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## INTRODUCTION FROM MAYOR VILLARAIGOSA: THE SCHOOLHOUSE

Imagine that tomorrow morning every child within the Los Angeles Unified School District ("LAUSD") awakens eager to go to school. Imagine that over 700,000 students attend schools offering excellent education and that they graduate prepared for college, work and life. Imagine a school district where neighborhoods are transformed by thousands of college graduates, young doctors, nurses, entrepreneurs, teachers, artists and engineers. Imagine the businesses and community-serving organizations they would build. Imagine the problems they would solve. Imagine a community reinvigorated by a growing middle class in a city where gangs can no longer compete for recruits against public schools offering a genuine pathway to opportunity for every child. And imagine the economic, scientific, legal, and artistic achievements possible in a place of such infinite richness, both of people and talent.

We can't begin to imagine any of these things if we don't first ask the fundamental questions: How do we build great schools? What does a great school really look like?

Over the last year and a half, my team and I have visited dozens of schools in LAUSD that are working for students. We've met with some of the most accomplished educators in the country. We've gone to school ourselves, studying the lessons learned in cities like New York, Boston and Chicago. We've closely analyzed a number of reform efforts. We've talked to thousands of parents, students and educators from LAUSD. Based on listening and learning, we developed a framework for improving our schools called The Schoolhouse.

Why the Schoolhouse? Because the Schoolhouse is a uniquely American institution. Historically, the Schoolhouse has been both the building where young people receive an education and the center of communities. Often, town halls and community picnics were held at the local schoolhouse. The Schoolhouse is both a concrete representation and a symbol of what each community must provide its young people in order for democracy to flourish. The Schoolhouse is four walls with tomorrow inside.<sup>1</sup>

Our Schoolhouse framework is anchored in a firm foundation of community support and resolve, and it is surmounted by a roof containing our ultimate aspiration: a system in which **all children receive an excellent public education to cement the opportunity to realize their dreams**. Between roof and foundation, connecting the community to its goals, there are six supporting pillars, six critical education strategies, "Pillars of School Excellence," which we believe need to be implemented to ensure success for all students. The pillars are:

- **High Expectations**
- **Safe, Small, Clean**
- **Empowered Leadership**
- **Powerful Teaching and Rigorous Curriculum**
- **Family and Community Involvement**
- **More Money to Schools**

# THE SCHOOLHOUSE

*All children receive an excellent public education to cement the opportunity to realize their dreams*

<b>HIGH EXPECTATIONS</b>	<b>SAFE, SMALL, AND CLEAN</b>	<b>EMPOWERED LEADERSHIP</b>	<b>POWERFUL TEACHING AND RIGOROUS CURRICULUM</b>	<b>FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</b>	<b>MORE MONEY TO SCHOOLS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create college and work-going cultures at all schools</li> <li>• Demand results</li> <li>• End social promotion through supports and standards</li> <li>• Restructure chronically low performing schools after supports are exhausted</li> <li>• Distribute family friendly report cards</li> <li>• Conduct regular surveys for school community</li> <li>• Require school uniforms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a comprehensive anti-gang strategy</li> <li>• Expand safe havens and safe passages</li> <li>• Increase number of youth mediation programs</li> <li>• Clean up our schools</li> <li>• Transform chronically underperforming schools into small schools</li> <li>• Create some K-8 schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay educators more</li> <li>• Empower schools with control over key decisions</li> <li>• Teachers lead in their classrooms</li> <li>• Give students a real voice in their schools</li> <li>• Launch a leadership academy for school leaders</li> <li>• Attract the best talent by launching a "Teach in LAUSD" campaign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide rigorous, relevant, standards-based curriculum for all children including A-G for high school</li> <li>• Embrace the arts, foreign languages and early college/career courses</li> <li>• Address unique needs of students through special education, ELL, gifted and other programs</li> <li>• Expand intervention and enrichment programs, and extend school day and week</li> <li>• Improve conditions for teaching and learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get families involved in the education of their children</li> <li>• Open family resource centers at all schools</li> <li>• Education programs for families, with a focus on teaching English</li> <li>• Engage colleges and universities in the success of schools</li> <li>• Create a "Commitment to School Excellence", a compact between all members of the school community to support their school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move money away from bureaucracy and into our schools</li> <li>• Audit district to identify cost savings</li> <li>• Increased attendance will increase revenue</li> <li>• Campaign for LAUSD</li> <li>• Get our fair share from Sacramento</li> <li>• Build an efficient, service focused central office and give schools control over their budgets</li> <li>• Leverage proven experts to participate in school reform efforts</li> </ul>
<b><i>Urgency and Community Partnership</i></b>					

Contained in each pillar is a set of underlying initiatives that have worked for students in schools around the country, initiatives supported by data and guided by best practices. While these initiatives have different levels of priority and urgency for different schools, they are interconnected and should be implemented in a comprehensive, thoughtful, aligned fashion over time, rather than as individual or scattered actions. Taken together, they are what we believe hold up and support great schools.

The Schoolhouse is an intentional framework. We must construct a school system that educates all children living within LAUSD and we will use The Schoolhouse as the basis on which to develop our plan. Not all of the initiatives within the Pillars of School Excellence could or should be implemented at once as they all require different timelines, strategies and resources. Before implementation, they must be further developed, prioritized and customized to conform to the unique needs of different school communities.

When I was sworn in last year as Mayor, I asked you to dream with me. Now I am asking you to work with me. Let's continue to work together to propel and sustain a Schoolhouse in every school in the Los Angeles Unified School District. We can't just leave this work up to the district, the superintendent or the School Board. The district can't do it alone. LAUSD needs new and innovative ideas, dynamic organizational approaches, additional resources, and bold leadership to carry out reform. It will take all of us: parents, students, teachers, the district, community groups, faith-based organizations, elected officials, municipalities, business, and labor organizations. Together, we are the foundation. Together, it is up to us to raise the roof and realize the vision of a great public education for every child in the wider community of Los Angeles.

## **PILLAR 1: HIGH EXPECTATIONS**

Our society too often blames poor students and their families for school failures, as if it is impossible to imagine that these children can achieve. We reject this notion categorically. Every child can learn regardless of background and our schools should make no excuses and demand results.

We should create school environments where every student is known by name, where students feel valued, and where they learn that hard work yields tangible success. Our goal is to prepare our students to attend college, to enter rewarding careers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and to be prepared to take their place as global citizens.

We should provide clear goals and targets for adults to meet and transparent assessments and information for families to use to track students and school progress. Moreover, we cannot allow dysfunctional school cultures to persist year after year. We need to intervene in chronically underperforming schools promptly with intensive support, and restructure them where necessary, as required by federal and state law. Finally, we should consistently communicate high standards of behavior and pride in our communities with policies such as requiring school uniforms and offering students service learning opportunities.

### **High Expectations Initiatives:**

- 1. Create College and Work-Going Cultures at All Schools***
- 2. Demand Results***
- 3. End Social Promotion Through Supports and Standards***
- 4. Restructure Chronically Low-Performing Schools After Supports are Exhausted***
- 5. Distribute Family-Friendly School Report Cards***
- 6. Conduct Surveys to Receive Feedback from School Community***
- 7. Require School Uniforms***
- 8. Service-Learning Opportunities for All Students***

#### ***1. Create College and Work-Going Cultures at All Schools***

Too often in our schools today, young people believe a university education or a well-paying job is not accessible because no one in their immediate families had either. We must instill a college and work-going culture in each and every one of our schools. College and job preparation programs such as information nights and college visits should be implemented in middle school, and educators and school site staff should begin to celebrate the accessibility and virtues of a college education and different careers in elementary school. The dozens of institutions of higher learning in our region have a special role to play here, and we must work closely with them to grow their outreach programs.

