

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

MÓNICA GARCÍA, PRESIDENT
KELLY GONEZ
DR. GEORGE J. MCKENNA III
NICK MELVOIN
DR. REF RODRIGUEZ
SCOTT M. SCHMERELSON
DR. RICHARD A. VLADOVIC



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

333 South Beaudry Avenue, 24th Floor

Los Angeles, California 90017

Telephone: (213) 241-7000 | Fax: (213) 241-8442

MICHELLE KING, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

Honorable Tom Torlakson
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
California Department of Education
1430 N. Street, Suite 5602
Sacramento, California 95814 - 5901

December 6, 2017

Dear Superintendent Torlakson:

We greatly appreciate the state's commitment to support school districts grappling with fires in southern California. As the fires' detrimental impacts on health and learning continue to extend far beyond the official mandatory evacuation areas, we respectfully call on you to offer any state assistance available to all schools significantly impacted by this disaster, including holding them harmless from loss of attendance and instruction in cases where safety and health concerns compel their closure.

Already, we have closed over 50 schools today due to the fires raging throughout L.A., as these schools are within or immediately surrounding the mandatory evacuation areas declared by the Los Angeles Fire Department. The fire's total wrath, however, has spread much farther. According to the South Coast Air Quality Management District, smoke from the fires has caused poor air quality throughout the San Fernando Valley, L.A. County coastal areas, and surrounding regions. Student and staff attendance in these areas has plummeted. Unpredictable winds have ushered in the prospect of sudden road closures, threatening to prevent a safe return home from schools that are currently open. In addition, our school communities have taken every opportunity to inform us that campuses remain dense with smoke, concerns about air quality hang heavy in every conversation, and instruction is severely hindered.

We continue to monitor the fire pattern and air quality surrounding our schools very closely, in consultation with the Los Angeles Fire Department and South Coast Air Quality Management District. We are in the midst of deciding which schools will remain closed, and others that may need to be closed, during this crisis. An updated list of school closures in L.A. Unified can be found at: <http://home.lausd.net/apps/spotlightmessages/1251>.

As we make difficult decisions, our singular focus continues to be the health and well-being of our students and employees. By investing your full support in this effort, and removing other potential concerns from the equation – including loss of attendance and instructional days – you can help ensure that our singular commitment to safety during this disaster does not come with a heavy price of lost resources and student learning in the months and years ahead.

On behalf of the Los Angeles Unified School District and our labor partners, thank you again for everything you have done to support schools, and thank you in advance for expanding this support to ensure that all schools are able to resume smooth operations and maintain student learning.

Sincerely,

Vivian Ekchian
Acting Superintendent

Monica Garcia
Board President