

Citizens Advisory Committee on Diversity

Report to the Board of Education
Berkeley Unified School District

JUNE 1999 - DECEMBER 1999

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY REPORT
TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Superintendent McLaughlin, President Doolan, School Board members and Berkeley community members, we thank you for this opportunity to present our recommendations resulting from our meetings over the past six months. Responding to Community-wide concern, the Board of Education at its June 16, 1999 meeting resolved that:

"An advisory group appointed by the Board of Directors and the Superintendent, to include representatives from interested community groups will meet regularly with key district staff and have direct input in the recruitment, hiring, training and retention of staff and other relevant issues facing Berkeley's diverse student population."

At the above-mentioned meeting the Board of Education appointed a citizens committee on diversity to study the hiring process of staff/teachers, to make recommendations, and to develop a recruiting, hiring, training and retention plan. The committee's initiatives and activities so far have keyed on promoting a diverse teaching staff within the district. In the year 2000 we will expand our endeavors to encourage greater diversity of classified staff and upper management in the district.

Our Committee is composed of 5 citizen members, representatives from the Berkeley Federation of Teachers, the Union of Berkeley Administrators, Local One and a Berkeley High School student representative. In addition we have had regular attendance by Superintendent Jack McLaughlin, Associate Superintendent Frank Brunetti, Associate Superintendent Chris Lim and School Board members Terry Doran and Shirley Issel. We greatly appreciate the commitment of all the district staff who have been actively involved and have attended our meetings faithfully.

From our attendance rosters we note that twenty different community members have been in attendance over the eight meetings we have held so far. There has also been great interest in our committee work by community organizations such as Latinos Unidos de Berkeley and Concerned Citizens of Berkeley High.

From our meetings we have learned a great deal about the procedures and application process for employment by the district. In addition we have heard about the many legal issues surrounding affirmative action, diversity and Proposition 209. Some of our invited guests to meetings have included Sheila Jordan, Alameda County Superintendent of Schools, Principals, Neil Smith and Theresa Saunders, District Legal Counsel Celia Ruiz, Laura Schulkind and Professor Pedro Noguera, Head of the Diversity Project.

SECTION II: COMMITTEE'S WORK AND ACTIVITIES

The committee has been engaged in the following initiatives and activities:

1. Discussion with Principals. The Committee is interested in finding ways to streamline the District's hiring process, and increase the number of qualified applicants that will reflect the diversity of the student population. The first step the committee took was to meet with Principals Neil Smith, King Middle School and Theresa Saunders, Berkeley High School. Smith and Saunders explained the recruitment and hiring process/strategies they use which include but are not limited to (a) phone calls to schools/colleges; (b) reviewing applications received by the District; (c) contacting all applicants by telephone; (d) hold panel interviews with teachers; and (e) meet with interview panel or department chairs for feedback and candidate selection.

Some of the concerns expressed are: (a) applicants telling principals that their applications are on file when in reality they are not on file; (b) lack of a standard process followed by both the Personnel Office and every principal.

2. Student Achievement Gap. Dr. Pedro Noguera, a UC Berkeley professor and Head of the Diversity Project, was invited to discuss the Diversity Project at Berkeley High, specifically the student achievement gap component of the study. Research findings show that: (a) zip code patterns correlate with students' GPA; (b) almost all African Americans who take pre-algebra courses have an 80% failure rate, and they are doomed, because they will not complete college-type courses; (c) in terms of equity of student disciplinary actions, such as suspensions and referrals, research findings have shown that there is a disproportionate number of students receiving disciplinary actions who are students of color, poor students and students who are behind academically; (d) what determines which students end up at East Campus (e.g., Berkeley High Alternative Program Center)? Is there an attendance problem? Or, are they behind academically? (e) there is a shortage of ESL teachers. About one-third of Berkeley High School's students' primary language is not English.

