

A monthly newsletter sharing school news with the community



BUSD Introduces Newsletter Subscriptions

This is the sixth edition of the **A+** News Update. If you enjoy reading the A+ News Update, you can subscribe to receive it electronically every month. To do so, send an email to:

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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.

Other Highlights inside:

- ❖ Superintendent on 2009-10 Budget
- ❖ BSEP
- ❖ B-Tech Students Black College Tour
- ❖ DOE Grant: Solar Schools Master Planning
- ❖ BUSD Spotlight: 174 Classified Employees Honored for Years of Service

Latinos Unidos por Nuestros Adolescentes: Latinos United For Our Youth (LUNA)

Isabel Parra & Ramona McGary, Parent Outreach Specialists

In April, 38 parents received graduation certificates from the LUNA program, created and taught by BUSD Parent Outreach Specialist Isabel M. Parra. This is the third group of parents who have completed the seven-week workshop. This parent education program, taught in Spanish, is designed to assist parents of middle school children in dealing with their child's educational and emotional needs.

Class participants receive information and support on a variety of topics including how to understand changes that adolescents face, gangs, and teenage use of technology. The focus of the program is to provide up-to-date

information so that parents can better understand the challenges their children face as they move through the middle school years. The LUNA program was first offered at Longfellow Middle School during the fall of 2008, and then at King Middle School during spring of 2008 and 2009. The LUNA program will expand to Willard Middle School in 2009-2010.

Over 110 parents have completed the LUNA program thus far, and the District is committed to continuing to offer these valuable classes, so that parents whose primary language is Spanish can share their challenges and successes with other parents. For more information about LUNA contact Isabel Parra in the BUSD Parent Resource Office at 510.883.5223.



Husband and wife Mario and Grisel Nicolas receive their diplomas from Board Member Beatriz Leyva-Cutler, Isabel M. Parra and Mercedes Sanders.

Vocational Education: The Bread Project

Thomas Orput, Vice Principal Berkeley Adult School

You may have eaten the wonderful food prepared by The Bread Project and didn't even know it. THE BREAD PROJECT is a nonprofit program in partnership with Berkeley Adult School's Career Technical Education Department that trains low-income and unemployed people in the skills needed for entry-level commercial baking and cooking positions. In addition, The Bread Project staff helps students find and retain jobs in the food service industry.



This program serves approximately 100 students a year and each student, in their own way, hurdles barriers to complete the nine week training. Some struggle with child care issues. Some students have holes in their employment records. Some were incarcerated or are coping with substance abuse problems. Some desire a career in the culinary industry and see this as a great place to start. All students are empowered and touched by the program which is evident at each teary-eyed graduation during the school year.

You can sample the Project's delicious food by stopping by the Bread Project Café at Berkeley Adult School on San Pablo and Virginia, where they sell fresh foods made daily. You can also eat their yummy bran muffins that are offered in all Berkeley Schools as a part of the Universal Breakfast or you can call them @ 510.644.4575 to order a cake or have them cater your next party. It is a win-win to get great eats and support students who are learning new professional skills.

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:

BUSDSCHOOLNEWS@BERKELEY.K12.CA.US

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

Piecing Together the 2009-10 BUSD Budget

William Huyett, Superintendent

Berkeley Unified is facing the same dilemmas that all public school districts in California face:

- Sharply diminished resources both this year and next, and
- Uncertainty over the exact amount of funds that will be received next year,

while renewing our commitment to improving the education of our students, in accordance with *No Child Left Behind* and Berkeley's *2020 Vision*, with its goal of increasing equitable educational outcomes for all of Berkeley's students.



In February, it appeared that the state budget numbers were set for 2009-10. Although the state budget called for a significant cut to K-12 education this early budget seemed to allow time to plan for the best use of the remaining funds. Many state categorical funds were cut 15% in 2008-09 and an additional 4.3% in 2009-10. The restrictions on some funds were lifted so they could be incorporated into the district's General Fund (GF) in order to mitigate General Fund cuts.

In February, the district responded to this state action by cutting some \$3 million in expenses. This was done through a hiring freeze, reducing non-essential expenses, and using some unspent categorical funds as permitted. Based on this February state budget, the district projected that another \$4.9 million in expenses would need to be cut in the Unrestricted General Fund and \$1.3 in the Adult Education Fund in the district's 2009-10 budget.



Superintendent's Budget Advisory Committee

In early March, I reconvened the Superintendent's Budget Advisory Committee (SBAC), initially formed in March 2008, comprised of 16 voting members representing employee and community organizations. Five other persons, administrative staff and Board members, also participated in the SBAC as non-voting members. The SBAC met six times in March, April and May to provide me with feedback and a list of recommendations for budget reductions.

As of May 10th, I received and reviewed recommendations from staff and the SBAC and submitted my recommendations to the School Board at its May 13th meeting. My recommendation includes GF budget reductions in the amount of \$2.9 million, and the use of restricted funds through allowable state flexibility transfers in the amount of \$1.2 million. Additionally, we applied \$0.8 million in new revenue—federal stimulus funds—to the Special Education budget to offset some of those expenses. These recommendations allowed us to meet the target of presenting a balanced budget.

