BCPTA Questions and Answers - October 2026

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

I heard that California schools had until June 30th to select one of 4 approved reading screeners. What screening software did BUSD choose and how will it be implemented?
Answer: mClass/Dibels through Amplify. It was implemented last school year, with the first administration in October. For 2026-2027, we will universally screen all K-2 students in January and deliver results to parents. We continue to progress monitor through mClass/Dibels for all students who were identified as below grade level this year or last year.

Why is Math 3 in 6th grade being eliminated next year? What will replace it?
Answer: Background: Math 6(3) combines 3 years of MS math into one school year, and students progress to Algebra in 7th grade so they can complete Geometry in 8th grade and begin Algebra II in 9th grade. Our HS team identified (through accelerated cohort tracking) that Math 6(3) students were hitting barriers in Algebra II and beyond. HS & MS teachers identified Geometry as the ideal course to accelerate students in MS instead of Math 6, 7, & 8. Additionally, taking Algebra in 7th grade and returning to Algebra II in 9th grade was identified as problematic for students. (See next question & Answer)

How will you meet the needs of advanced math students?
Answer: New Pathway: The new pathway will group students into two tracks instead of three. Continuing the Math 6(2) and Math 7(2) pathway into Algebra in 8th grade will allow students to receive more instruction in foundational curriculum in Math 7 and Math 8. Geometry will be the acceleration course that can be taken concurrently in 8th grade spring semester, over the summer between 8th & 9th, or concurrently in 9th grade.
Desired Outcomes: We will reverse the current decline in enrollment in our advanced HS math classes (Pre-Calc, AP Stats, & AP Calc AB/BC). We will also see much higher success rates for students in Algebra II. We reduce the burden on students and families to arrange tutoring in Algebra II, as students will have just taken Algebra in 8th grade prior to starting Algebra II in 9th.

What is the BUSD policy on teaching cursive?
Answer: The California State Standards include the skill of writing in cursive or joined italics in both grades 3 and 4.

While the district's overall performance on the 2026 Smarter Balanced assessments of math and English language arts has basically held steady from 2025 (-0.86% on English and 1.39% on math), there has been a trend at some of the elementary schools of decreasing performance since 2023 in the 5–10% range. Why is this happening? What is the district doing to address these declines, especially at the schools that are not receiving Title 1 (and similar) funding intended to address these types of academic disparities?

Answer: While the district's overall performance on the 2026 Smarter Balanced Assessments has remained relatively stable, individual school results can vary over time. Differences in student cohorts from year to year can influence individual school results, and at the elementary level, small changes in enrollment, student mobility, and student needs can noticeably affect overall performance rates. To address these trends, schools conduct site data chats and learning walks to monitor student progress and adjust instructional and intervention plans as needed. In addition, all schools implement a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework to provide targeted support for students requiring additional assistance, regardless of Title I status. During the 2026-27 school year, the district is also advancing a districtwide focus on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), engaging in an elementary-level mathematics textbook adoption process, and working with instructional leaders to plan the implementation of literacy professional learning through AB 121. Together, these efforts are designed to strengthen instruction and support improved outcomes for all students.

Instructional Materials & Classroom Activities

Each year, my middle school student is issued a set of textbooks for at-home use. She has never utilized one of these books in the last 2.5 years. Lesson plans do not even seem to match the textbooks. Instead, packets are utilized and online documents are posted that do not relate in any discernable way to the information in the textbooks - I have opened them to see if they can be used for studying and the answer is no. I have heard the same thing from high schoolers. Last year, textbook collection started at least two weeks before spring finals started which clearly shows they are not of any assistance to students. Why are teachers requesting for textbooks to be issued and not utilizing them? For 7th grade, we received paperwork stating that the total for these textbooks was $425.00, meaning, if my student loses any of the books, I have to cover the cost. Why is this potential financial burden being put on families for something that is not being utilized? If the books will not be utilized, can I turn them in now? I get that the students may be required to have certain tools but I think these are wasted funds for the district and families until/unless they start being utilized?

