

Dear Berkeley Community Members:

We need to inform you of a direction that Principal Slempp wants to take BHS. The Principal brought a proposal to the Shared Governance Committee (SGC) to eliminate science labs and to use the BSEP enhancement funds that support that program for other activities. On December 8, the SGC voted to support his proposal.

This proposal flies in the face of the BSEP mandate and the 2020 Vision. The science labs during 0 and 7<sup>th</sup> periods provide weekly enrichment and satisfy UC and CSU requirements that college prep science classes offer 20% of instructional time for hands-on lab activities. In addition, the extra lab periods provide additional time to support struggling students. The science program meets the goals articulated by both BSEP and the 2020 Vision providing enrichment, support for all students and UC requirements.




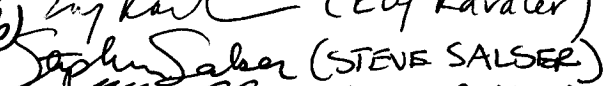
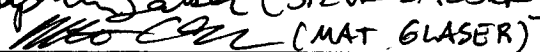
The extra time BSEP funding supports allows BHS to maintain an outstanding AP science program. Many of our students take and succeed in three AP level sciences courses as first year courses. Our students' performance on the AP exams well exceeds the national average. These courses would have to become 2<sup>nd</sup> year offerings if the labs were eliminated. Approximately 600 students per year enroll in our AP programs. All of our students take Advanced Biology, most take chemistry, physics, or environmental science or anatomy and the extra time provides the support students need to develop a deep understanding of these topics.


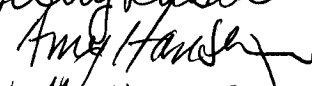


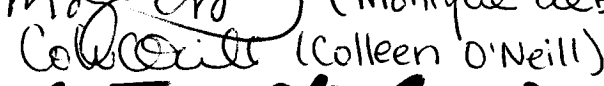

The elimination of these labs would reduce instructional time by more than 21% (30% in AP classes). Such devastating cuts would force science teachers to eliminate many of the labs that enrich the experience for students by having them "do science". These cuts would result in the reduction in coverage of the state standards and the inability to effectively use instructional strategies that support student learning. This flies in the face of the current push for equity and the 2020 Vision. It is the very students Principal Slempp wants to serve who will suffer. To close the achievement gap, students require more instruction, not less; more time with qualified instructors, not less.

Principal Slempp wants BSEP to remove support for science labs and then to allow him to redistribute the funds to new or other courses. Which programs or courses are, at present "unspecified". The SGC is to review the use of these funds through an "equity lens". Such unclear, unspecific "visioning" has become the standard mode of operation for this administration. At a time when science education is being touted as a top priority in our nation, a cut to our program makes no sense. It makes even less sense in the absence of an alternative project for science to be compared against.

Please speak up on this issue and let Mr. Slempp know that you will not accept the squandering of parcel tax dollars on unspecified and scattered programs that do not nearly provide the same effectiveness as science labs in enriching curriculum, providing equity and preparing all of our students for college. If you are interested in having your voice heard, please call the principal or school board or email or sign and send the letter provided.

Members of the Science Department

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