



BUSD Introduces Newsletter Subscriptions

This is the seventh edition of the **A+** News Update.

The Update reports on the many accomplishments of our students, teachers and staff, and gives highlights of our community partnerships, and Board and administrative actions.

BUSD Public Notice of Public Hearing June 17, 2009

The Berkeley Unified School District's Board of Education will hold a Public Hearing at 8pm on Wednesday, June 17, 2009 to receive Public Comment regarding Resolution No. 09-69, Budget Trailer Bill (SBC#34) Categorical Flexibility for the Berkeley Unified School District Budget for Fiscal Years 2008-09 through 2012-13.

Action Item 4.3A Approval of Resolution 09-69 is on the regular agenda following the Public Hearing.

Other Highlights inside:

- ❖ BPEF's Annual Spring Luncheon
- ❖ Superintendent's Budget Update
- ❖ BUSD Honors Retiring Employees
- ❖ Department Spotlight: Special Education Office

Graduations & Promotions

Elementary Schedules

- BAM:** June 11
10:00 a.m.
Cragmont: June 10
4:00 p.m.
Emerson: June 12
9:00 a.m. (At St. John's)
Jefferson: June 11
9:00 a.m.
John Muir: June 11
12:30 p.m.
LeConte: June 9
7:00 p.m.
Malcolm X: June 11
9:00 a.m.
Oxford: June 11
9:30 a.m.
Rosa Parks:
June 12, 10:00 a.m.
Thousand Oaks:
June 10, 7:00 p.m.
Washington:
June 11, 9:45 a.m.



Over 200 Berkeley High School Seniors were honored, receiving a combination of Certificates of Recognition and Scholarships at the annual ceremony May 28th.

Secondary School Programs

Middle Schools

- King:** June 11, 4:00 p.m. (at BHS)
Willard: June 11, 7:00 p.m. (at BHS)
Longfellow: June 12, 9:30 a.m.

High School

- B-Tech:** June 11, 4:00 p.m.
(at UC Berkeley - Barros Hall)
Berkeley High: June 12, 5:00 pm
(at UC Berkeley - Greek Theater)

Mayor's Awards Recognize 198 High School Students

Mark Coplan

May 20th marked the 13th Annual Mayor's Awards, recognizing the accomplishments of students from Berkeley High and B-Tech High School.

The idea for the awards was originally conceived by Salvador Morillo, a former BUSD employee and a lifelong advocate for public education. He saw merit in publicly celebrating a wide range of notable achievements and contributions of Berkeley students.

"So many of our kids are shining stars, but they aren't always recognized", said Mayor Tom Bates. "For 13 years, the Mayor's Office has recognized hundreds of high school students who have demonstrated leadership, excelled in their studies, and overcome great challenges. The Annual Mayor's Student Recognition Awards is one of the greatest honors I have as mayor in this great city."

This has become a coveted event for the students. Parents, grandparents, siblings and teachers, in the crowd of 400 applauded while each student crossed the stage. During the reception that followed, while classmates and families took photos of the awardees, two Emerson Elementary School teachers were delighted to find a number of their former students in the crowd and invited them back to speak to their current students.



Students listen to keynote speaker, former BHS student Tanya Henneman Moore.

Award Categories

- Leadership
- Community Service
- Extraordinary Effort
- Citizenship
- Performing/Visual Arts
- Sports
- Communications

“The Berkeley Public Education Foundation is participating in ongoing 2020 Vision planning and implementation, and we are delighted to use this luncheon to shine a spotlight on both the initiative and on the complimentary activities already underway by our distinguished honorees.

Their work is deserving of notice, and while its impact can't gloss over a broader persistence of troubling disparities in achievement, it demonstrates creative ways we are moving constructively and effectively forward.”

Molly Fraker, Director &
Karen McKie, Board Chair

SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS:

WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR WAYS TO MAKE THE A+ NEWS BETTER SERVE THE COMMUNITY, AND WE WANT YOUR INPUT. WE ARE INTERESTED IN YOUR OPINIONS, IDEAS AND QUESTIONS, PLEASE SEND THEM TO:

budschoolnews@berkeley.k12.ca.us

OR: SEND THEM TO THE BUSD PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
2134 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WAY
BERKELEY, CA 94704

BPEF's 22nd Annual Spring Luncheon 2009

Mark Coplan



All of the honoree's received a standing ovation from the capacity crowd of 300 who came out in support of the Berkeley Public Education Foundation.

