

MS. GARCÍA- Equity is Justice 2021: A New Standard for Public Education Centered on Racial Justice and Equity for the Highest-Need Students in Our Most Impacted Schools (WAIVER OF BOARD RULE 72)

WHEREAS, the fight for equity and access for all students in Los Angeles Unified School District (“Los Angeles Unified”) is an effort led by community demands over multiple decades for better support for students of color in under-resourced schools;

WHEREAS, due to the global pandemic, our schools and youth are experiencing unprecedented challenges in already highest-need communities that been most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic;

WHEREAS, approximately one in three Angelenos have been infected with COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, and this pandemic continues to exacerbate inequities as is evidenced by some neighborhoods being disproportionately harmed by the disease (e.g., wealthier communities like Bel Air have a case rate of 3,963 per 100,000 residents, while Boyle Heights, the case rate is 18,764 per 100,000 residents);

WHEREAS, low-income families of color continue to disproportionately bear the brunt of the pandemic, with the latest data from Los Angeles County showing COVID-19 deaths among Latinx residents increasing over 1,000% between November 2020 and the end of January 2021 and declines in life expectancy of Black and Latinx populations by 2.7 and 1.9 years, respectively, compared to .8 years for the Anglo population;

WHEREAS, families in most impacted communities that have been hit hard financially has led to students taking additional responsibilities at home including care-taker roles and teaching of younger siblings and/or seeking out employment to contribute to their families’ basic needs;

WHEREAS, students in highest-need communities have expressed increased wellness needs to cope with additional responsibilities and grief due to loss of life from COVID-19 and, exacerbated by a surge in gun violence in South L.A.;

WHEREAS, Los Angeles Unified has looked at these inequities in the past and has developed the Student Equity Need Index (“SENI”) in order to assess and accurately identify which of its schools need the most support, allowing it to differentiate investments and supports based on each school’s level of need;

WHEREAS, communities of the Highest- and High-Need schools as identified by SENI are experiencing an unprecedented crisis, causing the death or illness of thousands and also causing disproportionate educational, income, housing, and other economic impacts as a result of COVID-19 and the digital divide;

WHEREAS, prior to this crisis, Los Angeles Unified allocated \$284 million to schools in 2020-21 through the SENI funding formula;

WHEREAS, increased education investments are positively associated with improved student outcomes;

WHEREAS, Los Angeles Unified and community groups' successful advocacy for additional State and Federal funding to mitigate the significant impacts of COVID-19 will result in approximately \$5 billion dollars of projected additional state and federal funding being allocated to Los Angeles Unified;

WHEREAS, a significant portion of Los Angeles Unified's supplemental and concentration dollars are currently allocated equally across schools (e.g., \$50 million on non-targeted central office supports such as Maintenance & Operations and technology support and over \$130 million on non-targeted positions allocated across schools without regard to need);

WHEREAS, using both existing and new funds, Los Angeles Unified can double the amount of funding going through an equity-based funding formula that uses a school's rank on SENI, resulting in an average increase in funding for the Highest- and High-need schools of approximately \$850,000 for high schools, \$720,000 for middle schools, and close to \$300,000 for elementary schools;

WHEREAS, this increase in funding would allow the Highest- and High-Need school to reduce class sizes as well as invest in several new counselors, psychiatric social workers, instructional coaches, and other intervention positions;

WHEREAS, increasing the investment in SENI will ensure that new and existing dollars intended to remediate the impact of COVID-19 and the learning loss reach all schools proportionate to their needs, and;

WHEREAS, Los Angeles Unified has already committed an additional \$120 million (i.e., \$404 million total) to the SENI equity-based funding formula for the 2021-22 school year; therefore be it;

Resolved, That the Governing Board of the Los Angeles Unified School District ~~endorses~~ supports the Community of Schools strategy to empower school leaders and leverage a community approach to accelerates progress in student outcomes;

Resolved further, That the District will utilize ~~the~~ an equity-based funding formula that uses a school's rank on SENI and incorporates COVID-19 impact, to allocate a minimum of ~~\$600~~700-million, which will grow every year, of supplemental and concentration funding (an additional ~~\$198~~298 million dollars over the proposed 2021-22 budget) to be known collectively as "SENI Funding"; and that a portion of the additional funding will allow per pupil SENI funding for elementary students to rise to a level commensurate with SENI funding levels for secondary students;

Resolved further, That this additional SENI Funding shall be in addition to, rather than replace any existing equity-based spending or programs that currently benefit schools, ~~including but not limited to the Primary Promise, school carryover funds, and Targeted Student Population (TSP) per-pupil program (program code 10397);~~

Resolved further, That ~~this additional SENI Funding will be provided by ending funding programs not guided by a determination of student needs, including the~~ funds previously reserved as "hold harmless" funds ~~to~~ allowed for a stable transition to the current SENI formula will go towards the increase in the SENI funding, excepting that options schools will not receive reduced funding as a result of this resolution until such time as an alternative funding plan for option schools is developed;

Resolved further, That the Los Angeles Unified School District commits to an equitable distribution of COVID-19 relief funds and other intervention funding, determined by COVID's impact on the community, SENI, and other factors;

Resolved further, The Superintendent shall prioritize the allocation of funds be directly to schools based on identified student needs and provide the Board with an accounting of how increased funding is allocated to schools across the District as part of the annual budgeting process;

~~Resolved further, That distribution of any and all funds coming to the Los Angeles Unified School District through COVID-19 relief bills and other intervention funding to remediate learning loss will be determined by a school's level of need, as determined by its SENI ranking or a comparable assessment of student need;~~

~~Resolved further, That in furtherance of the goal of empowering school communities, not less than 50% of state and federal relief dollars will be allocated to direct school supports and, as part of the annual budgeting process, District leadership will provide the Board with an accounting of how increased funding is allocated to schools across the District;~~

~~Resolved further, That the Board affirms support for efforts to build a student-centered funding formula that will embed the goal of advancing equity in all funding allocations;~~

Resolved further, That by June 30, 2021 the District will create a task force to develop a plan inclusive of meaningful community input regarding a new student-centered funding formula to be the foundation for allocations to schools by October of 2021 for the 2022-23 District budget;

Resolved further, That the new student-centered funding formula will incorporate and build upon the formula used to determine SENI;

Resolved further, That the Superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District Superintendent will convene a task force to gather meaningful community input to inform the development of develop an evaluation plan for student outcomes as a result of SENI investments. Evaluation updates shall be provided to the Board of Education and the public community members on a quarterly periodic basis, not less than annually; and, be it finally

Resolved, That the ongoing Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) cycle will incorporate the above resolutions as part of the forthcoming LCAP.