

4-15-13  
11:54 AM

Please return this application by email to Deborah Turner, [deborahturner@berkeley.net](mailto:deborahturner@berkeley.net), or in person to the Superintendent's office at 2020 Bonar Street, Suite 321 **by 4:00pm on April 15, 2013**. Late submissions will not be accepted.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Rao  
(Last Name)

Satish  
(First Name)

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(Middle Initial)

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Email: [satish@cs.berkeley.edu](mailto:satish@cs.berkeley.edu) How long have you lived in Berkeley? 14 years.

Please attach a document with your answers to the 9 questions below, along with your current resume or curriculum vitae. Do not submit any additional items. Please note that all materials submitted, with the exception of your personal contact information, will be available to the public.

Please answer the following questions (200 word limit each):

- 1. Why do you want to be a School Board Director?

I think I may be able help Berkeley schools improve academically.

- 2. What strengths would you bring to the School Board?

I am a Professor in Computer Science at UC Berkeley. I teach and doing research in optimization, and have worked as developer and manager in industry.

In my role on the SSC for Berkeley High, I have extensively read and shared research in education with other members of the committee.

As an instructor of large undergraduate courses, I explore and implement various strategies to enable my students to learn as much as possible; these include online forums, electronic access to course materials and homework feedback, one-day test grading, ample office hours, test reviews, and a laborious test making process.

As a member of the College of Engineering committee on Curriculum I have done the analysis with respect to setting Advanced Placement levels for our Engineering students. I am currently providing the predictions on the impact on quality and quantity for changing our GPA levels for admission from the College of Letter's and Sciences. I can quickly do such analysis and can

understand these analysis well when done by others. My number sense is quite good and I can follow financial information with reasonable acuity.

Finally, I have experience in supervision both first and second line so have a grasp of human resources policies.

3. What are your three top priorities for Berkeley public schools?

Berkeley high school is 100<sup>th</sup> out of a 100 in similar school API rankings, and Berkeley is number 3 out of a 100 in per pupil spending in those schools (I obtained this by processing the research data files from the CDE.) The middle schools, in contrast, do much better: top 20, top 30, and top 40 with respect to similar schools. Examining the specific trends in performance as well as my experience on the SSC for Berkeley high suggests a cultural diminishing of academic culture, particularly as measured by standardized tests. Moreover, the administration continually pursuit of educational interventions that are not supported by research and are not monitored for effectiveness. Working on these aspects is a priority.

There are optimization issues which I am interested in. For example, are we using resources effectively across the system. Finally, a more humane school assignment and scheduling process would be wonderful.

I am generally happy with the financial support of the community and would be happy with still more. I would, however, very much like to see students benefit academically from the community's commitment to them.

4. How would you work with your fellow Board members and Superintendent to address these priorities?

I believe I can do my part to help reach an understanding of some issues. In general, I am willing to do my homework on fleshing out issues as noted above or in other arenas where my background might be useful.

5. How does your experience and knowledge lend itself to promoting the District goals of addressing the opportunity gap and the 2020 Vision?

This is, in particular, my main goal. For example, the lack of an academic focus (as measured in a standardized manner) hits students from households with limited resources particularly hard. Moreover, the peer pressure on certain racial groups penalizes even those with resources. One notable comment made by a highly committed teacher was that many academically prepared "African American students from good private schools, are in the parking lot smoking pot by October." The standardized test scores bear this effect out. While this is an issue for all high schools, Berkeley high does particularly poorly in this regard when compared to similar high schools.

A focus on curriculum as measured by the tests is one way to influence the culture as well as the content. Indeed, I have reviewed sample questions from the CST. They really do cover material that is quite useful. Indeed, I learned

more about use of the colon, semicolon, and the hyphen in following up on a question. In math, as well, quite reasonable lessons can be given based on the content of the question in the CST. As a mathematician and teacher, I am a good judge of the latter.

6. What are the greatest assets and strengths of BUSD?

Committed, talented teachers, a financially supportive community, and diverse population of students.

7. What do you see as your primary role and responsibilities as a School Board Director?

Implement policy that serves the academic needs of the students.

8. How does an effective School Board ensure opportunities for families and community members to express a diverse range of views to inform Board deliberations on important policy issues?

I have read your minutes and have received emails soliciting input. Access seems reasonable but perhaps of low bandwidth in the sense that it appears difficult to separate passion that results from impulse from passion that arises from the identification of problems that can and need to be addressed. Both are important, but actions can only address the latter. Not sure how to optimize this process at this point.

9. What has been your involvement with public schools and/or in the community?

Berkeley High SSC: 2010 – 2013.  
Soccer Coash: Boys 1999-2005, Girls 2004—2005  
Middle School Math Tutoring: 2010

Over the past few years, I have also helped out a handful of kids in Berkeley high with their math/science courses. This, in addition to my 3 kids, has given my familiarity with the math/science curriculum at Berkeley high.