

**BEN BARTLETT**

VICE MAYOR

CONSENT CALENDAR

April 15, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Ben Bartlett (Author)

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 April 27, 2025, 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 want to share at the event.

This is the third year of the event. In previous years, teams were formed to represent the following cultures: Eritrea, Mexico, Chile, Cuba, Canada, African American, Croatia, Farm & Garden, Rainbow Families, and Venezuela. Meals were catered by different local ethnic restaurants and supplemented by some of the teams with homemade foods. In addition, the tables shared cultural music in a community playlist, and there was live music. In all, the participants shaped the events, which were well received by the community.

With such great success, the Sylvia Mendez PTA is hosting this event for the third consecutive time, maintaining the same goal of contextualizing 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 most of the event's costs, which 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](https://www.berkeleyschools.net/schools/elementary-schools/sylviamendez-elementary/)¹), which is to "develop

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

long-lasting relationships and cultural appreciation for peers who are often separated by race and language.” This is further defined as the [school's vision on its website](#)² “to seek to honor and understand families.”

Since the pandemic restrictions were lifted in 2022, Sylvia Mendez Elementary has hosted well-attended Spring Events. Scheduled late in the school year, they have proven crucial for the community. Facing heightened challenges this year due to on-site construction that began last summer and will continue at least through next school year, fostering relationships by building a greater understanding of families within and the development of our community is fundamental in uplifting morale.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No negative impact.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

No General Fund impact; \$1,500 is available from the discretionary council office budget of Councilmember Ben Bartlett.

The cost is Sylvia Mendez School PTA: Celebración Cultural (Spring Cultural Celebration).

CONTACT PERSON

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ATTACHMENT

1. Resolution

² <https://www.sylviamendezschool.org/en/welcome-eng>

Attachment 1

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 \$1,500 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.

