

## Closing the Opportunity Gap: Defining a healthy school to build a healthy community

**Berkeley, CA, Berkeley High School Green Academy**  
12th Grade Composition and Eco Literacy



### ISSUE

The new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) dramatically changes the way public education will be funded in California, presenting an opportunity for more local control, greater transparency, and equity. Achieving these promises necessitates authentic community input in the creation of Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAPs) to identify goals and determine the way funding will be spent. As the recipients of LCAPs, Berkeley Unified School District recognizes that creating pathways for authentic student voice in the LCAP process is essential to the success of this policy. Over the past semester, seniors at Berkeley High Green Academy have been taking action to identify key priorities and strategies for the way Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) should allocate LCFF funding to create a healthy and equitable Berkeley High.

**“LCFF presents opportunity as an organizing tool and leveraging point to put many ideas and goals into action that have been talked about for years. Y-PLAN builds the capacity of the community itself to define local priorities – and most important, it is a vehicle to get authentic youth voice in this important process, and input from a community that is typically disenfranchised.”**  
– Y-PLAN Client, BUSD School Board Member

### QUESTION

**How can Berkeley Unified School District spend LCFF funding to create a healthier, equitable learning environment and close the opportunity gap within BUSD?**

### COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

**Y-PLAN Instructor:** Kate Trimlett, Dagny Dingman

**Students:** 12th Grade Green Academy

**Client:** Berkeley Unified School District Board of Education, City of Berkeley

### YOUTH DRIVEN DATA AND INSIGHTS

- There is inequitable access to AP Courses in small schools
- Young people want classroom experience to be directly linked to career and college preparation
- Elements of the physical environment have a direct impact on student learning, concentration, feelings of comfort, and school culture

### RECOMMENDATIONS

LCAPs require districts to set annual goals in eight state priority areas. Through school-based research including 200 student surveys, asset mapping, and policy research, students identified Basic Necessities, Student Engagement, and Course Access as top priority areas to develop recommendations for LCAP.

#### **Priority #1 Basic Necessities**

- Fix water fountains to increase water consumption and student health, while still saving the environment.
- Supply cleaner bathrooms to make students feel more comfortable at BHS.
- Use solar energy systems to provide high air quality for students so that they feel comfortable in school and thus more engaged.

#### **Priority #5 Student Engagement**

- Increase ethnic studies in all curriculum to improve student engagement.
- Create reciprocal communication systems for teachers take into account student feedback to improve their teaching, thus increasing student engagement in the learning process.
- Include one-to-one technology in the classroom to keep students engaged and close the technology gap.

#### **Priority #7 Course Access**

- Connect school learning to students' future careers through technical training and internships.
- Increase access to AP classes in small schools (e.g.), and build a stronger learning environment holding students to a higher standard and develop the learning skills to help them throughout their high school experience in order for all students to have equal opportunities at BHS.
- Implement career technical education for non-college track students that leads to jobs after high school.
- Create Latino Studies concentration at BHS to ensure that we are providing cultural and educational success for our students.

### NEXT STEPS

Students presented proposals to Berkeley Unified School District Board of Educator, which who will use this youth data in the final iteration of the BUSD LCAP to be completed by July 2014.

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