#### ***2. Demand Results***

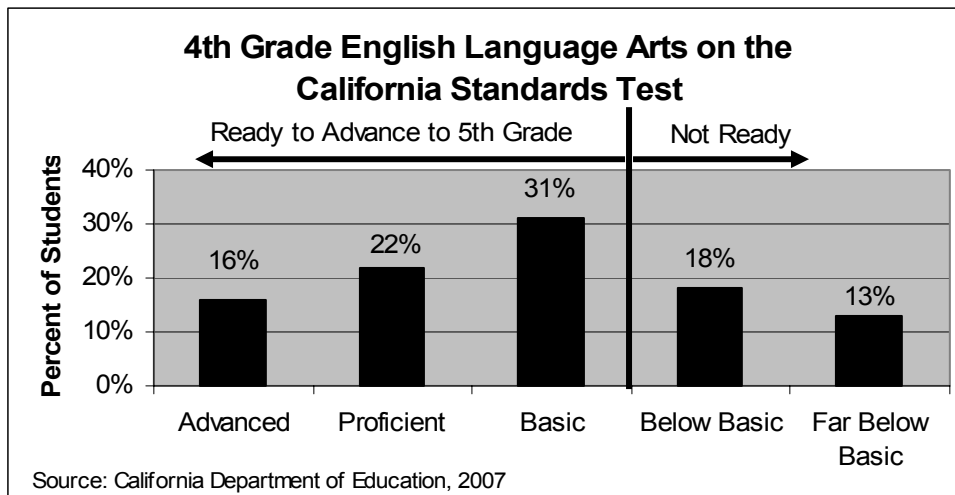
The culture of our school system must be centered on a firm belief in the potential of all students. We must provide educators with the supports and resources they need to educate our children to reach the stiff academic standards established by the State of California. Ambitious but attainable goals must be set for student achievement, and wise, creative plans should be developed annually by each school, which articulate the strategies

that will be employed to hit targeted achievement levels, including special efforts aimed at closing the achievement gaps that continue to plague our schools.

With the aspiration and vision of continuous improvement, performance management systems should be put in place to include annual goal setting, appropriate data collection, and ongoing measurement of performance against goals. This data can be used to drive support plans and assistance, to analyze what works and what does not, to offer rewards and recognition, or to intervene when necessary.

### **3. End Social Promotion Through Supports and Standards**

Social promotion hurts everyone! It is unfair to both students and teachers when young people in the same class are at dramatically different levels of preparation. Students should be able to demonstrate mastery of subject material before progressing to the next grade. This is not the case today as too many students automatically advance to the next grade despite having not learned the prerequisite material. For example, only 69% of LAUSD's fourth graders are ready to advance to fifth grade, yet the vast majority of them do.



Ending social promotion will require the school system to provide intensive after-school and weekend academic interventions to ensure that all students receive the necessary preparation to enable them to advance to the next level. These must be customized interventions to meet the unique learning needs of different subgroups including English Language Learners and special education students. The New York City Department of Education implemented a wide range of interventions targeted at third grade students when social promotion was eased in the 2003-4 academic year, since that time 99%, or 53,940, of all third grade students begin the fourth grade with the skills they need to succeed.<sup>2</sup>

### **4. Restructure Chronically Low-Performing Schools After Supports are Exhausted**

We cannot allow schools to fail their communities indefinitely. Rapid, effective response teams should be developed to provide intensive support to underperforming schools. If thoughtful intervention efforts are unsuccessful, escalating consequences should occur, including restructuring or reconstitution for chronically underperforming schools and removing employees from chronically underperforming schools as mandated by federal and state law. Any action of this sort must always be faithful to due process rights.

**5. *Distribute Family-Friendly School Report Cards***

Parents, students, and community members are often confused by a complicated accountability system heavy on jargon and data but often confusing in assessing school performance. A recent study conducted by UCLA noted that school report cards were more difficult to understand than the U.S. Internal Revenue Service forms.<sup>3</sup> Transparent, user-friendly report cards that allow parents to understand school performance and managerial capabilities should be distributed regularly to families and the community.

**6. *Conduct Surveys to Receive Feedback from School Community***

Annual participant surveys should be conducted to provide parents, students, teachers, and staff the ability to give specific, measurable feedback on their schools and district services. Feedback from these surveys will be used to identify areas to further support employees and schools and the results should be published in each school's report card.

**7. *Require School Uniforms***

We should require school uniforms to build a sense of pride and community. Uniforms relieve the adolescent pressure to compete, remind students that they are all on the same team, and minimize conflict over wearing gang colors. Neighboring Long Beach Unified School District has had great success with uniforms. Since requiring students to wear uniforms in 1992, Long Beach schools have seen a 34% drop in assault and battery cases, a 34% drop in physical fights and a 32% decrease in suspensions. Long Beach believes that its uniform policy was a key reason for these improvements.<sup>4</sup>

**8. *Service-Learning Opportunities for All Students***

Every student in LAUSD should engage in quality service-learning experiences prior to high school graduation. Service-learning opportunities promote academic excellence, personal and social development, civic responsibility, and community welfare. Additionally, service-learning experiences link community service experiences to classroom instruction while fostering civic engagement. Based on a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, participation in high quality service-learning experiences correlated with higher rates of attendance, academic achievement, positive work orientation attitudes, political awareness, and positive peer relations between teachers and students in a school.<sup>5</sup> LAUSD currently requires that all high school students participate in service-learning projects prior to graduation.<sup>6</sup> We should expand the diversification of civic engagement opportunities in high schools and extend civic engagement opportunities to the elementary and middle schools levels.

## **PILLAR 2: SAFE, SMALL, AND CLEAN**

Personal safety is a precondition to learning. No student, no educator, no school staff and no parent should feel fearful of being in or around their schools. Students cannot learn if they are afraid, and we cannot expect teachers to perform to high standards if they are worried about their safety. We must leverage and align the initiatives from non-profit organizations, cities, school district and county to make our schools and surrounding neighborhoods safe. We also need to keep our schools clean by helping students feel more ownership over their schools and by improving maintenance and repairs.

Our large impersonal schools must become smaller and more welcoming! Every student should have the option to attend a small school offering a more personalized learning experience. Small schools create communities where teachers and principals develop personal relationships with students and families. Students are less likely to fall through the cracks. They receive more individual attention. Smaller communities, where everyone knows one another are also safer - as potential conflicts can be recognized earlier and can be addressed before they boil over. We should launch a deliberate effort to transform our lowest performing middle and high schools into groups of small schools. Additionally, we should redesign some middle and elementary schools to allow for the creation of pre-Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade schools.

### **Safe, Small, and Clean Initiatives:**

- 1. Implement a Comprehensive Anti-Gang Strategy***
- 2. Expand Safe Havens and Safe Passages to All Schools***
- 3. Increase the Number of Youth Mediation Programs in Schools***
- 4. Clean Up Our Schools***
- 5. Complete Construction Program and Move All Students to a Traditional Calendar***
- 6. Transform Chronically Underperforming Schools into Small Schools***
- 7. Redesign Some Elementary and Middle Schools into K-8 Schools***

#### ***1. Implement a Comprehensive Anti-Gang Strategy***

In coordination with local organizations and with the federal, state, county, municipal and school district officials, implement a sustainable, comprehensive anti-gang strategy aimed at preventing young people from joining gangs, helping recovering youth who are currently participating in gang activity, and coordinating suppression efforts to fight violent street gangs in neighborhoods and around school campuses. Communication must be orchestrated between the Los Angeles School Police Department (LASDP), local police departments and the Sheriff's office, and local non-profits to work from common data (such as LAPD's COMPSTAT system) and share resources and information in order to keep our students safe.

