

Mr. Zimmer, Dr. Rodriguez --Embracing Community School Strategies in the Los Angeles Unified School District (Res-098-16/17) (Noticed May 9, 2017)

ADOPTED AS AMENDED

Whereas, A central goal of the Los Angeles Unified School District is to develop the holistic capacities of young people so that they emerge from their K-12 schooling creative, critical, and community-minded;

Whereas, Los Angeles youth should have access to an array of curricular and extra-curricular learning opportunities that promote their full development;

Whereas, Los Angeles youth and families should have access to an array of health and social supports that enable such development;

Whereas, Los Angeles youth should understand that they are valued members of communities and that they have a role to play in improving and contributing to their communities;

Whereas, Los Angeles youth can develop analytic skills and civic commitments by studying the strengths and challenges of their communities and developing evidence-based plans for community improvement;

Whereas, Los Angeles youth should develop the skills and commitments to negotiate differences through non-violent dialogue and build community across differences;

Whereas, The holistic development of Los Angeles students must be a shared effort of educators, school staff, community partners, and families;

Whereas, Los Angeles educators can play a vital role in such work when they have time, support, and training to forge meaningful connections with students, families, and community partners;

Whereas, There is a long history of community schooling (spanning well more than a century) that has promoted these very goals;

Whereas, Community schools are a strategy to not only improve graduation rates but also to improve four-year college eligibility and career readiness;

Whereas, The Los Angeles Unified School District already recognizes the need to integrate local educational activities with local community needs and has established Parent Centers in schools as the hub of this integration; and such Centers can be expanded to serve as the nucleus for Community Schooling with increased staffing and training;

Whereas, Organizations at many school sites throughout LAUSD have already incorporated some of these strategies and mechanisms into their approaches to teaching and community engagement, that should be learned from and built upon;

Whereas, Los Angeles schools face a set of challenges today, that make community schooling and the sharing of resources with external agencies, government entities, and community partnerships more important than ever;

Whereas, Los Angeles experiences among the highest levels of economic inequality in the U.S. and the U.S. has among the highest levels of economic inequality among industrialized nations;

Whereas, Economic and social inequality has powerful negative effects on the well-being of Los Angeles children and youth;

Whereas, These effects include unmet health, mental health, and social welfare needs;

Whereas, These effects also include inadequate and unequal access to enriching curricula and after-school experiences that support holistic development;

Whereas, These effects are exacerbated by educational reform strategies that focus narrowly on competition and hence erode the relationships and understanding that promote a sense of community;

Whereas, In the last few months, all of these challenges have grown dramatically due to the rhetoric, policy threats, and policy actions of the Trump administration which have fostered instability, anxiety, and fear across many Los Angeles communities;

Whereas, This moment calls for a greater sense of community and an array of supports that foster development and offer protection;

Whereas, The community schooling model allows for a systematic process by which a community's assets as well as its needs can be identified;

Whereas, Community schools can be hubs for providing broad and sustainable access to its community's assets;

Whereas, The ESSA (Every Students Succeeds Act) requires that federally funded interventions be evidence-based, and the most recent review of relevant research by the Learning Policy Institute and the National Education Policy Center in June 2017 was published in the brief *Community Schools: An Evidence-Based Strategy for Equitable School*

Improvement, presenting the following four research based strategies that appear in community schools that have demonstrated positive outcomes:

- 1) **Integrated Student Supports:** removing barriers to school success by connecting students and families to service providers or bringing those programs into the school addressing the reality that children whose families are struggling with poverty - and the housing, health and safety concerns that often go with it – cannot focus on learning unless their non-academic needs are also met
- 2) **Expanded Learning Time and Opportunities:** these take place before and after the typical school day and during the summer to augment traditional learning opportunities. Some include additional academic instruction and mentoring and others offer informal out of school learning experiences, emphasizing student centered, hands on, engaging experiences such as music, art, and athletics. Positive effects result from high quality programming when traditional instruction is taught by certified teachers and when they feature experiential learning activities. In other words, how the time is used, matters.
- 3) **Family and Community Engagement:** strategies include support for better parenting, communication between school and home, family volunteering, parents helping with learning at home, parents involved in school decision making and community organizing for school and district reform. Regular and consistent communication about the importance of education is the best way for parents to improve their children’s academic trajectories. Education reforms in communities of concentrated poverty must include broad based coherent approaches to include family, school and community resources.
- 4) **Collaborative Leadership and Practices:** Processes whereby parents, students, teachers and principals with different areas of expertise work together, sharing decisions and responsibilities toward a shared vision or outcome. Collaborative leadership impacts growth in student learning by increasing the capacity within a school for academic improvement. Collaborative school cultures are central to school improvement, the development of professional learning communities and the improvement of student learning.