Answer: California Education Code and BUSD Board Policy require that all students have access to standards-aligned instructional materials. As a result, schools distribute textbooks and other adopted materials to students even when classroom instruction incorporates digital resources, publisher tools, or other supplemental materials. The $425 amount referenced in the documentation reflects the replacement value of the textbook if it is lost or damaged. There is no cost as long as the materials are returned in acceptable condition.

BUSD expects teachers to utilize district-adopted instructional materials as the foundation of the curriculum. Because state guidelines allow schools to provide access through physical or digital formats, families who have questions about the need for a take-home textbook, rather than a set available in the classroom, should contact the site administration to ask for the policy for the course that is of concern. Our instructional services team is always available to answer questions or provide additional guidance for families.

A recent assignment for my middle school student was titled "Instagram Activity" and the instructions were "*create an original Instagram post that a character from the story might have posted...*". When I asked my student about it, I was told other teachers have given similar assignments using references to social media. While obviously students are not actually posting anything to Instagram or social media and I fully recognize that this is a teachers' effort to make activities interesting and relevant, why is it even being done? Especially when countries are blocking youth access, when the harmful effects are constantly being presented, when communities are working hard to keep kids safe and their mental health balances, it really feels like it is glorifying social media. Is there a way to ask teachers to not use social media or social media references as a tool, at least from TK-8?

Answer: We understand why some families may be concerned about references to social media in classroom assignments, particularly given ongoing conversations about youth mental health, online safety, and age-appropriate technology use. When teachers use a format such as an "*Instagram post*," the intent is typically not to promote social media, but rather to provide students with a familiar way to demonstrate their understanding of academic content, much like writing a diary entry, postcard, or newspaper article in previous generations.
That said, we value family feedback and recognize that people may have different views on whether these types of references are appropriate for younger students. We encourage you to share your thoughts with your teacher, principal, or the district, as parent perspectives help inform our ongoing conversations about instructional practices and student well-being. Our goal is always to balance engaging learning experiences with what families feel is best for their children.

Physical Education & Athletics

Bean run. For years, we have talked about other ways to grade middle school PE beyond the heavy focus on the mile run. Will you be reviewing middle school PE?

Answer: Middle school PE departments have continuously revised their running programs and assessment practices over recent years to focus on progression, form, and cardiovascular endurance rather than strictly speed:

- **Muir:** The run now occurs once every two weeks (down from every week). It starts with longer time intervals and works down to a 22–23 minute run focused on pacing and endurance. Students may walk if needed. Grading standards were adjusted within the last five years so that the run accounts for only 10–15% of the overall grade. Out of 1,370 students, only about 50 are currently not passing.
- **Huerta:** Teachers spend the first 3–4 weeks explicitly instructing students on running form. Runs occur on Mondays (in the morning due to period rotation), with the 25-minute or mile run taking place once a month. Modifications and accommodations are provided for students with disabilities.
- **Luther:** A 40-minute fitness run takes place every Tuesday, incorporating interval training, form instruction, and practical pacing strategies (such as demonstrating how brisk walking can yield up to 6 laps).

Elementary Preparation: Upper elementary PE teachers have identified a gap in stamina as students transition to middle school and are actively working to build cardiovascular endurance.

Why don't the PE teachers provide instruction about running and healthy form? Instead they just tell the kids to run.

Answer: We understand families' concerns and want to assure parents that running instruction and healthy technique are explicit components of our physical education curriculum. At the beginning of each school year, middle school PE teachers dedicate 3–4 weeks specifically to foundational instruction on proper running form, effective pacing strategies, and controlled breathing techniques during daily warm-ups.

This foundational teaching directly connects to our progressive endurance training practices across all middle schools. Through structured interval training, guided pacing, and individualized support and modifications, teachers help students safely build stamina, reduce the risk of injury, and develop confidence in their cardiovascular fitness over time.

Parents at both Burbank and JBHS have been very vocally upset over the last couple of years about their student athletes without a 6th period not being allowed to use the library to study during that time before beginning practice after school. They are required to leave campus and return, which many parents feel is both risky and a waste of time they could use completing homework. Is there some way to solve this issue to better serve our students?

