BSEP Committee and BHS School Site Council for the 2015-2016
School Year

Each year the Board receives a report on the fall elections and current membership of the School Governance Councils (SGCs) for the Pre-K Program, the K-8 schools, Berkeley Technology Academy (BTA), and the Independent Study (IS) Program; and the two Berkeley High School (BHS) committees: the BHS BSEP Site Funds Committee and the BHS School Site Council (SSC).

Principals and committee members were surveyed online to obtain a full picture of the conduct of elections for each site, including candidate outreach, nominations, election mechanisms, and community notification.

Candidate outreach and recruitment: Schools solicited parent candidates through a combination of newsletters and flyers, announcements and information tables at Back-to-School Night, PTA meetings, staff meetings, and other gatherings; email messages and automatic phone calls; as well as outreach to specific individuals. Principals and elected SGC members reported that face-to-face individual outreach was one of the most effective methods for candidate recruitment, while newsletters/flyers and e-tree announcements were key components of disseminating information about the SGC elections. Many schools used multiple means of outreach; those that only used e-tree announcements were reported to be less successful at reaching across the community. At Berkeley High, a candidate forum with a “state of the school” speech by the Principal brought a good turnout, and new candidates came forward at that forum.

Ballots and Voting: Parent candidates were presented via printed and/or online ballot statements, and only rarely in person at school meetings/elections. At over half of the sites, the statements and ballots were provided in both English and Spanish. 36% of respondents reported that voting was only by paper ballot - at meetings, or via ballots which could be picked up at school and sent home with students or downloadable. 48% reported that both paper and online voting was used, and 16% reported that candidate statements and ballots were only available online.

The principals and SGC members continue to ask for guidance as to best practices in voting methods, including whether it is acceptable to have online voting be the only method, and how to have safeguards against multiple votes. Questions have also been raised as to multiple choice, rank-order, or write-ins as voting methods. There were also issues regarding the role of alternates – most committees encourage full inclusion of the voice of all

er of parent,
staff or student seats. These questions and others related to elections and conduct of the SGCs are being brought to the Board Policy Subcommittee this year in order to ensure that bylaws and practice are updated and aligned.

Parent voter turnout averaged 15% across the district, ranging from 8% to 28%. Voter turnout at Berkeley High School continued to improve after the record low 3% turnout of 2013, with approximately 10% of parents voting this year. Overall, about 40% of elected members were new and 60% returning, which should create a good blend of historical knowledge and new perspectives, as long as there are targeted efforts toward ensuring that orientations and meetings encourage and equip all members to participate.

- x Race/ethnicity data was primarily obtained through self-report, rather than only asking the principal to supply the data as was done in prior years.

Given the relatively small numbers at each site, rather than providing counts and percentages for each school site, results were summarized by preK-5, middle school and high school levels.

Overall, 42% of committee members are non-white (Asian, Hispanic, African-American, multi-racial) and 58% are non-Hispanic white, which is similar to prior years. A few key findings:

- x When compared to the student demographics, there is somewhat higher Black/African-American membership (18.3% overall compared to 17.3% of student body); significantly higher at the high school, with 30% of committee members identifying as Black/African-American.
- x There is markedly lower committee participation for Hispanic/Latino members, 8.9% compared to 21.9% of student body. Some of this disparity may have to do with the fact that the ELAC/DELAC committee members are not counted in this report, but this does point to a need for more targeted engagement/outreach for Hispanic/Latino representation and/or a concerted effort to ensure that ELAC work is truly incorporated into the SGCs. Our Asian and multi-racial students are not matched by similar representation on SGCs. This may also point to black/white thinking in recruitment/outreach, whereas broader envisioning of diversity could be reaching more families.
- x The data on SGC membership race/ethnicity does not tell the entire story, however. Families are more diverse than the committee members themselves. Just over 20% of respondents indicated that their children's race/ethnicity was different from their own, including 10% of white parents, so in terms of family representation, the overall diversity of families is greater than the committee member numbers reflect.
- x In the prior year survey a question was included to ask about committee member perspectives, going beyond race/ethnicity to probe for what members bring to the table in terms of backgrounds and interests. At that time there was frequent mention of bilingual and/or multicultural families, as well as special education or GATE-identified students. This year the question about perspectives was not asked, but respondents still wrote in additional identifiers, including families with same-sex parents, children with learning disabilities, adopted children, immigrant families, and religious affiliations such as Jewish and Muslim. Some respondents also supplied additional race/ethnicity identifiers, including Xicana, Middle

“Thermometer Exercise.” The results of the latter workshop were reported to the board on November 18, 2015.

The turnout was very high, nearly double the attendance last year, with 180 members of SGCs, as well as members of PTA’s, the PAC, ELAC, DELAC, and other interested community members. Participants reported enjoying the opportunity to