#### ***2. Expand Safe Havens and Safe Passages to All Schools***

Traveling to and from school can be the most stressful part of a student's day. We have to change this. The Safe Havens Network, launched in the City of Los Angeles in July 2006, is a promising start. This initiative provides more Safe Havens for students (such as libraries, recreational centers, fire and police stations) and is building a growing cadre of trained individuals to ensure that students may pass through neighborhoods safely on their way to

and from school. We need to expand the Safe Haven program to other municipalities within LAUSD and their respective police and sheriffs departments. We also need to expand the Kid Watch programs (currently serving 54 LAUSD elementary schools); the Safe Passages component of the LA Bridges program (in 27 LAUSD middle schools); and other safety initiatives.<sup>7</sup>

**3. Increase the Number of Youth Mediation Programs in Schools**

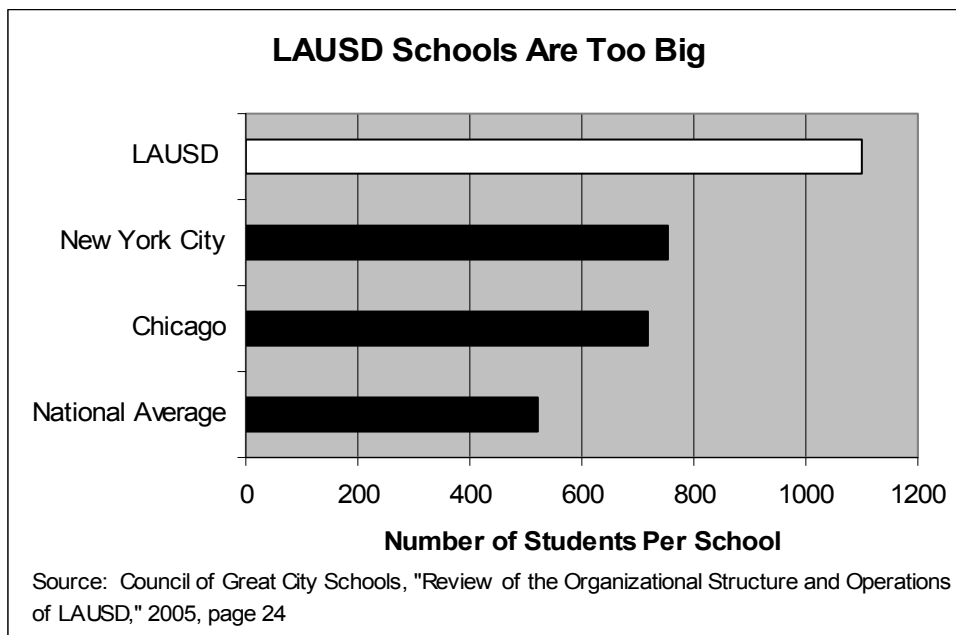
We need to increase the number of youth mediation programs within middle and high schools to teach our young people alternatives to violence. This will require collaboration between regional mediation programs and the school district. Last year, the City of Los Angeles and LAUSD convened mediation professionals from several social service organizations to train over 300 youth from 13 LAUSD middle and high schools in conflict resolution skills.<sup>8</sup> Programs such as this, teaching students to resolve problems in a non-violent manner, can help reduce school violence and provide positive lifelong decision-making skills.

**4. Clean Up Our Schools**

Students must have clean environments in which to learn! Beyond bringing together district, municipal, county and community resources to keep both our schools and the areas around our schools clean, the school community and its neighbors can hold regular school clean-up days during each school year. Over 7,000 people came together to do just that in Watts just a few months ago in a successful day of service. Our efforts to clean our schools should be complemented by an effort to “green” our schools by planting more grass, trees, and bushes to make our schools more pleasant and healthy.

**5. Complete Construction Program and Move All Students to a Traditional Calendar**

Currently, LAUSD has the largest schools in the nation. With a mean school size of over 1,100 students, LA’s schools dwarf the national average.





Because the dramatic growth in LAUSD's student population over the last several decades was not matched by a corresponding increase in the number of school seats, schools were moved to year-round calendars to address "multiple tracks" of students. Multi-track schools are typically found in the poorest areas of LAUSD which have the greatest academic and social needs. Some students in multi-track schools only receive 163 days of school compared to the standard 180 day school calendar.<sup>9</sup> LAUSD has sought to address this inequity by embarking on a massive \$19 billion school construction and renovation effort that is scheduled to move all students to a traditional calendar by 2012. We must complete the current construction program and build enough seats to ensure that all schools are put back on single track, and that no student gets his or her school year shortchanged because there are not enough seats.

**6. *Transform Chronically Underperforming Schools into Small Schools***

We must go further by transforming our large campuses into small schools. Small schools have their own unique leadership, academic focus, budget, schedule, culture, and uniforms. They feel different from one another, providing a place where every student is known by name and feels valued. The district's construction bond oversight committee should undertake a comprehensive assessment of the district's facilities to determine how, when and at what cost large campuses, particularly middle and high schools, can be reorganized to house groups of small schools. Sports teams and clubs from the large schools being transformed would survive any transformation as students in the new small schools sharing a campus could play on the same teams and could participate in the same extracurricular activities. It is critical that equity always be a key component of any school transformation strategy so that no tracking or biases be built into the new schools created.

**7. *Redesign Some Elementary and Middle Schools into K-8 Schools***

As space permits, LAUSD should transform some of its struggling elementary and middle schools into K-8 schools. This configuration would permit a child to remain in the same setting from the age of five (or four in the case of pre-school) through thirteen. This K-8 school structure enables the continuous enrolment of students in a school setting and minimizes school transitions for students and families. It also provides greater opportunity for teacher looping, a practice where teachers teach the same group of students for more than one year. Additionally, a K-8 school offers unique opportunities for cross-age learning, peer tutoring and project-based instruction using the skills and talents of the older students to support and interact with the younger ones. Many of the families who abandon the public school system after elementary school will be more likely to stay if the schools are K-8. Philadelphia has had some success with K-8 schools which has led to higher levels of involvement from parents, better connections between the teachers and the school, and a greater sense on the part of students that the adults are supportive and caring.<sup>10</sup>

### **PILLAR 3: EMPOWERED LEADERSHIP**

Outside of the family, educators have the greatest direct influence on the life of a child. Making real a vision of world-class schools depends in large part on our ability to attract, retain, develop and support outstanding principals, teachers, and staff throughout the system.

That means principals and teachers must be empowered and rewarded as professionals. It means educators should be given greater responsibility and the time and resources necessary to develop continually as professionals. And it means that everyone should be held accountable for results.

Effective leadership is inclusive. While every school must be led by an outstanding principal, leadership also extends to each and every classroom teacher, to dedicated staff, to students, and to community partners. We need to create and help actualize models of distributed leadership, recognizing that everyone who has a stake in the present and the future of public schools - students, parents, teachers, principals, staff, district administrators, community based organizations, municipalities, colleges and universities, faith-based organizations, labor unions, businesses, and foundations – needs to work together if we're going to bring fundamental, sustainable improvement to our public education system.

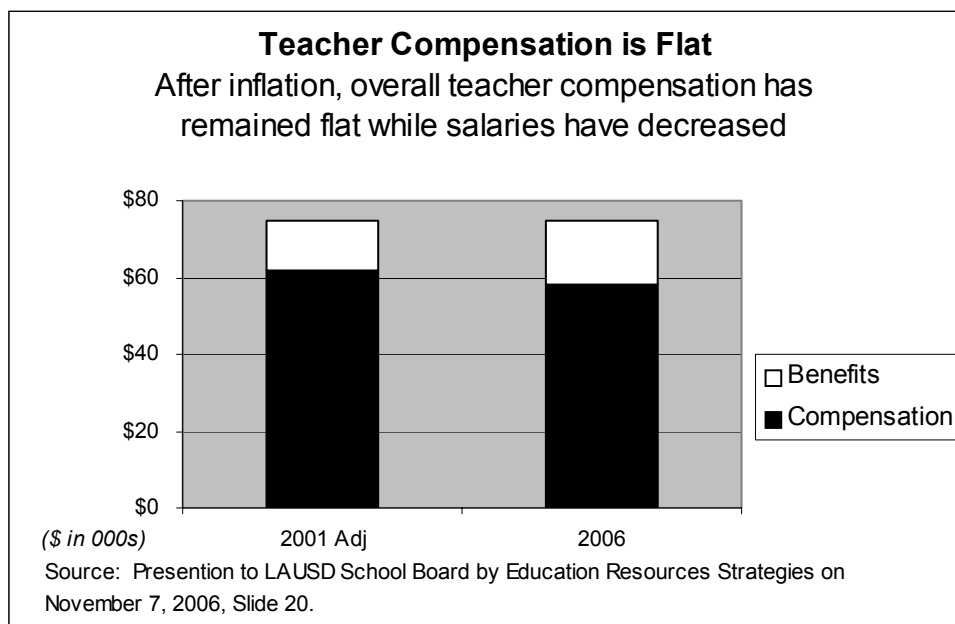
There are tens of thousands of great educators throughout LAUSD whose work should be celebrated and supported. Educators will not be able to guide, challenge and nurture students to success if we do not create the conditions for their success. That means we must provide our educators with compensation commensurate with other professions with safe and supportive facilities; and with appropriate instructional materials, modern professional development opportunities, career progression and advancement options, and positive school cultures that value and respect their opinions about pedagogy and curriculum. We must be consistently focused on recruiting, developing, and retaining high quality educators.