Our recommendations also included a list of programs and positions to be restored as the budget situation clarifies and in the event that our financial position improves. These priorities also reflect the input of staff and the SBAC.

State Budget Update

Unfortunately, the state budget situation has worsened since February. We expect a *May Revise* to the state budget to present two options, depending on the fate of the State propositions. There may be a subsequent *June Revise* after the election. We do not expect relief from the state legislators either. Since the state budget must be passed by 2/3 of both houses of the Legislature and a significant number of legislators in both houses have signed "no tax increase" pledges, the funding for the education of 6.3 million public school students is uncertain.

The Berkeley Public Schools Educational Excellence Act of 2006 (BSEP)

Jay Nitschke

In November of 2006, almost 80% of Berkeley voters responded to the perilous lack of funding for the Berkeley public schools by again approving the BSEP Special Tax - Measure A of 2006. The results of this tax (first approved in 1986 and then again in 1994), are evident. While many districts are raising class sizes, Berkeley is planning to keep class sizes the same in 2009-2010 as in 2008-09, among the lowest in the state.



The library and music programs remain robust because of BSEP/Measure A funding. Berkeley Unified schools are grateful to the voters for their support of key educational programs that make a tremendous difference in students' lives. That said, the many staffing reductions planned for 2009-10 in our district will significantly impact the organization. While BSEP/Measure A monies provide a significant augmentation of the school district budget, the district is highly reliant on the level of state funding as it forms the bulk of the district's budget. It is important for Berkeley 9,000 students as well as California's 6,300,000 public school students that public education become a top priority for all legislators.

BTech Students Score Big in Black College Tour

Mark Coplan

Twelve students from Berkeley Technology Academy (BTech) went on a Black College Tour in March and returned with six Promissory Acceptance Letters, and six Conditional Acceptance Letters. The conditional letters for the most part await ACT or SAT scores. BTech principal Victor Diaz was elated but not surprised with the results. "I have watched these students perform, and I knew that if they could get in front of the admissions counselors, they would blow them away. Without this tour their applications would still be at the bottom of the pile", said Diaz. "It wouldn't have happened if In Dulci Jubilo and the San Francisco Foundation's Koshland Program hadn't come up with the money to fund the trip, and it means a lot that they believe in these kids". (Diaz is a Koshland Fellow.)

(Read more about this in the Berkeley Daily Planet 5/7/2009, www.berkeleydailyplanet.com)

BTech Students & the Colleges they will attend:

- | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| • Taroy Ireland | Paine University * | • Maila Gutu | Howard University * |
| • Jason Miller | Clark University * | • Mike Glover | Paine University ** |
| • Tayona Law | Paine & Clark * | • Kamasi Jones | Paine University ** |
| • Jaquia Bolden | Paine & Clark * | • Anthony Durant | Clark University ** |
| • Deontay Wilson | Clark * | • Lorenzo Page | Paine University ** |

* Promissory Letter of Acceptance ** Conditional Letter of Acceptance

Reminder: Berkeley Public Education Foundation Spring Luncheon Friday May 15th

Don't forget the BPEF's Annual Spring Luncheon at Hs. Lordships on Friday May 15th, 2009. The lunch, provided by Olive Green Catering is always a special treat, and of course the highlight of the event is the chance to honor educators, volunteers and community partners who work so hard in our schools.

The Luncheon is also an important fundraising event for this organization that brings hundreds of thousands of dollars into Berkeley schools and classrooms, so if you are unable to attend, please visit the BPEF website to see how you can help:

<http://www.bpef-online.org/>

Watch for a complete report on the luncheon in the June edition of the A+ News



Front Row: Taroy Ireland; Jaquia Bolden & Lorenzo Page
Middle Row: Jason Miller & Tayona Law
Back Row: Mike Glover; Kamasi Jones & Anthony Durant

Solar Schools: Berkeley, Oakland & Contra Costa Districts Awarded Solar America Showcase Grant

Tom Kelly, KoyotoUSA

In a presentation at Sunpower Corporation in Richmond on April 29th the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced that a coalition of East Bay school districts and two local organizations were selected to receive a Solar America Showcase grant. The grant will allow the Berkeley, Oakland and West Contra Costa Unified School Districts to receive up to \$500,000 in technical assistance from DOE to conduct comprehensive solar generation analyses of district schools and facilities and to

Develop a district Solar Master Plan. The coalition includes the Sequoia Foundation and its sponsored project, KoyotoUSA,



Washington Elementary is Berkeley's first solar school and Principal Rita Kimball goes the extra mile to insure maximum efficiency. The solar panels are expected to provide 70% of Washington's electricity, as well as an educational element for the school.

