

Berkeley's 2020 Vision: Equity in Education (7.16.18)

Overview

Berkeley's 2020 Vision: Equity in Education (“*Berkeley's 2020 Vision*”) is a citywide initiative that strives to eliminate racial disparities in academic achievement in Berkeley’s public schools. Berkeley has one of the nation’s widest achievement gaps between African American and Latino/a/x students and their white peers.ⁱ *Berkeley's 2020 Vision* seeks to eliminate these disparities through a shared community commitment to this goal: that all young people in Berkeley grow up with equitable opportunities to achieve high outcomes and realize their full potential.

Berkeley's 2020 Vision was formally established in 2008 when the City of Berkeley (COB) joined with United in Action (a community-driven, multi-ethnic coalition), the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD), and other key community stakeholders to issue a “call for urgent action to make educational success, equity, and outcomes...a communitywide priority.”ⁱⁱ The partners set a goal of high academic achievement for all Berkeley students, while placing a priority on closing the “opportunity gap”ⁱⁱⁱ for African American and Latino/a/x children and youth.

This initiative rests on the belief that the responsibility for ensuring that all children and youth have what they need to fulfill their potential extends beyond school walls to the entire community – to public agencies, community organizations, businesses, families, and more. To this end, *Berkeley's 2020 Vision's* stakeholders collaborate to align and strengthen systems, to leverage resources, and to create and increase access to opportunities that support young people’s success.

Berkeley’s City Manager’s Office coordinates *Berkeley's 2020 Vision*, in partnership with BUSD, Berkeley City College (BCC), and the University of California at Berkeley (UCB). Public agency, education, nonprofit, and other partners lend content expertise, shape the direction of this initiative, and represent the students and families they serve.

Local funders and institutional partners have aligned their funding to advance the goals of *Berkeley's 2020 Vision*. With this support, nonprofits and community agencies design and implement programs and services across Berkeley to “move the needle” on key indicators of student well-being and academic attainment.

Through these collective efforts, *Berkeley's 2020 Vision* strives to bridge our community’s “opportunity gap” by providing equitable learning opportunities for all Berkeley children and youth.



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Our Priorities

Too many young people in Berkeley -- and a disproportionate share of our African American and Latino/a/x children and youth -- lack access to the resources and supports they need to succeed in school. *Berkeley's 2020 Vision's* partners are striving to close this "opportunity gap" by working together to expand and strengthen our work across six priority areas: Kindergarten Readiness, 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency, 8th Grade Math Proficiency, College and Career Readiness, Improved School Attendance and Health, and Community and Family Engagement.

These priorities span the course of a child's early education through high school graduation. Each priority is associated with a critical benchmark, demonstrated by research to link closely with a child's well-being and later academic success:

- **Kindergarten Readiness** closely aligns with future attainment and well-being in school and in life. Starting with prenatal care, early experiences and learning provide children with fundamental skills and foundations for life-long academic and socio-emotional success.^{iv}
- **3rd Grade Reading Proficiency** is the primary predictor of academic success and high school graduation. Children who learn to read by 3rd grade are more likely to complete high school and less likely to experience socio-emotional and behavioral problems. Reading by 3rd grade opens the doors to a world of learning opportunities as the transition begins from "learning to read" to "reading to learn."^v
- **8th Grade Math Proficiency** lays the foundation for succeeding in an increasingly collaborative and technical professional world. Students who master basic math are more likely to be successful in advanced math, which is strongly connected to future college enrollment and graduation.^{vi}
- **College and Career Readiness** empowers young people to complete high school, equipped to seize positive opportunities to advance in their education and/or career. Higher levels of educational attainment correlate with better health and well-being, and greater economic and career success.^{vii}
- **Improved School Attendance and Health** are important because children need to be in school to succeed in school. Students who are chronically absent miss out on important learning and can face a steep uphill climb to catch up with their peers. Chronic absences can also be a symptom of other challenges facing children or their families, including health problems (such as asthma), emotional trauma, housing stability, and parental stress.^{viii}
- **Community and Family Engagement** – including families, schools, government, nonprofits, businesses, academia, the faith community, and beyond – is perhaps the most critical component of fulfilling our shared commitment to the younger generation. Only through our steadfast engagement can *Berkeley's 2020 Vision* ensure that all Berkeley children and youth grow up with equitable opportunities to learn and thrive.