3. Strategies for Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Teachers. The committee has identified the following recruitment strategies: (a) begin recruiting teachers in early spring; (b) further develop and publicize Internship Programs; (c) look at partnerships, such as Cal-State Hayward partnership with Oakland Unified School District. Cal-State Hayward has a self-contained, outreach program and training center that is open to teacher interns. Instructors are available to provide direct services to school sites. They are currently providing services to Oakland, West Contra Costa and New Haven. They soon will be starting a program in Hayward; (d) recruit individuals who are starting second-careers; (e) expand paid internship programs; (f) continue to offer instructional/mentor teacher support to interns and new teachers while they are teaching; (g) recruit U.C. Berkeley graduates for teaching positions and provide them with emergency teachings credentials.

4. Alameda County Office of Education. Sheila Jordan, Superintendent, Alameda County Office of Education shared information with the committee about County resources that may be offered to the District with regard to creating a diverse teaching staff. Among the suggestions were: (a) going into schools and talking with paraprofessionals who are

thinking about going into teaching; (b) talking with teachers who want to become administrators; (c) looking at people who are retiring and who are thinking about teaching as a second career; (d) looking at linking schools to UC Berkeley in the areas of Math and Science for purposes of re-invigorating existing teachers or offering training to those going into the teaching field; and (e) looking at community businesses and asking for help and/or starting partnerships.

5. **BUSD Legal Counsel.** The Committee met with the District Legal Counsel, Ms. Celia Ruiz, and Ms. Laura Schulkind, Attorneys at Law with Ruiz & Sperow, LLP. Topics discussed were legal issues surrounding affirmative action, diversity, proposition 209, and retention of a diverse staff. With their assistance the Committee reviewed the recent Utilization/Representation Data Analysis of BUSD Teacher Ethnic Comparison to Selected County and California Teacher Pool data. The Committee reviewed BUSD utilization/representative data analysis and statistics and developed a policy to do target recruitment and outreach.

SECTION III: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Board approve and adopt the new policy concerning Hiring and Recruitment of a qualified diverse staff. (See attached) This document is essential in setting the priority and importance of having a diverse staff in the District. Working with the District's Legal team we have crafted a policy document that is assertive, progressive, and legally defensible.
2. To aid the recruitment process, principals should be given approval to start the hiring process as soon as possible by the District administration. Working with the unions and staff the administration should determine projected vacancies early in the year in order to allow site managers to begin the hiring process in a timely manner. In order to implement this recommendation the District must establish a position control system that would contain information on all approved and budgeted positions.
3. The Personnel Department should be allocated funds in order to carry out an aggressive recruitment campaign. In order to reach a diverse pool of applicants the Personnel Department should be given a budget that will allow them to advertise job announcements in a variety of newspapers and journals and would allow personnel representatives and department administrators to attend job fairs throughout the state. Also, the District's web page should be used to post job announcements, download job applications, and allow applicants to apply on-line.
4. Standardize the application process including any budget allocation needed. An applicant tracking system needs to be implemented to guarantee that every applicant that applies for a position in the District is notified that his or her application was received. This tracking system should include post interview notification.
5. The Teacher Intern Program should be expanded with Hayward State with appropriate mentoring and academic support to further the District's goal of cultivating a diverse and highly qualified teaching staff.

6. Formalize a teacher internship program with UC Berkeley.

7. The Board should direct the Superintendent to investigate and report back to the Board the advantages and disadvantages of using Alameda County Office of Education to assist with screening applicant credentials or other personnel resources. Currently, several districts in the county are using the services of the Office of Education to supplement their human resource needs.

SECTION IV: PLANS FOR 2000

1. Review the status of District recruiting efforts and recommend outreach improvements including any funding requirements.

2. Review District hiring practices and procedures to insure responsiveness to all applicants, and make recommendations to insure that staff is selected who will maximize the achievement of all Berkeley students.

3. Review District strategies to retain employees and recommend improvements.

4. Develop new approaches to increasing the pool of staff who can provide maximum educational opportunities for Berkeley's diverse student body. One approach may be to start a "Future Teacher's Club" at Berkeley High School.

5. Review instructional and administrative practices and make recommendations to improve multi-cultural sensitivity.

6. Address teachers' pay scale: not competitive -goes to recruitment issues.

7. Statewide credential program.

8. Diversity of Classified Staff and Upper Management.

SECTION V: CONCLUSION

To help carry out the mission of this committee we ask for the Superintendent's and Board's leadership to implement these recommendations in order to support diversity and multiculturalism in our district.

11/23/99