#### **Empowered Leadership Initiatives:**

- 1. Pay Educators More***
- 2. Empower Schools with Control Over Key Decisions***
- 3. Teachers Lead in their Classrooms***
- 4. Give Students a Real Voice in their Schools***
- 5. Launch a Leadership Academy for School Leaders***
- 6. Attract the Best Talent by Launching a "Teach in LAUSD" Campaign***

#### ***1. Pay Educators More***

If we are to attract and retain the best talent, we need to pay at levels that are commensurate with other professions and with surrounding jurisdictions. When adjusted for inflation, LAUSD teachers' total compensation has actually been flat and salaries have decreased over the last five years, a clear sign that we need to pay our teachers better.



While major salary increases will require new state funding, we estimate it will be possible to pay principals, teachers and school site staff significantly more over the next several years by streamlining central support and increasing student attendance (state funding is driven by Average Daily Attendance).

In addition to paying educators more on the whole, we need to begin to explore providing additional compensation for those teachers that take on substantial additional responsibility and deliver results at schools. These responsibilities could include but not be limited to teaching a longer school day or on weekends, teaching in the lowest performing schools or to the most challenging student populations or serving as a mentor teacher. The Denver Public Schools has rolled out a differentiated professional compensation program, and the Milken Teacher Advancement Project offers a constructive example.<sup>11,12</sup>

## **2. Empower Schools with Control Over Key Decisions**

Schools are constrained by "one size fits all" mandates. We need to move decisions away from the downtown bureaucracy and into the area closest to the classroom: the schoolhouse. School-based leaders should play a central role in making critical decisions for their school including hiring, allocation of budget resources, programmatic focus areas, and the integration of healthcare, libraries, and other public services. This increased responsibility must be coupled with extensive professional development and defined parameters. Additionally, as school leaders are given more responsibility to run their schools, they should be held accountable for student results. Giving school leaders more power to lead has been a key factor in the national success of KIPP, one of the leading operators of public schools in the country.

Principals must be liberated from the central office mandates for compliance and given more autonomy to manage their schools. A principal's time should be focused on instructional leadership, interactions with parents and students, and developing community relationships.

### **3. *Teachers Lead in their Classrooms***

Our school system must declare and define clear requirements and parameters for its A-G curriculum and follow rigorous state standards. This is not inconsistent with building in substantial flexibility, supports, and accountability for teachers to develop and creatively customize the curriculum and instructional practices they use to meet the unique needs of their students. School site personnel also should play a meaningful role in their own professional development and the district's Peer Assistance and Review process should be reinvigorated and implemented.

### **4. *Give Students a Real Voice in their Schools***

Providing students with the opportunity for ongoing, meaningful commentary about their schools and their learning will allow them to develop a greater sense of responsibility for their education and a heightened excitement for learning. Through student surveys and committees, important data and context for school improvement plans can be collected. The Chicago Public School system provides an example, having begun to make student surveys a vital part of the high school experience.<sup>13</sup> Students should also be included on committees to help drive decisions related to sports, extracurricular activities, elective courses, and other areas.

### **5. *Launch a Leadership Academy for School Leaders***

Talented principals are essential to a school's success and fundamental to the ultimate success of the school system. We need to develop a phenomenal training program to ensure that all principals in LAUSD are qualified to take on this pivotal role and lead well. A Leadership Academy for aspiring school leaders should be launched, drawing on best development practices from both the private sector and the education sector. This Leadership Academy should emphasize instructional leadership, community relations, team-building, as well as instruction in the professional practice of teaching, school facility maintenance, and financial management. The program will include both non-school site leadership training opportunities as well as opportunities for aspiring leaders to shadow successful principals on school sites. The Department of Education in New York City is one of many school districts in the country investing in leadership development programs that we can use as a model. The DOE's Leadership Academy has placed more than 110 new principals in New York City's neediest public schools with mentor support.<sup>14</sup> These schools have posted greater gains on the English Language Arts (ELA) tests than other schools city-wide with first-year principals.<sup>15</sup>

### **6. *Attract the Best Talent by Launching a "Teach in LAUSD" campaign***

We will lead an aggressive and creative recruiting effort to attract outstanding principals and teachers to "Teach in LAUSD". Similar to the "Teach NYC" campaign, a professionally managed campaign to attract "New York's Brightest," a sophisticated multi-faceted media outreach effort should be utilized, engaging partners such as Teach for America, The New Teacher Project, New Leaders for New Schools, and other organizations with proven track records for recruiting outstanding talent to public schools. During this campaign, we should look locally, making a concerted effort to influence young adults and adults changing careers to come into the teaching profession. Outstanding leaders and managers from the private and non-profit sectors are also a prime target and resource for bringing management best practices to school support services.

## **PILLAR 4: POWERFUL TEACHING AND RIGOROUS CURRICULUM**

The relationship between teacher and student is the most significant factor influencing student success, and thus reform efforts must focus on creating the instructional and organizational conditions which will enable teachers and students to consistently perform at high levels.

Every student deserves a rigorous and relevant curriculum aligned with California state standards. Unfortunately, too many of our middle and high school students in LAUSD are not taking a rigorous curriculum today. This must change! We also must expand middle and high school education to a broad-based, "A-G" curriculum that teaches strong reading, writing, and math skills but that also includes social studies, science, languages, physical education, music, and the arts. Our students live in an increasingly global society, and to compete and thrive, they must become literate in multiple languages and technologically savvy. Our goal is to develop critical thinkers and lifelong learners.

Public schools in LAUSD should offer multiple pathways for student success. While every student should have the option to attend college, some students will prefer to enter a career. Our schools should provide rigorous, sequential Career and Technical Education opportunities (which would still be aligned with A-G requirements) enabling students who acquire these skills to enter well-paying jobs. Our school system should partner with business and labor entities to create career academies so students can benefit from internships, mentorships, and career immersion.

To help students succeed in mastering a rigorous curriculum, many students need additional time and support throughout the school day, week and year. Extended class time for interventions and supplemental programs must be made available. We must also dramatically improve our programs targeting specific populations including young children, students with special needs, English Language Learners, drop-outs, and gifted and talented students.

It is teachers who are entrusted each day with making their classrooms fun, exciting and alive so that students will want to learn. Far too often in LAUSD today, however, teachers do not have a voice in their classrooms. To keep teachers motivated and effective, it is essential that teachers have a knowledgeable and growing understanding of their practice and have the space, technology and materials, and supports they need to do their jobs. They also need smaller class sizes. We need to support the development of professional learning communities where teachers make instructional decisions based on student achievement data.

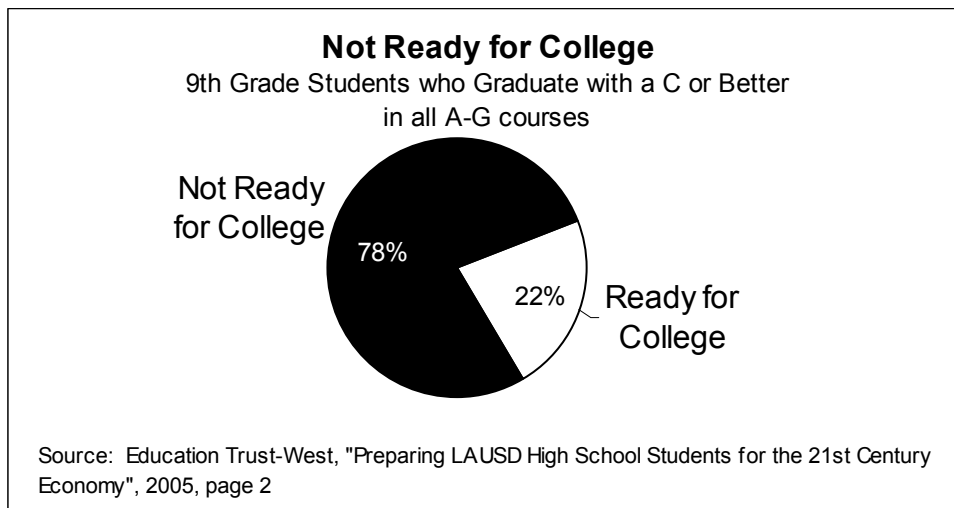
### **Powerful Teaching and Rigorous Curriculum Initiatives:**

