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News Release

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Los Angeles Unified School Board Moves Forward To Create New School Gardens and Community-Shared Outdoor Spaces

LOS ANGELES (Feb. 9, 2021) – The Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education today unanimously approved a resolution, authored by Board Member Jackie Goldberg and Board President Kelly Gonez, that will create new school gardens and school community-shared green spaces, focusing on underserved communities that lack the much-needed green and outdoor space to support learning and active play. This resolution will also provide outdoor learning opportunities and create sustainable and healthy environments for students.

“Developing creative solutions to support student learning and active play is critical,” Superintendent Austin Beutner said. “School gardens and healthy environments for students are an important part of every child’s education.”

“Green space is essential to student health and can also enhance school curricula,” Board Member Jackie Goldberg said. “Residents in low income communities generally have less access to open space and suffer from poorer health outcomes. We owe it to our families to do everything in our power to identify and implement green spaces in our most park-poor communities.”

“Too many of our students lack access to public parks in their neighborhoods and often our school playgrounds are their only communal place to play,” School Board President Kelly Gonez, a co-sponsor, said. “They deserve more than concrete and asphalt on our schools; we should do everything we can to provide green, shaded, natural play spaces at every school. I’m proud to cosponsor this resolution to expand green spaces on our campuses and to prioritize those communities most in need.”

“It is no exaggeration to say that green space is rare in many of the neighborhoods served by Los Angeles Unified,” Board Member Dr. George J. McKenna III said. “School gardens will help students learn. Green spaces will be good for everyone who lives in that area.”

“We love green spaces and outdoor learning environments,” Board Member Mónica García said. “We have provided learning opportunities outside of the classroom before and I am so proud that Los Angeles Unified and our community are doing it again.”

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“Promoting a healthy lifestyle is essential for the success of our students and families. Unfortunately, many do not have access to a park, recreational facility, or a place where they can be physically active,” Board Member Scott M. Schmerelson said. “This resolution will move us in the right direction by allowing us to continue to create the necessary partnerships and maximize funding to invest in more green spaces and initiatives that will improve the wellbeing and quality of life of our students, families and Los Angeles Unified community.”

“Every student and every community should have access to green space and gardens to serve a variety of purposes,” Board Member Nick Melvoin, a co-sponsor said. “I am proud to co-sponsor this resolution to increase the green space available to our school communities and look forward to watching the seeds of this initiative grow.”

“Increasing green space on school campuses is a crucial step for enriching the health and well-being of our students and communities,” Board Member Tanya Ortiz Franklin said. “By collaborating with local governments and public agencies on these projects, we can absolutely ensure all of our students have healthy places to play and opportunities to learn about environmental sustainability.”

A Green Space Task Force has been initiated, which is comprised of Los Angeles Unified, United Teachers Los Angeles, and the City of Los Angeles to create new schools gardens and school community-shared outdoor spaces. Los Angeles Unified will also work with the County of Los Angeles and other municipalities that are located geographically within Los Angeles Unified boundaries such as the cities of San Fernando, Carson, Huntington Park, and South Gate to identify school sites for Community School Parks and other joint-use initiatives that include green space to encourage active play.

This resolution prompts the Green Space Task Force to continue their collaboration to identify funding opportunities, including grant funding programs to support playground improvements and greening initiatives, active play spaces and partnerships that share maintenance costs and responsibilities to pay for long-term maintenance.

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