

# Employees' Connection

Keeping You Informed About Investments In Our Schools



## Chapter 3: *L.A. Unified and Our Union Partners Demand Adequate Resources for Students with Disabilities*

**Students with disabilities soar when given the right resources.** Take Christopher Leon: born with spinal muscular atrophy, Christopher has lived fulltime at home in a wheelchair since first grade. He was able to [attend classes virtually](#) using a “VGo”—a wheeled robot that he controlled from home—and he created spellbinding artwork using one finger, a specialized computer program, and sheer determination; before earning a diploma from L.A. Unified in 2016. Christopher represents us all—whether or not we have an individualized education plan, we all have individualized talents that can be unleashed, and individualized challenges that can be overcome, with the right resources.

**However, California does *not* provide individualized resources for students with disabilities.** Regardless of whether a school district has many students with severe disabilities like spinal muscular atrophy, a handful of students with mild speech impairments, or few students with any disability at all, it receives the *same amount* of money from the state to serve its special education population.

**This has a real and direct impact on you!** L.A. Unified invests *\$1.6 billion* annually to help students with disabilities achieve—we have one of the largest special education populations in the country, and it is our moral and legal duty to support them all of them based on what they *need*, not based on *cost*. Since the funding we receive for students with disabilities is inadequate, and since our district has limited resources, we must pull funds from other areas to meet our \$1.6 billion commitment. If we could get the state to provide adequate funding for students with disabilities, we would have more money to invest in things like classroom resources, student support services, and employee compensation.

**L.A. Unified and our union partners demand adequate resources for students with disabilities!** As shared in the last [Employees' Connection](#), we are standing together to request equitable investments in our schools, and our first demand is that state and federal lawmakers allocate resources based on the number of students with disabilities we serve, and the severity of those disabilities. This extra funding will help *all* of our students and employees succeed.



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