- 1. Rigorous, Relevant Standards-Based, "A-G" Curriculum for All Students***
- 2. Provide more Opportunities for Students to Learn a Foreign Language in Elementary School***
- 3. Bring Back the Arts and Physical Education***
- 4. Extend Opportunities for High School Students to Receive Career-Oriented Technical Training and Take College Courses in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grades***
- 5. Extend School Day and Week for Support and Enrichment Programs***
- 6. Offer "Summer Bridge Programs" to All Students to Help with Transition to Middle and High School***

- 7. Create 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Academies to Help Transition to A-G Curriculum and Small Schools**
- 8. Additional time for English Language Learners with Multiple Approaches to Early Language Learning**
- 9. Expand Programs for Gifted and Talented Students**
- 10. Comply with the Terms of the Special Education Modified Consent Decree**
- 11. Create Advisory/Mentor Programs**
- 12. Track Drop-Outs in Real-Time and Provide Supports**
- 13. Free, Pre-Kindergarten Education for All Four-Year Olds**
- 14. Create Professional Learning Communities on School Sites to Transform Teaching and Learning**
- 15. Use Student Achievement Data to Drive Instruction**
- 16. Decrease Class Size by Transferring Resources from the Bureaucracy to School Sites**
- 17. Embrace Technology to Help Drive Teaching and Learning**

**1. Rigorous, Relevant Standards-Based, "A-G" Curriculum for All Students**

Every student in LAUSD should have the option to attend college. Our schools must offer a rigorous, relevant curriculum aligned with the California state standards for each grade level. This has not traditionally been the case as large segments of underserved students have not been given a college preparatory curriculum and instead have been tracked into remedial classes. We should provide all high school students with an A-G curriculum that is required for admission to a four-year state university. *Rigorous curriculum* challenges the learner, while a *relevant curriculum* is one that is recognized both by teacher and student as being pertinent. Given the wide diversity of students in LAUSD, the curriculum must be both aligned with standards and customized to meet the unique needs of specific communities and students.



**2. *Provide more Opportunities for Students to Learn a Foreign Language in Elementary School***

The human brain is much more adept at learning languages at young ages, yet in most American schools, we wait until middle school to begin foreign language instruction. We need to push our elementary schools to offer foreign languages which will be most valuable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including Spanish, Arabic and the languages of the Pacific Rim, beginning in the first grade.

**3. *Bring Back the Arts and Physical Education***

In the nation's creative capital, art, drama, music, theatre and physical education have been seriously neglected in our schools. We need to incorporate these disciplines into our schools and value the role of the humanities in the development of human beings. We can also utilize part-time teachers and create stronger links and relationships with the region's fine museums, libraries, non-profits art organizations and volunteers to supplement school staff. Arts and physical education can also be integrated into our after-school programs and we should collaborate with municipal recreation and parks departments, Boys' and Girls' Clubs, YMCAs and youth sports leagues to ensure that all students receive the necessary physical education opportunities.

**4. *Extend Opportunities for High School Students to Receive Career-Oriented Technical Training and Take College Courses in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grades***

We should strengthen the link between rigorous academic experiences to opportunities for high school students to pursue career and college options. This important link will help students envision themselves in meaningful careers and important roles in society. We need high schools offering electives complementing the A-G curriculum, which lead students to receive entry-level industry certification, community college certification, and university credits. High school students should be able to earn credits towards college and also sample career pathways such as healthcare, construction and engineering, and media and entertainment while in high school. These efforts require close coordination between our high schools, community colleges and universities as well as a coordinated effort with public transportation and law enforcement leaders to help ensure students can move efficiently and safely between their high school campuses and colleges or internships.

**5. *Extend School Day and Week for Support and Enrichment Programs***

School days should be extended and Saturday school utilized to ensure students receive enrichment and support! Programs for students struggling with math and literacy, additional support for English Language Learners and opportunities to retake core classes would all be possible with an extended school day and week. This extra time could also be used to offer customized programs to gifted students and to allow for additional programs in the arts, drama, music and physical education. Students' performance on fair diagnostics should determine which students require additional time for intervention in core subjects and student choice should be the determinant for the additional time for enrichment. Schools sites should have flexibility in building their master schedules and choosing the most effective means for extending the school week and year based on their own unique populations and needs. Teachers and recognized excellent after-school programs such as LA's BEST should run extended day and/or week programs. Currently, 25,000 children aged 5-12 take part in LA's BEST at no cost to their parents. UCLA researchers found that second

and fourth grade students who participated in the program showed a significant increase in the amount of reading overall and better attendance rates in middle and high school.<sup>16</sup>

**6. Offer "Summer Bridge Programs" to All Students to Help with Transition to Middle and High School**

The transitions between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades and between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade are the two most difficult for students in a pre-K-12 school system. Summer bridge programs ranging from 1 – 4 weeks could thoughtfully support transitioning students. Teachers of these programs should diagnose students' skill levels and help prepare them for the cultural shift of moving from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school.

**7. Create 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Academies to Help Transition to A-G Curriculum and Small Schools**

9<sup>th</sup> grade academies, in which 9<sup>th</sup> graders are housed away from the rest of the student population, should be utilized to provide 9<sup>th</sup> graders with the support they will need to master the A-G curriculum. For the near term, it is the case that many students have not taken pre-college prep curriculum in middle school, and they will be asked to take an A-G curriculum in high school. Intensive supports in reading and mathematics will be required to help many students with this transition. Organizing students in 9<sup>th</sup> grade academies can also create a more personalized environment and an increased likelihood that students will successfully complete the 9<sup>th</sup> grade – the year in which most students drop out. Additionally, 9<sup>th</sup> grade academies are conducive to building new cultures of hope and student achievement, particularly so during the first year of transforming a large school into groups of small schools.

**8. Additional time for English Language Learners with Multiple Approaches to Early Language Learning**

40% of the students in LAUSD are English Learners;<sup>17</sup> and the vast majority of these are Spanish speakers. For these students, an intensive focus on instruction specifically designed for second language acquisition is imperative. Multiple approaches to early language learning must include the arts and sensory-motor learning in addition to regular classroom instruction. At all age levels, English Learners should be receiving additional time in school and in creative and recreational activities that support second language acquisition.

**9. Expand Programs for Gifted and Talented Students**

We must sustain a coordinated program of innovative instructional strategies, proven to work, to meet the education needs of gifted and talented students. At all levels, GATE funding can be used to assist teachers in broadening their instruction, creating enrichment opportunities, and designing individual programs to meet students' needs. We must do a better job of identifying underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students earlier to place into gifted programs.

**10. Comply with the Terms of the Special Education Modified Consent Decree**

Nearly 11% of the LAUSD student population is identified as eligible for special education services. Instruction and procedures to meet the unique needs of each child with a disability is defined for LAUSD by the Chanda Smith case and the Modified Consent Decree. Of the 18 outcomes identified by the court monitor, 13 outcomes are currently out of



