

# **BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**TO:** William Huyett, Superintendent  
**FROM:** Neil Smith, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services  
Susan Craig, Ed.D., Director, Student Services  
**DATE:** April 13, 2011  
**SUBJECT:** Status Report on the Response to Weapons on Campus

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Recent incidents involving Berkeley High School and B-Tech students in possession of firearms require an immediate response, as these incidents are of serious concern to the District and the community of Berkeley. Ensuring the safety of BUSD students and staff is of paramount importance to all of us. In addition to the Parent and Community Forum on March 28, a special Board meeting was held on March 30 to allow the Board to hear and respond to concerns regarding this issue. At that meeting, staff agreed to bring to the Board a progress report on the steps being taken to address the presence of weapons on campus.

### Safety Committee

The Superintendent has established an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Safety to address the issue of weapons on campus. The members include six staff members (four from the secondary schools and two from the central office), four parents and two high school students. This committee is charged with studying the following security issues and presenting recommendations to the Superintendent to be implemented by the opening of school in the fall:

- Identification badges for students and staff
- Procedures for visitors to campus
- Limited closed campus
- A community school in Berkeley
- A review of a security assessment of the campus.

The Board may also request the establishment of a permanent District Safety Committee to provide input on long-term actions to improve safety in all BUSD schools.

### Security Assessment

Internal: BHS Administration has reviewed the on-site coverage provided by the Safety Officers during the school day and has redesigned their assignments to ensure that there are hourly patrols of all restrooms and other out of the way areas on campus. In addition, staff has noted the need for doors that lock from the inside, allowing teachers to secure their rooms without having to enter the hallway to lock the doors. BHS administration and

BUSD Maintenance and Operations are developing a schedule to install interior locks on classroom doors this spring.

External: Staff is arranging for an outside organization that specializes in school security assessments to conduct an assessment of security procedures and the campus at BHS using the standards identified by the National Crime Prevention Council. The results of the assessment will be reviewed by the Superintendent's Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Safety as well as the BHS Administration.

#### Additional Staffing

The two additional Safety Officers who were recently added at Berkeley High School are continuing until the external assessment is completed and the need for safety personnel is analyzed.

The additional Safety Officer who was added to B-Tech approximately one month ago is continuing through the end of the school year.

The Berkeley Police Department is now assigning a Resource Officer to work at BHS five days a week. BPD previously provided coverage four days each week.

There is an additional part-time administrator at Berkeley High School for the remainder of the school year specifically to coordinate and implement the steps listed here to reduce weapons on campus.

#### Staff Training Currently Scheduled

BHS has scheduled two one-hour trainings in April with BPD for administrators and safety officers on Search and Seizure and Tactical Emergency Procedures including Radio Communication.

Four BHS safety officers have signed up for the 40 hour training on Conflict Mediation over the next two week-ends facilitated by SEEDS.

All middle and high school Safety Officers will attend a three-day workshop during the week of June 20 led by the Institute for Campus Safety, an agency that specializes in training school staff responsible for safety and security.

#### Student Education and Input

Administrators at Berkeley High School have recently met with all students in their history classes and explained the rules and

consequences of weapons on campus, the dangers of weapons, and the ways students can confidentially report information about weapons and other dangerous situations at school.

Staff facilitated focus groups with students to learn from students the possible reasons some students are bringing guns and weapons into campus and to allow students the opportunity to express their concerns.

#### Transitional Support for Specific Students Entering BHS

A Teacher on Special Assignment at BHS and a Counselor at B-Tech are assuming responsibility for ensuring support for entering students who are on probation, living in group homes or foster care, or reentering after expulsion. These staff members will also monitor the students' progress to help them succeed in school. Central Office staff is researching model transitional processes designed for these students that could be immediately implemented in BUSD.

#### Board Policies

The Superintendent will lead the Board Policy Subcommittee in reviewing current policies on weapons, harassment and bullying. Recommendations for revised or additional policies will be presented to the Board.

#### Communications

The Superintendent has notified the Communications Committee to include protocols and channels of communication during crises and emergencies in the proposed District Communications Plan.

An anonymous tip telephone hotline to report weapons on campus - 1-866-SPEAK UP - has been created and publicized to students and parents; a text message option will soon be added.

The Administration will provide monthly updates on progress in this area at Board meetings in May and June this spring.

#### **POLICY/CODE**

Board Policy 5131.7

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Approximately \$89,000 for additional staff and trainings

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Receive for information.