



2022 LOS ANGELES UNIFIED FEDERAL PRIORITIES

The Los Angeles Unified School District's (Los Angeles Unified) legislative and funding priorities for 2022 call for systemic policy changes that make schools a safe and equitable place for student learning. As part of Los Angeles Unified Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho's 100 Day Plan, a comprehensive, multi-year advocacy strategy will be developed, encompassing a vision for addressing regulatory, policy and revenue matters that have the most impact on the students and communities we serve. The strategy will be complimented by the following federal priorities.

As the nation's second largest school district, Los Angeles Unified operates 1,386 schools across more than 700 square miles in a diverse set of communities and geographies. Our District serves over 86,000 students who are English learners, over 9,000 students experiencing homelessness, and more than 5,000 students in foster care. In addition, over 81% of our students qualify for free or reduced priced meals and 13% are students with disabilities excluding those enrolled at independent charter schools.

MAINTAIN AND INCREASE INVESTMENTS IN CRITICAL PROGRAMS



The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated longstanding inequities in our communities and created extraordinary challenges for schools and the students we serve. While Los Angeles Unified recognizes the funding support Congress and the administration provided to schools to address the pandemic, sustained and ongoing funding is critical to ensure our schools have the staff needed to serve our students. Stable funding will ensure we can invest in our nation's students, and would indicate that Congress is serious in meeting its commitment to helping school districts support all students.

Los Angeles Unified supports increases in federal appropriations for programs including Title I, Title II, Title IV, GEAR UP, and funding allocated to State and local educational agencies under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

SUPPORT FULL FUNDING OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)



Each year that Congress fails to fulfill its promise of fully funding IDEA, school districts are required to pay a higher proportion of the special education costs to ensure students with disabilities receive the services they are entitled to. Despite its obligation to provide 40% of the extra costs associated with educating students with disabilities, the federal government only covers approximately 16%.

In 2020-21, Los Angeles Unified served approximately 80,000 students with disabilities including those enrolled at charter schools. In order to meet these students' needs, in 2021-22, Los Angeles Unified will use more than \$950 million in unrestricted state general fund revenues to fund almost 53% of its \$1.8 billion special education budget. If the federal government provided the full 40% funding, the District would have received approximately \$180-200 million additional dollars annually over the past several years. While this is not sufficient to cover the entire amount we invest in student with disabilities services and supports, this increased federal contribution could provide financial relief as we strive for sustainability of our instructional initiatives.

Los Angeles Unified supports the passage of the bipartisan IDEA Full Funding Act (S.3213/H.R.5984) which would require regular increases in IDEA spending to finally meet the federal financial commitment to school districts for special education.

PROVIDE ROBUST FUNDING FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION



Schools are the economic drivers that prepare students for the future and the buildings they are taught in provide the foundation for this classroom learning. Research shows that school conditions can positively or negatively impact student learning. In Los Angeles Unified, the majority of students are learning in old and outdated classrooms. More than 70% of our school buildings were built more than 50 years ago and do not meet today's standards for learning and safety, including 100 schools that are almost 100 years old and in need of improvements. Because of this, 2020 estimates showed that there are over \$50 billion of unfunded school facilities and technology needs Districtwide, and those needs grow every year.

In order to improve student learning, school buildings must be safe, up-to-date, and have spaces that facilitate teaching and learning for students with various needs. The COVID-19 pandemic showed just how dire this issue really is. While Los Angeles Unified is committed to providing safe facilities to support students' health and well-being, this is difficult to achieve without adequate funding.

Los Angeles Unified strongly supports the adoption of a school construction bill in order to assist districts in building, repairing and renovating schools.

DELETE THE DIVIDE



The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the severity of the digital divide for students throughout the nation, especially for those in underserved communities. When Los Angeles Unified first closed schools at the onset of the pandemic, an estimated 50% of students in the District lacked the digital tools (computer or tablet) to participate in online curriculum and 25% of families did not have access to the internet at home. In 2021, it was estimated that approximately 365,000 households in Los Angeles County lacked broadband internet service. Without access to the internet, students are unable to learn online with their peers thus creating more inequity among our low-income population. Increasing connectivity for our most vulnerable students can help close the gap in access to information and communication technologies.

Los Angeles Unified urges Congress to extend the Emergency Connectivity Fund past June 30, 2022 and modify the E-rate program to allow off-campus use so that remote learning can be considered an educational purpose.

SUPPORT AND PROTECT OUR IMMIGRANT FAMILIES



In Los Angeles County, 1 in 3 residents are foreign born. In addition, immigrant children make up 7 percent of the County's population and 58 percent of children have at least one foreign-born parent. At Los Angeles Unified, diversity is our strength. Annually, Los Angeles Unified welcomes approximately 12,000 students who are new to the Country and our students and staff speak more than 94 languages, representing a wide range of nationalities. Because of this, the District has become a leader in championing the rights of all students to receive a public education regardless of immigration status and has passed resolutions declaring that every District site is a place of support and resources for all students and families.

Los Angeles Unified urges the federal government to protect and support our immigrant students and families and provide permanent legal protections and a pathway to citizenship for our undocumented youth.

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