

LAUSD School Board President Mónica García
Board of Education, District 2
Los Angeles Unified School District
333 South Beaudry Avenue, 24th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Phone: 213.241.6180 | Fax: 213.241.8459
garcia.laschoolboard.org
facebook.com/iamwithmonicagarcia
twitter.com/monica4LAUSD



News Release

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Contact: Isidro Armenta (213) 241-6180

Isidro.Armenta@lausd.net

L.A. Unified Unanimously Approves García ‘Equity is Justice 2.0’ Resolution to Invest \$25 Million in Highest Needs Schools

‘We thank every partner for student success that puts kids first’

Los Angeles – The L.A. Unified Board of Education voted to approve the School Equity Need Index 2018 that includes community indicators that will identify the highest-needs students to invest \$25 million dollars from Gov. Jerry Brown’s 2018-2019 California budget. The resolution also requests the superintendent to create a working group for community stakeholder input.

This measure is a result of the hard work, contributions and input from students, parents, partners and district staff. The action is a follow-up to the 2014 ‘Equity is Justice’ resolution that inspired the district’s trailblazing arts equity index.

“Action has defined progress in America and progress in our district,” said L.A. Unified Board President Mónica García, who sponsored the resolution. “The path toward 100 percent graduation is an imperfect process that requires urgency and a new direction. With today’s action, each school community maintains their budget, and our highest needs schools receive an injection of additional investment. We thank every partner for helping to put kids first.”

“I look forward to realizing the shared vision of equity this resolution brings,” said Interim Superintendent Vivian Ekchian. “This is a major step forward in closing the opportunity gap for all students, especially our youngest learners.”

“Today, the board, our students, and our advocates came together on behalf of our highest need communities,” said Vice President Nick Melvoin. “We know that we need to do more—and our state and federal government need to do more—but this is a foundation upon which to build. I look forward to the next iteration of a student-based funding formula that continues to ensure dollars reach our classrooms. Equity is justice,

but California spending so little on our students remains an injustice.”

“Today’s board decision is a major step forward toward more equitable funding of our schools,” said Board Member Kelly Gonez. “I’m proud of our commitment to equity and meeting the needs of our students across the district with the updated Student Equity Needs Index.”

“I supported this resolution, because I am a firm supporter of equity-based funding,” said Board Member Dr. Ref Rodriguez. “However, I also believe that this is only the first step toward that. I have consistently advocated for a per-pupil funding model, in which the dollars follow the students more closely. I hope that, as a District, we can explore other models to create a more holistic and comprehensive framework to fund our high-needs schools adequately and equitably.”

“Our schools are grossly underfunded by the state of California, and it is a shame we don’t have enough funding to adequately support education,” said Board Member Dr. Richard Vladovic. “These efforts are a testament to the district’s commitment to provide equitable support for all students and making strategic investments to ensure all students succeed.”

The L.A. Equity Alliance, a group of educational justice organizations representing thousands of student, parent and stakeholder voices applauded the district’s commitment.

Maria Brenes, InnerCity Struggle’s executive director shared her support.

“I believe in the promise of this district,” she said. “From A-G, to the Student Bill of Rights, our children and families have seen courage in action. Today, is no different. I am a proud Angeleno today.”

“Today’s unanimous vote is a historic moment,” said Community Coalition Executive Vice President Executive Director Aurea Montes-Rodriguez. “The District is putting black and Latino high-needs students first by adopting the Student Equity Need Index 2.0.”

John Kim, the Advancement Project’s Executive Director, pointed to the meaning of the resolution.

“Today, L.A. Unified leadership took bold action and is truly a model of how all of California can ensure that this is, indeed, a Golden State for all of us,” he said.

In addition to the immediate \$25-million infusion, additional requirements of the Board action include: periodic updates; making the “equity-based funding formula” a primary funding model to be used by the district; the identification of additional resources and “a menu of options’ for evidence-based programs” from the Superintendent.

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LAUSD School Board President Mónica García was first elected in 2006 and is the longest-serving school board president in the District's history. She continues to galvanize the LAUSD school community on a path toward 100% graduation with bold initiatives that have contributed to annual increases in high school graduation rates.

She is an effective policymaker with a focus on high-impact progressive policies such as school community strategies that increase student engagement and achievement by fully funding student needs through an equity lens.

Board President García was raised in East Los Angeles, and is a proud graduate from UC Berkeley and USC.