L.A. Unified Moves Forward with Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan Under the Americans with Disabilities Act

Reaffirming its commitment to ensuring that L.A. Unified schools and programs are accessible to individuals with disabilities, the Board of Education has unanimously approved a long-term plan that details District efforts to comply with the Title II program accessibility requirements of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

During its meeting on Oct. 10, the school board approved the Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan, which utilizes approximately $600 million that was allocated in 2015 to remove barriers to program accessibility. The plan enables the District to further its efforts to comply with Title II of the ADA while satisfying accessibility requirements for students, employees, parents/guardians and community members.

The plan includes input obtained from students, parents, employees and community stakeholders during 14 meetings held around the District and collected through an online survey administered during two separate phases. In addition, the District retained a nationally recognized ADA expert to review, analyze and assist in drafting the plan.

“The L.A. Unified way is about service, personalization, and connection. This plan exemplifies how we have learned to increase our outreach, include authentic student voice, and create solutions to increase access to the graduation finish line,” said Board President Mónica García.
As part of the District’s commitment to comply with the ADA Title II program accessibility requirements and to assist in obtaining the certification needed to disengage from facilities-related requirements of the Modified Consent Decree, in 2014, the Facilities Services Division began working on several components included in the plan.

“I am proud of the work that the Facilities Services Division has done to support the development of this plan,” said Chief Facilities Executive Mark Hovatter. “I look forward to our team’s continued efforts to remove physical barriers to accessibility and implement the transition plan approved by the board.”

Board Member Dr. George J. McKenna III said, “We continue to make great strides in fulfilling the commitment to ensure that our programs are accessible to every member of our L.A. Unified family.”

The 460-page plan and accompanying appendices include proposals for improvements at the District campuses, along with operational solutions and training and policies to support improved accessibility.

The District’s voter-approved Bond Program has enabled the District to make substantial progress in its efforts to make its school facilities, services, programs and activities accessible.

More than $67.5 million has been expended on accessibility renovations and/or repairs at school sites. In addition, more than $20 million has been utilized for minor renovations needed to provide access for individual students seeking placement in District programs, which is part of Section 10 of the Modified Consent Decree.

It is estimated that the District has expended an additional $220 million on corrective access compliance projects. Furthermore, each of the District’s new school, modernization and repair projects has been designed and constructed to comply with the ADA, the California Building Code and Division of State Architect requirements for accessibility and path of travel. The plan builds off of these successful efforts.
“As a passionate advocate for our students with special needs, I am very happy to see the District’s ongoing commitment to increasing access and equity,” said Board Member Scott Schmerelson. “Ensuring that our programs are accessible for everyone’s use is critical, and I applaud L.A. Unified’s progress on this mission.”

"I commend the District for working hard to put a plan in place to make our schools ADA accessible," said Board Member Dr. Ref Rodriguez. "Many of my schools and parents in the Southeast have voiced the need for accessibility improvements, and I'm happy that these schools will be getting the upgrades they desperately need."

“We're bringing L.A. Unified closer to ensuring that every child and family can access our schools,” said Board Member Kelly Gonez. “We must now implement the transition plan with a continued sense of urgency.”

Ms. Gonez added, “It’s imperative that all programs and supports are accessible to all students, regardless of type of disability, as we seek to fulfill our District’s ongoing commitment to equity.”

"Living life with disabilities should not – under any circumstances – be an impediment to a quality education,” said Board Member Dr. Richard Vladovic. “I stand with my colleagues in reaffirming our solemn commitment to helping students with special needs under Title II.”


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