The Berkeley Public Education Foundation honored educators, business partners and volunteers in the Berkeley schools, and managed to raise over \$50,000 in donations that will support the foundations generous funding in BUSD schools and classrooms. This year's theme, *Seeding the Vision*, recognized four honorees whose initiative and compassion capture the spirit of the 2020 Vision that is guiding the city-wide effort to close the achievement gap in Berkeley's Public Schools.



Distinguished Educator: Cheryl Chinn

On the verge of her twentieth year as principal of Malcolm X, and her 37th in the Berkeley schools, signs of fatigue are few as Cheryl continues to steer the school to higher levels of success. Recognition from the State Board of Education with a Title I Academic Achievement Award for 2008-09 is the latest evidence of her dedication and belief that every student can succeed.



Distinguished Educator: Susannah Bell

Susannah came to Berkeley High in 1998, and soon spotted how unfair assumptions and a corresponding lack of challenge were holding students of color back. She decided that a small school framework would give her the sustained and positive contact she wanted with students, and joined Community Partnership Academy (CPA) in the early 2000s. Consistent with her belief in setting a high bar, she now teaches an Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum to her regular 11th and 12th grade classes.



Distinguished Volunteer Karen Meryash

Karen was among the early coaches helping middle school students with writing through the Writer's Coach Connection in the early 2000s. Even the most engaging parents might start to bow out when their kids hit middle and high school, but just the opposite happened with Karen. Her continued interest in focusing resources on struggling students drew her into the Academic Pathways Project helping to organize after-school tutoring by teachers at Berkeley High.



Distinguished Business Partner: The Cheese Board Collective

Members of The Cheese Board Collective exude a camaraderie among themselves and towards their customers that creates that 'sense of place' so vital to a healthy community. BPEF's selection of The Cheese Board as an honoree, is for its contributions to culinary and civic life in Berkeley, and for the quiet generosity the Collective has shown to Berkeley's public schools in the form of food, funds, services and volunteerism.

Superintendent's Budget Update

William Huyett

While the overall California budget is very much up in the air, it appears that Berkeley Unified will be able to make the necessary budget reductions without additional layoffs in the preK-12 program.

Compared to many Bay Area school districts, where kindergarten through third grade class sizes are climbing to 30 or more, Berkeley is very fortunate to be maintaining average class sizes at 20:1 in K-3, 26 in grades 4-5, and 28 in grades 7-12. Only one tenured teacher is expected to remain on the layoff

list after the Board takes action at their June 10 meeting. We are fortunate the Berkeley community has supported quality education through BSEP/Measure A and other ballot measures throughout the last 20 years.

There are significant unknowns, including the final state 2009-10 budget and the amount of federal stimulus money, which was initially promised for May, and is now tentatively scheduled to be disbursed later in the year. The amount of stimulus money that will be passed on by the state to school districts has not been determined at the state level.

The state budget passed in February for 2009-10 is estimated to be \$24 billion in deficit. This new proposed budget from the governor calls for reductions to Berkeley Unified of \$1.7 million in current year (that's right, the year that ends on June 30, 2009!) and \$3.7 million in 2009-10, only \$2.2 million of which staff predicts will be covered by federal stimulus funds.

There is good news. Actuarial studies on the district's Post-Retirement Benefit Fund and the Worker's Compensation Fund found that the contribution to each fund can be reduced for 2009-10 and meet existing obligations. These are employer expenses; reducing the rates does not affect employee compensation at all, and will lower expenses across the district including nearly \$700,000 in the General Fund. In addition, these funds can return significant amounts to the General Fund in 2008-09.

The \$3.7 million reduction in 2009-10 will be mitigated by \$2.2 million in stimulus funds, the reductions in Post-Retirement benefit rate and Workers' Comp rates, a proposed reduction in health benefit costs created by raising deductibles, a \$400,000 amount from the Adult School (in the form of reduced services and higher fees), and a few smaller changes. More details can be found in School Board Meeting packets at www.berkeley.net/board-meeting-information/.

While overall our district is much better off than others, our layoffs including bus drivers, clerks, vice principals, counselors and others still stand. We thank our teachers and staff for all their hard work in the face of many uncertainties, and for some the potential or real loss of their job. Our budget work has always focused on how to do our best to educate students. In some very trying times, the Berkeley community has many reasons to be proud of its schools.