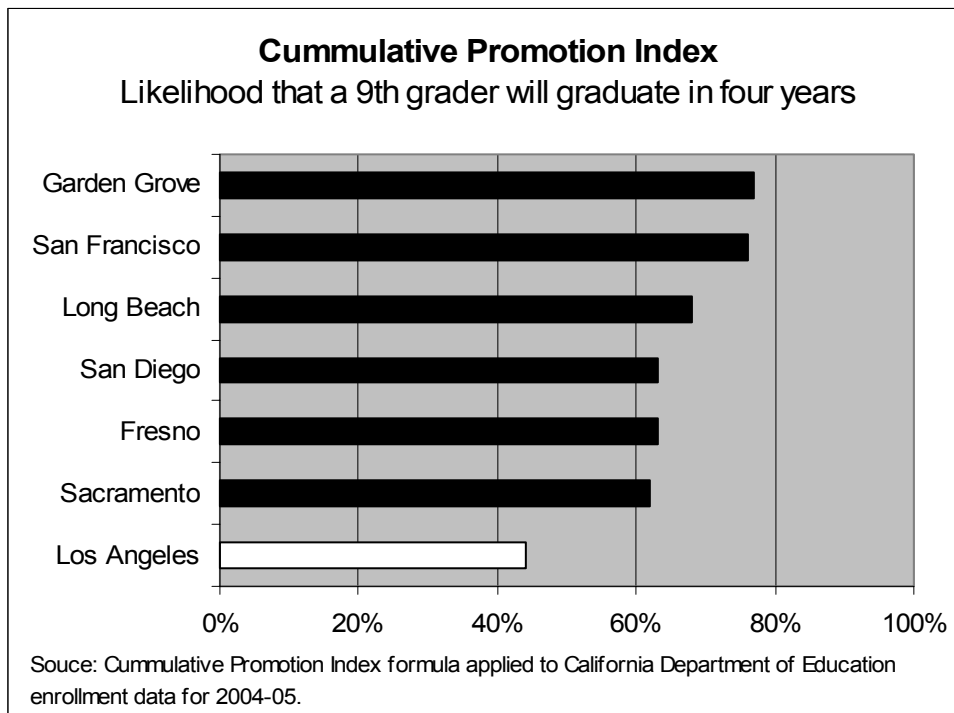
compliance. We must put in place the resources and the expertise to comply with all 18 outcomes of the MCD and serve all special education students.<sup>18</sup> Early intervention practices, student support teams, response to intervention and site level programs such as Safe and Civil Schools have shown to reduce special education referrals and to provide strong support for special needs students.

**11. Create Advisory/Mentor Programs**

One way to ensure every student has a strong relationship with a responsible adult is to assign all students an on-campus advisor. These advisors would complement the work of counselors by utilizing a guiding curriculum to address the social and developmental needs of young people and to help them prepare for the future. Ratios of advisors to students need to be small to be effective, ideally around 25:1 or less. Both school employees and volunteers from throughout the city should be used to maintain a small ratio.

**12. Track Drop-Outs in Real-Time and Provide Supports**

We need to redesign real-time processes and systems for managing the drop-out problem in our district. Five recent independent studies indicate that only half of the students who start 9<sup>th</sup> grade finish in four years. We must do better! No longer can we allow students to walk away from schooling without understanding why they left or without having in place strong intervention and targeted instructional and support programs.



**13. Free, Pre-Kindergarten Education for All Four-Year Olds**

Participation in pre-school has a strong positive effect on subsequent school achievement. This is particularly true for second-language children who profit greatly from the additional exposure to English prior to kindergarten as well as students who are often wrongly designated to special education. The State of Connecticut has shown leadership by investing in early education.<sup>19</sup> They experienced a two-thirds decrease in preschool

students requiring special services when they started kindergarten and children were three times less likely to require special education during their kindergarten year. Connecticut estimated a cost savings of \$4,128,000 in the area of special education programs over a four-year period.<sup>20</sup>

We should work to make on-site pre-Kindergarten education available for every four-year old attending a public school in LAUSD. We can coordinate and expand state pre-school, Head Starts and other programs to develop the capacity to serve every four-year old. Free pre-Kindergarten is an initiative that will take a substantial amount of additional funding. It should be rolled out first in the highest need areas and then further expanded as funds are obtained for the program. The LAUP plan prepared by LA County's First Five commission provides a roadmap for this initiative.

#### ***14. Create Professional Learning Communities on School Sites to Transform Teaching and Learning***

Over the past few years, LAUSD has spent millions of dollars on various professional development efforts including "Thinking Maps", "Learning Walks" and literacy strategies. Each of these efforts was based upon solid research and was instructionally sound, but they were often not fully understood and supported by teachers and administrators. A "professional learning community" should be developed at each campus, where teacher-driven conversations centered on the teaching and learning of the school and its unique array of students and needs. Timely research and data coupled with classroom experience form the basis of the conversation. To support these communities, common planning time must be made available during the school week and year for teachers to interact around focused instructional goals by grade level, and by department, houses, and teams. Within these communities, teachers' doors should be open as administrators, mentor teachers and colleagues are consistently observing lessons to learn and provide each other feedback. Release time would be provided to teachers, administrators and school site staff so that they can observe high performing colleagues at other school sites. Instructional leaders, including principals and mentor teachers, would regularly support new and experienced teachers by modeling classes, giving feedback and providing supports.

Animo Inglewood, a charter high school run by Green Dot Public Schools that serves the Inglewood community provides a strong example of school site based professional development. The school attributes a large part of its API growth from 622 to 739 in four years to its school site based professional development. School starts late every Wednesday to allow for an hour and a half of professional development for the entire staff, for grade levels or for departments. Eight days are built into the work year for site-driven professional development created by administrators and teachers; and teacher mentors, teacher buddies and administrators walk in and out of classrooms on a daily basis modeling and observing classes and providing support.<sup>21</sup>

#### ***15. Use Student Achievement Data to Drive Instruction***

Teachers and administrators need regular, reliable, disaggregated data to understand each student's performance and the progress of the student body. With quality information about student learning and performance, teachers address unique learning needs and determine which students require intervention after school or on weekends. The main purpose for data in effective schools is not to punish, but rather to identify areas where

students need support. Regional higher performing school districts in Southern California such as Long Beach and Garden Grove have been using data effectively for instructional planning, student monitoring, and program evaluation.<sup>22</sup> User-friendly data should drive decision making at our schools with systems in place in the district to ensure that all teachers receive student achievement data about incoming students before school commences and then routinely throughout the school year.

***16. Decrease Class Size by Transferring Resources from the Bureaucracy to School Sites***

Teachers in LAUSD are consistently teaching in class sizes well above 30 students, particularly at the middle school and the high school levels. Class sizes should be decreased to create more manageable learning environments. Even without additional funding from the state, class sizes could be lowered by moving resources from the central and local district bureaucracies back to school sites and into classrooms.

***17. Embrace Technology to Help Drive Teaching and Learning***

This is an international world and technology is one of the key currencies. Our schools must embrace technology as a critical asset. Students, teachers, and administrative staff will need the benefits of technology to reach the high standards set within our schools and the global economy. Technology has the power to expedite language acquisition, ease the writing process, and inspire music composition. It should be viewed as a complement to excellent teaching. Site-specific tech plans should aim at boosting instructional excellence. Often, students are more adept in using technology than teachers. Summer institutes and professional development programming will address this situation, so that teachers have the requisite background to prepare students to succeed.

## **PILLAR 5: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

For students to succeed, parents, caregivers, and family members have to feel welcome on the school campus and have a strong connection to the school. We need to see schools as neighborhood centers, deeply embedded in the fabric of family life and their communities.

Schools should be different and distinctive. Schools in South Gate, Boyle Heights, Koreatown, North Hollywood, Gardena, Northridge, and Venice should not be the same. How could they be?

Each school community should spell out the responsibilities and commitments of students, parents, teachers, and administrators. In addition, each school community should have a representative school-based body to drive the decisions facing each school. Schools should establish relationships with a broad range of partners including parent groups, local businesses, social service and arts organizations, health care, libraries, nearby parks and community-based organizations, universities, and others. Each has something to offer to students and families; better alignment of services can benefit everyone.

### **Family and Community Involvement Initiatives:**

- 1. Get Families Involved in the Education of their Children**
- 2. Open Family Resource Centers at All Schools**
- 3. Education Programs for Families, with a Focus on Teaching English**
- 4. Engage Colleges and Universities in the Success of Schools**
- 5. Create a "Commitment to School Excellence"**

#### **1. Get Families Involved in the Education of their Children**

Parental, caregiver and family involvement in a student's academic career is highly correlated with student engagement and success. Schools can do a great deal to help families feel engaged. They need to offer a "welcoming" process for new parents, caregivers and students to introduce them to the school and its staff and offer a wide range of opportunities for family involvement. Whether it is serving on the school's governance board, helping out with tutoring, serving lunch, or simply reading with their own sons or daughters, parents should be educated on all the ways they can get involved in their schools. They must also stress the importance of education and provide support and discipline at home to ensure that students focus on their future. Communications between schools and families should be consistent and often. Organizations, such as Families in Schools, Parent Institute for Quality Education, Boyle Heights Learning Collaborative, Community Asset Development Re-defining Education (CADRE), OneLA, ACORN, the LA Parent's Union, and other non-profit organizations who partner with schools have created models that work. We need to replicate these models.