These priorities are inter-related; for example, how well children read in 3rd grade is connected to how prepared they are to start kindergarten and how consistently they attend school.^{ix} Measurable indicators aligned with each of these priorities capture how well we as a community are doing at fulfilling our commitment to educational equity for Berkeley children and youth.

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Our Approach to Closing the "Opportunity Gap"

1 Kindergarten Readiness

Goal: All children enter kindergarten ready to learn.

Strategies: Increase access to affordable care for children ages 0-5; ensure high quality care for children ages 0-5; educate parents/guardians of children ages 0-5* about healthy child development and preparing for kindergarten; develop trauma-sensitive school and care environments for children ages 0-5*.

Indicator: % of kindergarteners who are "ready to learn" as demonstrated on BUSD's Screening Assessment of sound/letter identification and rote counting.

Lead Partners:* BUSD, COB *includes prenatal

2 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency

Goal: Every student reads at or above grade level by the end of 3rd grade.

Strategies: Expand resources to support early grade literacy programs during school hours, extended day learning, and summer; provide tutoring, mentoring, and other academic support in and out of school; increase access to diverse, engaging, culturally relevant books and stories; empower families and community members to participate in and support literacy development.

Indicator: % of 3rd graders testing at target or higher on the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project assessment.

Lead Partners: BUSD, COB, UCB

3 8th Grade Math Proficiency

Goal: Every student performs math at or above grade level by the end of 8th grade.

Strategies: Provide professional development for K-8 math teachers, with a focus on middle school instruction; provide tutoring, mentoring, and other academic support in and out of school; empower families and community members to participate in and support math proficiency.

Indicator: % of 8th graders at baseline proficiency or above on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Summative (end-of-year) test.

Lead Partners: BUSD, UCB

4 Improved School Attendance and Health

Goal: Every student attends school regularly.

Strategies: Promote a positive TK-12 attendance culture; identify absent students quickly and offer supports to help students get back to class; provide skill-building and youth leadership activities; provide school- and community-based behavioral health services; deliver other strategies to address children and youth at risk of chronic absenteeism, school suspensions, and/or police contact.

Indicator: % of students who miss 10% or more of the school year.

Lead Partners: BUSD, COB

5 College and Career Readiness

Goal: Every student is prepared for success in both college and career.

Strategies: Expose K-12 students to post-secondary opportunities; provide cohort-based and 1:1 academic interventions and social supports; provide college preparedness and transition support; offer structured, hands-on opportunities to experience work; support dual enrollment and activities that create post-secondary momentum and degree/certificate completion; offer access to college scholarships (e.g., Berkeley Promise^{xi}).

Indicator: % of HS graduates who complete (with a "C" or higher) A-G courses required for UC/CSU admissions.

Lead Partners: BCC, BUSD, COB, UCB

6 Community and Family Engagement

Goal: Community stakeholders collaborate to strengthen and align systems, leverage resources, and create opportunities that support the success of all children and youth. Families and youth are engaged partners in efforts to advance educational equity.

Strategies: Under development.

Lead Partners: BUSD, COB

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References and Notes

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- ⁱ Reardon, S.F., Kalogrides, D., & Shores, K. (Forthcoming). The Geography of Racial/Ethnic Test Score Gaps. *The American Journal of Sociology* (cepa.stanford.edu/content/geography-racialethnic-test-score-gaps)
- ⁱⁱ City of Berkeley Resolution, "2020 Vision for Berkeley's Children and Youth," June 24, 2008.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Opportunity gap refers to the differences in resources and opportunities available to students depending on their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other factors, and describes how these inequities often perpetuate lower educational attainment for certain groups of students.
- ^{iv} <http://www.cafc.ca.gov/>
- ^v Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*, 2010.
- ^{vi} <https://www.childtrends.org/indicators/mathematics-proficiency/>
- ^{vii} Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Commission to Build a Healthier America, *Education Matters for Health*, Sept. 2009.
- ^{viii} <http://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/the-problem/>
- ^{ix} Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Early Warning Confirmed! A Research Update on Third Grade Reading*, 2013.
- ^x The term "lead partners" here indicates which of the four main institutional stakeholders is coordinating the overall work plan for achieving a given goal. Many other partners play significant roles in each of these efforts.
- ^{xi} *Berkeley Promise* is a college access and matriculation scholarship initiative that supports low-income and/or first-generation college candidates with degree and/or certificate completion. It is led by the Berkeley Mayor's Office in partnership with BCC, COB, BUSD, and others.