Melia Hong's second grade class at John Muir Elementary School reflects the 20:1 ratio in the kindergarten through third grades with 19 students. Grades four and five are maintained at 26:1 and grades six through twelve are maintained at 28:1.

School Break/Holiday Schedule

Last Day of School
Friday
June 12, 2009

First Day of School
Wednesday
September 2, 2009

King Field Summer Closure:

A re-grading and new seeding project to the King Field on Hopkins St. will require closure from late June to September, 2009. Thank you for not using the field during this time in order to avoid accidents or delay of the project. This timeline is only an estimate, and the field will be opened as soon as the work is completed.

Scheduled Board Meetings Wednesday

June 17, 2009
June 24, 2009
August 12, 2009
September 9, 2009
September 23, 2009
October 14, 2009
October 28, 2009
November 18, 2009
December 9, 2009

**A+ NEWS
UPDATE
INCLUDES
STAFF PAGE**

The Staff Page focuses on news and updates primarily of interest to BUSD employees, although the community may appreciate these stories and highlights as well.

A+ News Update

Published by the BUSD Public Information Office. Articles and production by Mark Coplan, Lea Baechler-Brabo and Mary Hurlbert.

Send submissions to:
busdschoolnews@berkeley.k12.ca.us

Or fax to: 540-5358

BUSD Recognizes Retiring Employees

The Board of Education hosted a celebration for 20 retiring employees on June 3rd and also recognized 30 certificated employees celebrating their 15, 20 and 25 year anniversaries.

Honored Retirees

Ann Aoyagi, Administrative Coordinator
 Jill Boornazian, Teacher - Spec. Ed.
 Marilyn Bruno, Teacher
 Valcour Carroll, Jr., Grounds Gardner
 Elizabeth Fuentes, Teacher
 Maria Rosa Grunwaldt-Keys, Teacher
 Edith Hallberg, Substitute Teacher
 Charles Hamilton, Teacher
 Signe Harnett, Teacher
 Margaret Kirkpatrick, Principal
 Sabina Lanier, Teacher
 Sally Lappen, Instructional Assistant
 Ellen Levine, Instructional Assistant
 Shira Peck, Teacher – Spec. Ed.
 Ruth Sacksteder, Teacher
 Rachel Star, Substitute Teacher
 Beverly Thiele, Teacher
 Donna Van Noord, Teacher
 Elizabeth Van Schoick, Teacher
 Wilma Woods, Parent Liaison



Retirees posed with Board Member Beatriz Leyva-Cutler and Superintendent Bill Huyett in the ceremony held at the Berkeley Adult School.

15 Years

Sandra Farmer
 Theresa Fletcher
 Tamara Friedman
 Anne Hirose
 Robin Jew
 Barbara Lind
 Laurie Nielson
 Charles Pratt
 Heidi Ramirez-Weber
 Kim Robinson
 Michael Williams

20 Years

Joette Al-Hakim-Hall
 Kathleen Giustino
 Kirsten Lono
 Mahalia Ryba
 Roseann Santa Cruz
 Neil Smith
 Mary Sonnenberg
 Donna Suzuki
 Barbara Vogel
 Laura West
 Dana Wahlberg

25 Years

Matthew Bremer
 Wendell Brooks
 Marilyn Bruno
 Candyce Cannon
 Wendy Fong
 William Gaebler
 Marie Hunter
 Kay Sims

Department Spotlight: New Executive Director for Special Education

Berkeley Unified School District's Special Education Department has over 100 certificated and classified staff working at the school sites to support students with special needs. In addition to the special education teachers there are psychologists and mental health counselors, instructional aides and supervisors. All of this requires a lot of organization, coordination and administrative support. This support comes from the four people who run the Special Education Office, under the new director of the department just approved by the Board.



Kay Altizer, Executive Director (July 1st, 2009)

Kay Altizer will join the team in July. She has served as Director of Special Education and Student Health Services in Vallejo for the past 13 years. She brings 32 years of experience in the field of education,

and her work is known widely as Chair of the State Special Education Local Plan Area Association. She began her career as a Speech and Language Therapist and served as a Program Specialist and Coordinator of Special Education Services prior to her role as Director of Special Education in Vallejo.



Special Education support staff from left to right: Foroozan Toofan, Accounting Tech.; Gloria Dudley, Administrative Secretary; Hermelinda Guerrero, Senior Records Clerk and Ly Vo, Senior Records Clerk