#### **2. Open Family Resource Centers at All Schools**

Opening an active Family Resource Center in each LAUSD school would go a long way in creating links for families to an array of services – including healthcare, adult education and parenting classes, crisis intervention, job training, and family counseling – that are now

disparate in most neighborhoods. In some cases, services could be co-located. The Family Resource Center at LAUSD's K-12 Elizabeth Learning Center is a fine model to consider.<sup>23</sup>

### **3. *Education Programs for Families, with a Focus on Teaching English***

Many parents struggle with their own low levels of education and would greatly benefit from training for themselves. English and other skill building classes should be offered to non-English speakers regularly at night through the Family Resource Center. Training programs could be led by non-profits or parents and could include problem-solving, budgeting, parenting skills, health, and nutrition.

### **4. *Engage Colleges and Universities in the Success of Schools***

Los Angeles is rich in institutions of higher education. We need to expand on the many partnerships that exist today between our colleges, universities and K-12 schools. Universities provide valuable services and resources to both educators and students on school sites. Universities can play an integral role in ongoing teacher professional development by participating in professional learning communities on actual school sites. Additionally, undergraduate and graduate students can serve as mentors, researchers and volunteers and learn about the social and educational needs of society while gaining "real-world" experience. Graduate student researchers and faculty can also evaluate the success of practices at schools, and colleges and universities can expand their outreach programs to bring high school students onto their campuses. While many of our colleges and universities are already providing support and resources to our K-12 public schools, we need to expand those efforts and tie them more and more individual school sites.

### **5. *Create a "Commitment to School Excellence"***

Across our entire region, many institutions share a common interest in the success of our young people. The Boston Compact, built thoughtfully and collaboratively in that city over time, provides a fine starting example of a community's commitment to its schools;<sup>24</sup> the Los Angeles area Chamber of Commerce has been developing a similar expression of community responsibility. We will invite key community institutions, including the school district, city and county governments, cultural institutions, higher education, business, labor, faith-based organizations, and major civic and nonprofit institutions to make organizational commitments on programs and resources to benefit our young people – including college programs, safety around schools, library hours, access to health care, apprenticeships, mentorships and so forth.

The Commitment for School Excellence also would include a customized compact for each school to sign that is explicit about expectations for students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Responsibilities defined by school sites would cover behavior, dress, days and hours of attendance, homework, and ongoing communication.

## **PILLAR 6: MORE MONEY TO SCHOOLS**

In order to make the significant transformation envisioned by The Schoolhouse framework, we must change the resource equation and get more money into our classrooms. The first step is to move funds away from LAUSD's central office and directly into schools. The central office and administrative structures of the district must shrink.

We should immediately look to Sacramento to increase funding for our schools. In the short term, we must work hard together to get a fair share from Sacramento for our low performing schools through programs such as SB 1133 and the new construction bond program.

In addition to increasing efficiency and advocacy, we need to launch an aggressive campaign to inspire foundations, corporations, and individuals to help support the improvements so needed in our public schools. We must rally the community around a Campaign for LAUSD and raise \$200 million over the next five years to help propel and sustain the transformation.

In the longer term, after we have built a much more efficient central office, raised funds from foundations and individuals, and can show promising progress, we need to explore new local revenue sources to increase funding for our public schools.

It is the primary mission of the central office to support the daily efforts of teachers, administrators and schools site staff to educate all children. Schools should be given the financial resources, support systems and authority they need in order to serve students effectively. Unfortunately, the district's current central office has a culture that has long been compliance-oriented, with a command and control mentality rather than by a service-oriented approach. We must invert the hierarchy so that schools are empowered and the central and regional offices play supporting roles. The adjustment envisioned here will necessarily shake up norms and habits long entrenched within the district. This reorientation is imperative. It reflects a deep shift in values and will require time.

Lastly, the systems and processes of the central office must be redesigned to allow for dollars to follow students directly to school sites rather than be centralized and redistributed.

### **More Money to Schools Initiatives:**

- 1. Get Money Away from the Bureaucracy and into Our Schools***
- 2. Comprehensive Audit of Central Office to Identify Cost Savings***
- 3. Drive More Funding through Increased Attendance***
- 4. Campaign for LAUSD***
- 5. Increase State Funding for Public Education***
- 6. A Service-Minded Central Office***
- 7. School-Site Autonomy over Budgets***
- 8. Leverage Expertise of Other Districts and Education Providers to Implement Reforms***
- 9. Create a Data Driven Organization***

**1. *Get Money Away from the Bureaucracy and into Our Schools***

Far too much money continues to support LAUSD's bureaucracy today and not enough is making it to school sites. For example, according to Education Resource Strategies, non-school positions at LAUSD increased by 985 positions or 12% between 2001 and 2006.<sup>25</sup> We must change this pattern! Money, resources and people from the central office need to be moved to schools sites and focused directly on educating children. Additionally, the structures, systems and culture of the bureaucracy need to be transformed in order to improve organizational efficiencies and get more money into classrooms and schools.

**2. *Comprehensive Audit of Central Office to Identify Cost Savings***

A thoughtful streamlining of the functions formerly provided by the central office will require a comprehensive audit to identify those areas where improved service and efficiencies can be gained. Organizations of scale and excellence routinely operate with strong mechanisms to ensure transparency and continuous improvement.

**3. *Drive More Funding through Increased Attendance***

Implementing initiatives to improve attendance could dramatically improve school performance and drive more revenue to our schools. Schools, funded by the state based primarily on average daily attendance, receive more money per student as attendance improves. Not surprisingly, successful public schools have higher attendance rates.

**4. *Campaign for LAUSD***

Public funds appropriately provide the bulk of operational funding for public education. Building on these and cognizant of the needs of our students, we should invite foundations and individual donors to join in the transformation effort as partners and funders. We will launch an aggressive campaign to raise \$200 million over the next five years to provide additional support to our schools. For this campaign to be attractive, philanthropists' confidence will need to increase on the belief that an investment in LAUSD will yield an important social return. A separate non-profit will be created to manage the fundraising for the district. Through a transparent process, donors should be able to earmark their funds to an array of specific efforts from uniforms to leadership development to funding for Mandarin language instruction.

**5. *Increase State Funding for Public Education***

We must advocate for creative funding solutions in California's post-Proposition 13 era. The first step is to make sure the LAUSD is getting its fair share of all of the current funding programs in Sacramento, in particular, SB 1133 funds for lower performing schools and funds for construction from bonds passed in the most recent election. In the long term, we need to explore other ways to increase funds for schools. Our state, once a national leader in public education, has fallen woefully behind. It is certain that the dollars spent on public education need to be reallocated and spent more wisely, as advocated throughout the Schoolhouse framework, but it is hard to imagine a compelling argument for improvement that could justify California ranking in the lower half of states in the country in per pupil funding. Ultimately, we will need to demonstrate that improvement has indeed begun to generate support for the thorny financial choices ahead.

## **6. *A Service-Minded Central Office***

The district's central office must become more service oriented. Service Level Agreements defining the services and service levels provided to schools should be developed by the central office and provided to each school. Expectations of what services the central office will provide, when they will provide them, and at what level of quality need to be clear and explicit. Departments within the district should be held accountable by the school sites for meeting these service levels. Additional operational flexibility should be provided to school sites if departments within the central office consistently fail to deliver. A performance culture must be developed within the central office which prioritizes and delivers on serving schools.

## **7. *School-Site Autonomy over Budgets***

If we are to hold schools and educators accountable, they must be provided with control over their own budgets. We have to support this autonomy with extensive professional development, clear accountability and measurable outcomes. A critical step is the redesign of financial management systems and processes to allow school site staffs to control budgets, ensuring that dollars follow students directly to school sites and to provide transparency. School leaders will be given training and parameters for managing their budgets.

## **8. *Leverage Expertise of Other Districts and Education Providers to Implement Reforms***

All of the initiatives proposed within the Pillars of School Excellence have been implemented successfully in some urban schools in the United States and in some schools in Los Angeles. We need to engage institutions of all kinds, including school districts, universities, education service providers, family support organizations and education providers to help transform our schools. The size of our endeavour and its urgency necessitates that we reach out to the very best education organizations in the country. Groups like New Leaders for New Schools, whose talent for training principals is highly regarded,<sup>26</sup> and KIPP, which operates high performing middle schools throughout the country,<sup>27</sup> need to be included in our efforts. We also must tap the expertise of leaders in such school districts as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and other cities that have already embarked on comprehensive reforms so that we can learn from their implementation experience.

