



Berkeley City Council

CONSENT CALENDAR

March 25, 2014

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmembers Laurie Capitelli, Linda Maio, and Darryl Moore

Subject: Refer to the Budget Process: Recurring Funding for Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATOD) Counselors at Berkeley High School, Longfellow and King Middle Schools

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the budget process half funding for two full-time Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATOD) counselors: one full-time counselor for Berkeley High School and one full-time counselor for both King and Longfellow Middle Schools. The other half funding will be paid by Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

\$70,000 annually.

INTRODUCTION

In July of 2013 this office, in conjunction with the office of Councilman Arreguin, requested that the City Manager, the Berkeley Police Department (BPD), the BUSD, and the BUSD Board coordinate efforts to address the use and abuse of marijuana and alcohol among Berkeley's school age youth. This request was compelled by the growing data gleaned from successive California Healthy Kids Surveys (CHKS) revealing Berkeley youths to have a significantly high level of marijuana and consumption ([see July 2, 2013 ATOD revised referral http://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City\\_Council/2013/07Jul/Documents/2013-07-02\\_Item\\_11\\_Marijuana\\_Smoking\\_Tobacco\\_Smoking.aspx](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2013/07Jul/Documents/2013-07-02_Item_11_Marijuana_Smoking_Tobacco_Smoking.aspx)). As a result of this request, the Deputy City Manager gave a report to City Council on February 11, 2014, giving an overview of the current procedures around ATOD use on BHS campus and suggesting two significant steps to address substance use at BHS: 1) create a new protocol for discouraging substance use in Civic Center Park; and 2) hire a full-time ATOD counselor for the school. The proposed protocol would allow the police department to escort students to the On Campus Intervention (OCI) office instead of citing or arresting them. The recommended hire of a full-time ATOD intervention counselor, stationed at BHS in OCI, could address students' psycho-social needs, create individual treatment plans, and refer students to additional resources, if necessary. This proposed protocol establishes a procedure for the BPD to take students to BHS and addresses the current 4 – 6 week wait students have in order to see the intervention counselor who is presently at the school only one day each week.

This referral picks up where Deputy City Manager Roger's report left off in focusing on the need for a full-time ATOD counselor, and extending that rationale to Longfellow and King middle schools, which currently have no ATOD counselors. Berkeley Technology Academy already has a full-time ATOD counselor, and Willard middle school has a part-time counselor. Providing ATOD counselors at all school sites is a way to address the pervasive need for marijuana and alcohol intervention throughout the entire city and district equally.

### BACKGROUND

The July 2013 Consent Item already illuminated the pervasive drug and alcohol use by 11<sup>th</sup> graders as reported in the 2012 CHKS data report. It should also be noted that not only is ATOD use widespread throughout BHS, in many cases the level of use is extreme. According to that same survey:

- In the last 30 days, of Berkeley 9<sup>th</sup> graders surveyed:  
Approximately 22 students reported using marijuana and/or drinking alcohol at least 20 or more days.
- In the last 30 days, of Berkeley 11<sup>th</sup> graders surveyed:  
Approximately 50 students reported using marijuana and/or drinking alcohol at least 20 or more days.

While half of each of the groups noted above used those substances while on school property, the other half did not. In short, there were, and most likely still are,\* a significant number of students whose level of drug and alcohol use is extreme and a serious problem both at home and at school.\*\* Dr. Joseph E. Marshall of the Alive and Free Training Institute identifies drug and alcohol addiction as two of the nine actions that put young people at risk for promoting violent behavior and shutting down each individual's potential to succeed and build a future.

While drug and alcohol consumption in middle school is far less than at BHS, the CHKS data report also notes that by far the most prevalent age of onset for ATOD use is 13 – 14 years, i.e. late middle school. Early intervention in middle school increases the chances that substance abusing students will steer clear of heavier use in high school and recognize the positive options available to them at school and within the community. According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy's fact sheet on the benefits of early substance abuse treatment and intervention, "intervening early, before drug use or excessive alcohol use progresses to addiction, is among the most cost effective ways to address substance abuse, reduce its costs to society, and improve public health."<sup>1</sup> This same report stated that every dollar spent in early intervention and treatment saved several times that amount in healthcare, law enforcement and criminal

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<sup>1</sup> "Cost Benefits of Investing Early in Substance Abuse Treatment," Fact Sheet from the Office of National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President, May 2012, [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/defaultfiles/ondcp/Fact\\_Sheets/investing\\_in\\_treatment\\_5-23-12.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/defaultfiles/ondcp/Fact_Sheets/investing_in_treatment_5-23-12.pdf).

justice costs later on, and contributed to a decline in numbers of arrests and felony convictions.

Pervasive and extreme levels of drug use pose serious problems for the community at large and BHS. For society the consequences of drug and alcohol addiction create challenges to public health and public safety as well as economic burdens on our healthcare systems. Within individual families, substance abusing youth create hardships that challenge social ties and threaten the home setting, often resulting in the increased financial load of drug treatment that many families are unable to manage. At school these same students are often the one who are at risk for poor academic performances and getting into trouble.

For these reasons, then, it makes sense for the City of Berkeley and the BUSD to collaborate in funding drug intervention counselors at all the middle schools and both high schools. Providing half-time ATOD intervention counselors at both Longfellow and King middle schools, in addition to Willard, offers the ability to reach out early to substance abusing students *before* their problems become severe. Providing extreme substance-abusing BHS students the services they need will limit the number of students who require referrals to Berkeley Technology Academy.

\*This year's CHKS was just recently administered. The results should be available early summer.

\*\*This combined number of students is only half the total number of students using substances as only two of the four grades were surveyed.

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