

Hello Board Members,

I am addressing you tonight on behalf of the BSEP Planning and Oversight Committee to express the committee's general approval of the plan for for Class Size Reduction budget. As we approach the end of this 10 year measure, we are pleased to have been able to meet the class size goals established in the 2006 Measure, and have sufficient funds to also provide support to the district by funding expanded course offerings, middle school counseling, and program support, as specified in the measure. In the early years of the measure, the BSEP budget has been able to support the district's general fund, and increase support to important district support programs during a period of BSEP revenue growth based on higher COLAs of over 4%, and flatter costs when enrollment and salary increases were less than they are today. Recently, the BSEP budget has had much smaller COLAs, hovering around 1% for the last few years, and the all of the various program budgets have been strained by enrollment growth and cost increases.

There are many potential ways to balance the needs of our schools with the budget issues we face. In the past, the district administration has prudently cut budgets early, when funding from the state looked uncertain and likely to decline. Those cuts, while difficult, served both the district and the people of Berkeley well, and they protected our schools from dramatic changes. Given this historical precedent, cutting program now may look like the correct action . . . it worked before to minimize the possibility of major traumatic cuts, reducing through several