
"2020 Vision": A Cover for Charter Schools

Keep Berkeley Schools Public & Integrated:
No Charter Schools!

Demand Equality for Black & Latina/o
Students in Berkeley

Fulfill the Promise of Integration:

Smaller class-size, no more tracking, teach more critical thinking, teach less to the tests, structure frank discussions of how race impacts students experiences in the Berkeley Public Schools

*Reject the 2020 Vision Committee's
Recommendation for REALM*

The 2020 Vision Plan, which will be voted on by the BUSD School Board and whose stated goal is to "close the achievement gap," functions as a false cover for charter schools, which would lead to the resegregation of our district. The 2020 Vision Plan is promoting the charter school REALM ("Revolutionary Education and Learning Movement"), a second-class, substandard charter school for black and Latina/o students. (Draft Recommendations Appendix, Goal 1.) The school would function outside of Berkeley's school integration plan and ask us to abandon our commitment to integration and return to Jim Crow segregation dressed up as "innovation." The 2020 Plan uses deliberately vague and deceptive language like "innovation" to promote the development of a segregated charter.

The 2020 Planning Team's support for the REALM charter consciously deceives the communities of Berkeley because there is virtually no support for charter schools in our city. The Committee decided to remove the word "charter" from the Draft document to hide REALM's true objective of opening a charter school. They know full well that there is strong support for integrated public education throughout Berkeley, especially in the black and Latina/o communities.

The 2020 Planning Team is functioning as a public relations (PR) committee for the promoters of charters, and REALM specifically. Victor Díaz, the promoter of REALM and the person who would benefit most from its opening, is on this same committee that is supposed to decide on his charter school proposal. His presence on the committee severely compromises its credibility. No one seeking to do business with the District (have his own charter school) should be on any school-district body that recommends charter schools, let alone his own.

Black and Latina/o and poor students of all races have the right to demand educational policies that can begin the process of closing the achievement/opportunity gap. The discussion that has been opened up in Berkeley and throughout the nation on how to address educational inequality for black and Latina/o students, means that Berkeley's black and Latina/o communities are in a powerful position to put forward real solutions and to win positive systemic changes in Berkeley that can be models for the nation. We need to fight for the programs we need to deepen integration – ending tracking, getting smaller class sizes, teaching critical thinking, giving a wider choice of electives and support programs for all students, structuring frank discussions on campus climate and how race affects students' experiences at school – not follow a recipe for the destruction of public education and integration in our city. The draft recommendation for REALM must be rejected.

If we go down this road, the problems of neighborhood segregation and differences in socio-economic status based on race, which we are still striving to overcome, will deepen. The vulnerability of our undocumented immigrant students and neighbors to harassment and mistreatment will increase. Dr. King's vision for America has defined our identity and made us a community. We cannot abandon the dream now.

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