

**BEN BARTLETT**

CITY COUNCILMEMBER, DISTRICT 3

CONSENT CALENDAR  
May 7, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Ben Bartlett (Author), Councilmember Hahn (Co-Sponsor)

Subject: Celebración Cultural Sylvia Mendez (Spring Cultural Celebration) by the Sylvia Mendez School PTA: Relinquishment of Council Office Budget Funds to General Fund and Grant of Such Funds

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a Resolution approving the expenditure of funds, including \$1,500 from the discretionary council office budget of Councilmember Ben Bartlett, to the Sylvia Mendez Elementary School PTA to host a Spring Cultural Celebration event on May 4, 2024, in the courtyard on campus. The funds will be relinquished to the City's General Fund from the discretionary council office budget of Councilmember Ben Bartlett and the discretionary council office budgets of any other City Councilmembers who would like to contribute.

**BACKGROUND:**

This year, the Berkeley Unified School District's (BUSD) only Two-Way Immersion school, Sylvia Mendez Elementary (Sylvia Mendez), will host a Cultural Celebration to celebrate the global heritage, various nationalities, and other cultures important to its community. Community members are creating teams to determine the information, tastes, crafts, dress, music, and performances they would like to share at the event.

Last year's inaugural event was hosted by 10 teams: Eritrea, Mexico, Chile, Cuba, Canada, African American, Croatia, Farm & Garden, Rainbow Families, and Venezuela. The meal was catered by different local ethnic restaurants and supplemented by some of the teams with homemade foods. In addition, the tables shared cultural music to a community playlist and there was a live act as well. In all, the participants shaped the event, which was well received by the community.

With such great success, the Sylvia Mendez PTA is hosting this second annual event, maintaining the same goal of contextualizing some of our students' cultural influences, backgrounds, and much more. The funds requested are intended to offset some costs associated with the event. Therefore, they should be sent to the Sylvia Mendez PTA organization to distribute accordingly.

This parent-led committee is already funding the majority of the costs of the event and

has been a reliable resource to offset budget shortfalls. The donations ultimately support the program guidelines laid out by BUSD (on the [Sylvia Mendez Elementary website](#)<sup>1</sup>), which is to “develop long-lasting relationships and cultural appreciation for peers who are often separated by race and language.” This is further defined as the vision of the [school on its website](#)<sup>2</sup> “to seek to honor and understand families.”

Since the pandemic restrictions were lifted in 2022, Sylvia Mendez Elementary has hosted well-attended Spring Events (last year being the first Cultural Celebration). Scheduled late in the school year, they have proven to be important for the community, particularly in light of the COVID pandemic. Facing heightened challenges (such as construction starting this summer for at least the next two years), fostering relationships by building a greater understanding of families within and development of our community is fundamental in uplifting morale.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

No negative impact.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

No General Fund impact; \$1,000 is available from the discretionary council office budget of Councilmember Ben Bartlett. The cost is as follows: Sylvia Mendez School PTA: Celebración Cultural (Spring Cultural Celebration).

CONTACT PERSON:

Councilmember Ben Bartlett  
James Chang

bbartlett@cityofberkeley.info  
jchang@cityofberkeley.info

ATTACHMENT:

1. Resolution

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.berkeleyschools.net/schools/elementary-schools/sylviamendez-elementary/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://sylviamendezschool.org/en/welcome-eng>

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

AUTHORIZE THE EXPENDITURE OF SURPLUS FUNDS FROM THE OFFICE EXPENSE ACCOUNTS OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBERS FOR A DONATION TO THE SYLVIA MENDEZ SCHOOL PTA TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR A SPRING CULTURAL CELEBRATION EVENT.

**WHEREAS**, Councilmember Ben Bartlett has surplus funds in his office expenditure account; and

**WHEREAS**, Sylvia Mendez School PTA, a California non-profit organization, will receive funds in the amount of \$1,000 from Councilmember Ben Bartlett's office expenditure account; and

**WHEREAS**, the Sylvia Mendez School PTA supports equitable public education for students, families, and our community through grants and volunteer programs; and

**WHEREAS**, the provisions of such services would fulfill the municipal public purpose of providing students and the youth with opportunities through educational programs and activities to encourage them to learn and embrace cultural diversity;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the City of Berkeley that funds relinquished by the Mayor and Councilmembers from their office budgets, of an amount to be determined by each Councilmember, shall be granted to Sylvia Mendez School PTA for this purpose of supporting students and the youth in highlighting cultural heritage that forms the community of the student body.