Whereas, Federal funding could be used to support each of the pillars (alone or in combination as well as other interventions under the community schools umbrella);

Whereas, Community schools hold promise for closing well documented racial and economic gaps;

Whereas, More research is needed to strengthen the evidentiary basis and data must be used in an ongoing process of continuous program evaluation and improvement and in order to be successful needs assessment must involve community, parents and young people;

Whereas, LAUSD and community partners further defines a Community School as a school that achieves success by utilizing the following mechanisms:

- 1) An annual asset and needs assessment of and by both school and community;
- 2) A strategic plan that defines how educators, school staff and community partners will use all available assets to meet specific student needs and get better results;
- 3) The engagement of partners who bring assets and expertise to help implement the building blocks of Community Schools, and;
- 4) A dedicated staff member at the community school site whose primary job is to facilitate the development and implementation of the strategic plan in collaboration with school and community members/partners, and to ensure alignment of solutions to needs;

Whereas, Many school sites throughout LAUSD have already incorporated strategies and mechanisms into their approaches to teaching and community engagement;

Whereas, Transparent decision-making and accountable governance are necessary pre-conditions for sustainable community engagement and are essential components of any community school;

Whereas, The District has adopted several policies, programs, and practices that support the principles and vision of community schools, including restorative justice and the school climate bill of rights, social emotional and trauma-informed practices, wellness centers and Healthy Start programs, culturally relevant curricula like Ethnic Studies, and high-quality parent and community engagement strategies; the Division of Access, Equity, and Acceleration, and the Innovation Office;

Whereas, The community school framework provides a systematic approach for incorporating and expanding upon existing Board resolutions whose goals include preventing domestic violence, developing career pathways for school staff, fostering sustainability through gardens and other programs, and expanding dual language instructional pathways; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Governing Board of the Los Angeles Unified School District recognizes the positive impact community school evidence-based strategies can have on schools and communities;

Resolved further, That the Los Angeles Unified School District recognizes Community Schooling as a valuable research backed strategy for school accountability, improvement and community development which has the potential to expands access to:

- a. Enriching curricular and extracurricular experiences that support the holistic development of Los Angeles youth;
- b. School-based health, mental health, and social services that offer essential supports for students and their families;
- c. Community-centered curriculum that engages youth in social inquiry and civic action;
- d. Restorative justice programs that build a non-violent, respectful, and justice-enhancing community;
- e. Professional development programs that link educators with families and community partners and provide educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to support community-based curriculum and school-community partnerships; and
- f. Inclusive and democratic leadership structures that engage family members and community partners alongside educators and school staff as vital members of community school teams;

Resolved further, That the Board of Education will establish a Community Schools Implementation Team (CSIT) advise and assist staff in the preparation of a report outlining a proposed implementation procedure by which a school site, having expressed the desire to become a community school, may proceed systematically through a community school transformation process, after undergoing a school/community-based asset and needs assessment;

Resolved further, That the CSIT shall including the following District staff and stakeholders: a) the Executive Director of the Student Health and Human Services Division, or their designee; b) the Chief Academic Officer of the Division of Instruction, or their designee; c) the Office of Educational Services; d) Parent and Community Services; e) representatives from District labor partners; f) Academic partners from local universities well-versed in community schooling models and theory; g) Non-profit and/or community-based organizations, particularly those

with a proven track record of implementing community schooling models in District schools;

Resolved further, That in the course of preparing its report, the CSIT must also engage extensively with interested stakeholders, community members, parents, and students;

Resolved further, That the report will also include a proposal for: 1) the optimal number of school sites for an initial cohort that shall be allowed to undergo a community school transformation; 2) the selection criteria for this initial cohort of community schools; 3) a proposal to responsibly scale the number of community schools throughout LAUSD; 4) mechanisms to ensure school sites are transparent in decision-making processes and accountable to community concerns; and 5) an assessment of the direct costs to borne by the district for each community school; and, be it finally

Resolved, That the staff shall form this Community Schools Implementation Team and prepare a roadmap for implementation of this resolution within 180 days and ultimately present its findings and recommendations to the Board of Education within 180 days of the passage of this resolution.