The DOE Solar America Showcase award is intended to 1) support companies and local agencies that are "highly committed" to adopting solar technology and 2) accelerate the installation of photovoltaic (PV) panels across the country. The Sequoia Foundation's successful proposal on behalf of the three school districts will enable them to evaluate the energy consumption and solar electricity generation potential on all schools and facilities within the districts. The project will guide the districts in making choices about 1) which facilities exhibit the greatest solar potential, 2) what type of solar technology is most appropriate for each facility, and 3) what types of investments should be made in energy efficiency improvements to provide the best return for the districts. The school districts stand to save millions of dollars in energy costs – the result of energy conservation, better energy efficiencies, and adopting renewable energy systems.

During the 18 month grant period, the districts will select one or more schools to become a "Showcase School" where the most efficient and effective solar arrays will be installed.

In Dulci Jubilo's 25th Art Poetry & Essay Contest:

Mark Coplan

In Dulci Jubilo, a Berkeley foundation providing an average of \$70,000 in grants to the Berkeley schools every year, has hosted an Art Poetry & Essay Contest for all fourth and fifth graders in the District for the past 25 years.

This year's theme was *My Place in History: How I Can Make a Difference*. Thirty students were honored and given the opportunity to read or describe their pieces at a ceremony held at Oxford Elementary School on April 23rd.



Fourth and Fifth grade winners received a certificate and an In Dulci Jubilo gold medal as well as a cash prize.

In Dulci Jubilo Awards \$33,500 in Grants for Fall

In May IDJ reviewed grant requests for programs/ideas that address the achievement gap, in support of the District's 2020 Vision. Grants awarded include two grants given in April due to immediate needs:

Oxford Elementary School \$5,000

BTech High School \$5,000 (See story on page 3)

Berkeley High School \$5,000 (CPA) \$2,500 (Parent Resource Center)

Cal Scholars in Berkeley Schools \$5,000

Berkeley Chess School \$10,000

Berkeley Symphony \$1,000

BUSD Spotlight: Classified Employees 5 to 35 Years of Service

Mark Coplan

On May 12th the Board of Education and the Personnel Commission celebrated 174 classified employees who have reached their Five through Thirty-Five Years of employment in the BUSD. The event kicked off with a BBQ that served over 200 people while eight Longfellow Middle School orchestra (strings & flutes) student musicians provided the entertainment.



Seventy-one Five Year employees were recognized in the celebration. Superintendent Huyett noted that the collective years of service for all the employees honored was over 4,000 and these 71 employees represent 355 years.

Classified Employees Honored:

- **Thirty Five Years of Service:**
Virginia Chyou; Emily P. Gutierrez
- **Thirty Years of Service:**
Gayle J. Brown; Wilma J. Cooper;
Donna J. Chan Chu; Melinda J. Jackson;
Mack-Sear Matthews; Virma D. Reyes;
Shirley V. Robinson; Lucia C. Rodriguez;
Cynthia G. Simon
- **Twenty Five Years of Service:**
Caroline Damerell; Rodney Hill;
Marsha Montgomery; Samuel Scott Jr.;
Gregory B. Williams; John L. Williams
- **Twenty Years of Service:** 23 Employees
- **Fifteen Years of Service:** 20 Employees
- **Ten Years of Service:** 43 Employees
- **Five Years of Service:** 71 Employees



Forty-three Ten Year employees were recognized.



Twenty Fifteen Year employees were recognized.



Twenty-three Twenty Year employees were recognized.

Employee Years of Service Continued from page 5

A+ NEWS UPDATE

School Break/Holiday Schedule

Malcolm X's Birthday
Monday
May 18, 2009

Memorial Day Holiday
Monday
May 25, 2009

Scheduled Board Meetings
Wednesday

May 13, 2009
May 27, 2009
June 10, 2009
June 17, 2009
June 24, 2009 *Tentative*

Note: Board meetings begin at 7:30 pm, and can be heard on Berkeley Cable Channel 33, and radio KPFB FM 89.3

A+ News Update

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Send submissions to: budschoolnews@Berkeley.k12.ca.us

Or fax to: 510.540.5358



Three Twenty-five Year employees were recognized.



Nine Thirty Year employees were recognized.



Directors of Personnel, Pasquale Scuderi (Certificated) and Francisco Martinez (Classified) grilled over 50 lbs of burgers, hot dogs & veggie burgers for a hungry crowd. Sally Reed (not pictured) worked behind the scenes with Francisco, sending invitations to the honorees, completing their certificates and dealing with the many details that go into such a successful event.



Thirty-five Year employees Virginia Chyou and Emily P. Gutierrez (front row) found themselves surrounded by presenters from the Board of Education, the Personnel Commission and the Superintendent.

Superintendent's Cabinet Designates May 6th Staff Appreciation Day in the Berkeley Schools



This year marked the first BUSD Staff Appreciation Day for all classified and certificated employees in the District. Superintendent Huyett and all of the Central Office Management Team spread out across the District personally delivering BUSD pens and Staff Appreciation stickers to employees in their classrooms and workstations. Many employees expressed their pleasure in being recognized, and directors and managers returned from their deliveries with a renewed sense of the value of a heartfelt Thank You. Superintendent Huyett wasn't surprised. He had predicted that the management team would benefit as much from the effort as would the employees they were honoring.