Answer: We are working to identify funding to cover study/homework time in the JBHS and BHS Library during period six, two to three days a week. This will also require recruiting Teachers to cover this activity. The District is also looking at afterschool program funding sources to determine if we can make a program like this eligible for after school program funding in future years. Another suggestion is to have students opt into an elective class rather than take period six athletics if practices are not being held until the evening hours.

Special Education & Student Supports

How will our district be able to utilize the additional funds to Special Education passed in AB 126?

To strengthen services and resources for Burbank Unified School District students with disabilities the District intends to use additional special education funding provided through AB 126, as follows: Hiring and retaining qualified special-education teachers to provide consistent, individualized instruction. Recruiting, training and supporting paraeducators on IEP implementation, instructional assistance, accommodations and individual support needs. Expanding behavioral support and training for paraeducators and BIAs, with an emphasis on positive behavioral interventions, de-escalation, and appropriate supervision.

Providing appropriate classroom resources and related supports, including assistive technology and related services when required by a student's individualized plan.

Once we confirm the district's allocation, we will then develop a spending plan identifying personnel costs, additional classroom services, training and resources. The plan will distinguish funding used to maintain existing services from funding that will expand student support.

If a classroom has students with significant behavioral, academic, or sensory needs who are legally entitled to specific accommodations and support, but there are not enough adults available to provide those services, what steps will the district take to ensure that these students receive the support they are legally entitled to?

A staffing shortage does not remove our obligation to implement students' IEPs and/or meet Section 504 requirements. Students with significant behavioral, academic, or sensory needs must receive the services and accommodations required by their individualized plans.
If there is a vacancy, we will arrange for qualified interim coverage. Depending on the services involved, this may include trained substitutes, contracted providers, or reassignment of qualified personnel. Interim arrangements must meet the affected student's needs without preventing other students from receiving their required supports. Staff responsible for implementation will be informed of each student's accommodations, service requirements, and behavioral supports. In cases of unintentional missed or interrupted services, we will document the concern, communicate with the assigned team members, and work with the case manager responsible for resolving the missed service. We will also evaluate the educational impact and determine the corrective action necessary to resolve issues as quickly as possible.

School Scheduling, Facilities & Operations

High schools have 7th periods. Can middle schools have 7th periods? If not, is it only because of funding?

Answer: Our High Schools do not have a full complement of seven periods, there are selected classes offered zero period during each semester. The budget for staffing our high schools would not currently afford our high schools or middle schools having a full seven period schedule for all students. For middle schools we would need input from Principals regarding the programs that need additional meeting time to determine if that program could be included more formally in the after school program.

Replacing Stage curtains at all of the auditoriums in the district was on the bond list. What is the time frame for replacing the stage curtains with new curtains?

Answer: Our bond team met last week to discuss replacement of all elementary auditorium curtains. Although this was not scheduled in the current sequence of bond projects, we can move forward with adding it to the schedule and purchasing replacement curtains as part of our various modernization projects. We will work with our bond team to identify qualified vendors and obtain pricing for replacement and installation at all BUSD elementary schools.
Once we have a better understanding of the costs, availability, and installation requirements, we can establish a reasonable timeline for moving forward. We will provide updates as we gather pricing and develop a plan for implementation. We will also research the condition of the middle school and high school curtains.

With the growing likelihood that UC campuses will begin requiring (or at least allowing) the SATs again, will BUSD consider hosting the test on one of our campuses? Currently it's very difficult to secure a test date, and almost all "local" locations are around an hour away.

Answer: If UC and/or CSU begin requiring SATs, BUSD will apply to become a testing center. This is ultimately a decision made by the College Board.

Is it possible to get toilet seat cover for elementary school bathrooms?

Answer: Historically, we have not installed toilet seat cover dispensers in student restrooms, particularly at the elementary school level, due to ongoing maintenance concerns. Students tend to pull out large quantities of covers or dispose of entire stacks in the toilets, resulting in clogged plumbing, additional maintenance calls, and unnecessary repair costs.

If there is a particular issue at elementary schools generating an increasing need for toilet seat covers that can potentially be addressed through our site PBIS programs. Please inform your site Principal or the District if a particular problem is identified.