## **9. *Create a Data Driven Organization***

Our school system needs accurate and extensive data to track student performance, employee performance, school performance and district performance. We need robust student information systems to enable the creation of a portfolio of student-related data including attendance, academic performance results by lesson, special education needs, and English language acquisition. We also need a financial management system that can provide school site leaders and the central office with real time financial information so that they can spend money in the most efficient way for kids. Critical in any information management system is the need for strong reporting capabilities that allow data to be delivered quickly and in a user friendly format.



## **PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SCHOOLHOUSE**

We must begin working now to ensure that every child receives a world-class education to prepare him or her for college, work, and life. The Schoolhouse framework **will** work. We need to come together to give life to this framework at schools throughout the district. Our efforts must have an intense sense of urgency by everyone in our community

The following are the steps we will take to ensure that the Pillars of School Excellence strategies are implemented at all schools in LAUSD:

### **Create “Commitment to School Excellence” - a compact between all members of the LAUSD community to provide every child with a quality public education**

Let’s bring together parents, students, teachers, administrators, community groups, faith-based organizations, businesses, labor unions, elected officials, municipalities and the entire LAUSD community to sign “The Commitment to School Excellence”, a pledge to use The Schoolhouse framework as the foundation to improve all schools. By signing this commitment, individuals and organizations will be agreeing to actively participate in our community’s effort to provide every child with an excellent education. Town halls, community meetings, education roundtables and online gatherings will be held weekly throughout the community to gather input from parents, teachers and community members on the Schoolhouse framework and to get people to sign “The Commitment to School Excellence”. Feedback from all of these sessions will be used to further refine the Pillars of School Excellence initiatives and actions. We will continue organizing and building support until the Schoolhouse framework has been successfully implemented in all of our schools.

### **Conduct Comprehensive Audit of LAUSD to identify all sources of inefficiency and efficiency so funds and resources can be redirected to schools**

The district bureaucracy must become more efficient. While there are thousands of talented, able people working within the district’s central office, the system itself is broken, built upon multiple layers of bureaucracy to support a centralized, outmoded structure. We must get the best organizational and business minds together to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the district’s massive central office. The goal is to identify specific inefficiencies and efficiencies within the system and determine how much money can be pushed from the central bureaucracy to our schools. This assessment should begin immediately.

### **Develop Comprehensive Plan based on The Schoolhouse framework that can be rolled out throughout LAUSD**

The Schoolhouse framework should be implemented at each of the 768 schools in LAUSD.<sup>28</sup> The framework is both aspirational and substantive. It initially should be implemented in several clusters of our lowest performing schools. These school clusters could serve as demonstration projects where ideas can be tried, evaluated, and strengthened to show the promise of the many building blocks that form the Pillars of School Excellence. The work from the demonstration project will also provide us with significant knowledge about how to roll out the Pillars of School Excellence initiatives quickly and wisely. As we learn, we must develop a comprehensive plan for implementing the framework at all schools – with their partnership and participation – in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

### **Visit School Sites to and Develop Customized Implementation Plans**

Any plan developed from the Schoolhouse framework must include a process for customizing that plan to meet the unique needs of each school and student population. Time must be spent with teachers, administrators and parents and caregivers around each school to listen, learn and identify what is working and where additional support, direction and resources are needed to successfully implement the plan. Initiatives already working for students on each campus should be honored and embraced. The Schoolhouse is not a one-size-fits all, prescriptive plan but rather a constellation of initiatives that can be customized and refined for each school community.

### **LET'S GET TO WORK**

Not another day, month or year can pass while our children wait for their schools to function successfully. We must all come together quickly and begin the work of implementing The Schoolhouse framework. The district, educators, community members, local governments, faith-based organizations, higher education; civic, business, and labor organizations, along with students, parents and families must commit to dramatically improve LAUSD's schools as fast as humanly possible. We hope to partner closely with the school district to carry out these reforms.

Research and practice show that it is possible for public schools to become places of excellence and achievement. Giving more autonomy to teachers works! Providing students with more time in the school day for intervention and enrichment works! Setting high standards with a college preparatory curriculum inspires students to rise to the occasion! Providing parents and families with meaningful ways to participate in their schools creates involvement and connection. The Pillars of School Excellence within The Schoolhouse work. Together, the pillars hold up our dreams, hopes and expectations for a school system of excellence for all our children.

If we know The Schoolhouse works, it is time for us to move forward and stop making excuses. Let's not spend more time discussing why we can't roll out practices that are good for kids in our schools and let's focus our energy and passion on bringing them to life and scale. It is every child's civil right to have an excellent public education, and we will not stop until every student in Los Angeles can attend a great public school.

Let's build this Schoolhouse together, in partnership, pillar by pillar!

## ENDNOTES

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- ACLU of Southern California
- ACORN
- Alliance for a Better Community
- Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools
- Annenberg Foundation
- Armenian National Committee of America
- Asian Pacific American Legal Center
- Aspire Public Schools
- Belmont High School
- Bert Corona Charter School
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Board of Public Works
- Boyle Heights Learning Collaborative
- Broad Foundation
- Bryant Temple AME Church
- CADRE
- Cal State Dominguez Hills
- Cal State LA
- California Business for Education Excellence
- California Business Roundtable
- California Charter Schools Association
- California Community Foundation
- California Endowment
- California School Employee Association
- California State University, LA
- California Teachers Association
- California Wellness Foundation
- Campaign for College Opportunity
- CARECEN
- CD-Tech
- City Attorney's Office
- City Council of Los Angeles
- Claremont Graduate University
- Cleveland High School
- Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families
- Commission on Disability
- Community Coalition
- Community Development Department
- Community Partners
- Crenshaw Cougar Coalition
- Crystal Stairs
- Curtiss Middle School
- Dakota Communications
- Department of Aging
- Department of Recreation & Parks
- Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley
- EducateLA
- Education Coordinating Council
- Education Trust West
- ExEd
- Families in Schools
- Federacion de Clubes Yucatecos
- First AME Church
- First Five LA
- Foshay Learning Center
- Fulfillment Fund
- Gates Foundation
- Granada Hills Charter School
- Green Dot Public Schools
- Harvard Business School
- Hawaiian Elementary School
- Healthy City
- Hispanas Organized for Political Equality
- Hope Street
- Inner City Struggle
- Institute of Popular Education of Southern California
- Irvine Foundation
- KIPP
- LA Chamber of Commerce
- LA City Human Relations Commission
- LA County Children's Planning Council
- LA County Department of Public Health
- LA County Office of Education
- LA Parents Union
- LA Public Library
- LA Trade Tech
- Los Angeles Police Department
- LA's BEST
- Los Angeles Universal Preschool
- LAUSD
- Literacy Network of Greater LA
- Long Beach Unified
- Loyola Marymount University
- Magnolia High School
- MALDEF
- Manual Arts High School
- Miracle Center Apostolic Church
- Music Center
- New Capital
- New Leaders for New Schools
- New Schools Better Neighborhoods
- New Schools Venture Fund
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- New Visions Foundation
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- Bret Harte Middle School
- Parents Action for Children

- Parent's Collaborative
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- Playa del Rey Education Foundation
- POWER
- Project Grad
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- SALEF
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- Santee High School
- LAUSD School Police
- SCOPE
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- SEIU 99
- Soledad Enrichment Action
- Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Greater LA
- Springboard Schools
- St. James AME Church
- California Department of Education
- Stevenson Middle School
- Teach for America
- Teamsters Local 572
- The Accelerated School
- The Advancement Project
- The California Wellness Foundation
- The New Teacher Project
- University of California College Prep
- UCLA Anderson School
- UCLA IDEA
- UCLA Mental Health Project
- UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Sciences
- UCLA School of Law
- United Federation of Teachers
- United Way
- Urban Education Partnership
- Urban League
- USC School of Social Work & Education
- USC Tomas Rivera Public Policy Institute
- United Teachers of Los Angeles
- Valley Industry and Commerce Association
- Vaughn Next Generation Learning Center
- Verizon
- View Park Prep
- Village Nation
- Washington Mutual
- Watts Labor Community Action Committee
- Youth Policy Institute
- Zero to Three