

Berkeley Schools Excellence Program (BSEP)

Since 1986, a community's response to school funding shortages.

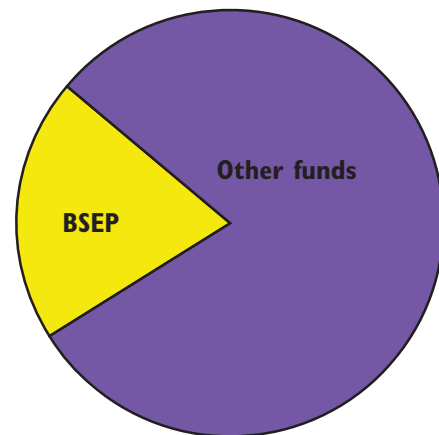
A community response to school funding shortages in the wake of Prop. 13, the *Berkeley Schools Excellence Program* (BSEP), has made a huge difference in the quality of our children's education since 1986. With a successful twenty-year history, this special local tax was on Berkeley's November 2006 ballot as Measure A, the Berkeley Public Schools Educational Excellence Act of 2006, where it won the approval of close to 80% of the voters, and was extended for 10 years.

What do these local BSEP funds provide?

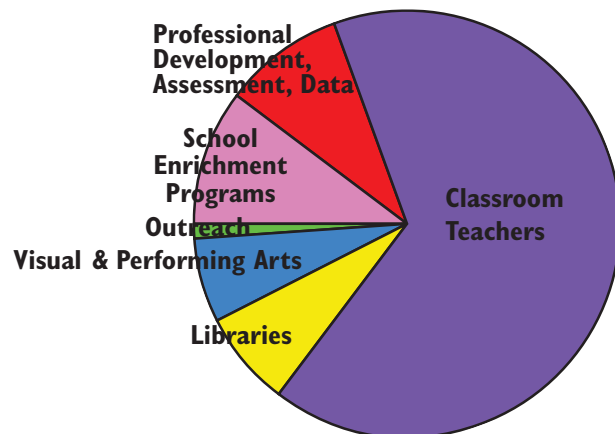
Local tax funds are integral to educating Berkeley's children. They pay for:

- 30% of the classroom teachers — about 140 teachers create smaller classes
- the music program in grades 4-8 — teachers and instruments
- well-staffed libraries in every school
- library books and materials
- computer equipment, software and techs in the schools
- an evaluation office to assess the effectiveness of the District's educational programs
- outreach to families to support greater parent involvement in their children's education
- educational programs that make each school special - such as arts and science programs, athletics, counseling, and many others

BSEP is about 20% of Berkeley Unified's budget:



BSEP funds provide:



Thoughtful Oversight of BSEP Funds

Among the cities that have created local tax initiatives to supplement their schools' budgets, Berkeley's BSEP Measure is unusual in that it specifies the purposes for which the funds may be used, and requires extensive community involvement in planning and overseeing the expenditures. The BSEP Planning and Oversight (P&O) Committee, comprised of parent representatives from each school, meets regularly to review the implementation of the Measure, and to ensure that BSEP funds are spent in compliance with the Measure. An outside audit is also mandated by the Measure, providing an additional layer of assurance that funds are being spent according to the voters' wishes.

The Future of BSEP: Thanks to the generosity of Berkeley voters in passing Measure A of 2006, these funds will continue to support and strengthen our schools through June 2017.

What does the BSEP tax pay for?

■ Teachers – Class Size Reduction

66% (\$13.3 million)

The bulk of the BSEP tax money goes to keeping class sizes as small as possible, so teachers can give maximum individual attention to students. In 2007-08, class sizes throughout the district average 20 in grades kindergarten through 3rd grade, 26 in grades 4-5, and 28 in grades 6-12. BSEP pays for over 30% of Berkeley's classroom teachers. Providing K-3 classes of 20, as well as other intensive programs, such as middle school math classes no larger than 20 students, would be impossible without BSEP.



■ School Enrichment Programs

10.25% (\$2 million)

This portion of the BSEP funds, approximately \$200/student, goes directly to each school to provide programs chosen by the School Governance Council (SGC), which is comprised of parents, staff, and the principal. These programs encompass both academic and enriched experiential learning, in such areas as art, science, PE, after-school tutoring, counseling, sports, student activities, and much more. The SGC is also responsible for allocating state and federal monies at the school, so that all the school's site-based funds can be spent according to a comprehensive plan to support the achievement of all students. At the Berkeley High, with its much larger enrollment, a separate BSEP Committee develops the BSEP site budget, which is submitted to the SGC for approval.



■ Visual and Performing Arts Programs

6.25% (\$1.2 million)

BSEP is the sole source of funds for the 4th through 8th grade music program. Music teachers provide instrumental music education for all children in grades four and five, and for many in grades six through eight as "0" period classes. Instruments are loaned to every music student without charge. BSEP funds also support other visual and performing arts, as well as concerts and festivals.



■ School Libraries

7.25% (\$1.6 million)

Every school has a well-staffed and well-stocked library. BSEP is the sole funding source for the district library program, providing books, computers, electronic databases and other materials, librarians in all middle schools and the high school, library media technicians in the elementary and middle schools, and a district-wide librarian.



■ Parent Outreach and Translation Services

1.25% (\$250,000)

The district is committed to supporting students' families in their efforts to have greater access to and involvement in their children's education. BSEP monies support an office dedicated to these goals, focusing particularly on addressing and removing barriers so that underserved families can better participate in their students' education.



■ Professional Development, Educational Program Evaluation, and Technology for Schools

9% (\$1,8 million)

These funds are dedicated to providing professional development for the District's teachers and staff, to assessing the effectiveness of the District's educational programs for improving student achievement, and to providing and maintaining computers and technology in schools.

Public Information and Oversight

Before the BSEP tax revenues are distributed for the purposes described above, two percent of the revenues received by the District from this tax are allocated to providing written communications to parents and the community, maintaining the district website, and to supporting the citizens' oversight committee, the BSEP Planning and Oversight Committee.



More information can be found on the web at www.berkeley.k12.ca.us.

Projected amounts for the 2007-08 School year.