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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 15, 2021

L.A. School Board Renews its Commitment to Community Schools

LOS ANGELES, June 15, 2021 – The Los Angeles Unified Board of Education voted unanimously today to support the resolution, “Sustaining, Deepening, and Expanding the District’s Community Schools Initiative.” Community Schools are an innovative school model that builds deeper partnerships with families and the surrounding communities to enhance student learning and provide greater resources and wraparound supports to students and families. Board President Kelly Gonez and Board Member Jackie Goldberg brought the resolution, with Board Members Tanya Ortiz-Franklin and Scott M. Schmerelson cosponsoring.

There are currently plans for 40 community schools in the Los Angeles Unified. With this resolution, that number will increase to 70 over the next three years. All Community Schools will further benefit from additional coaching, administrative support, and evaluation to ensure they are able to fully implement the model and build strong community connections.

“The Community Schools Initiative is one of the ways we are working to ensure our public schools can meet the needs of the whole child,” Board President Gonez, who authored the resolution, said. “Now, more than ever, we must be holistic in our approach to student need. I am proud that several schools in my District have become Community Schools, and this resolution will help them reach their full potential in deepening supports for students and families.”

“I’m glad that the Board is taking steps to expand the Community Schools model to strengthen collaborative partnerships and reach more of our kids and families,” Board Vice President Nick Melvoin said. “I look forward to understanding and learning from the impact of this initiative to improve academic outcomes and support student growth.”

“The community school approach sets up our students for academic and life success by harnessing the power of strategic community partnerships and key health, social services, and child development resources,” Board Member Goldberg, a co-author, said. “These supports and opportunities are carefully selected to meet the unique needs and interests of our students and families. Deep engagement with families and community members helps enrich curriculum and learning opportunities, which in turn reinforces community pride and a commitment to shared goals, all while strengthening

the school. This is an investment that we know leads to increased graduation rates, higher attendance, reduction in the racial achievement gap, and more students advancing to the next grade level.”

“Community Schools should be expanded because they provide greater opportunities for our students and greater support for that campus,” Board Member Dr. George J. McKenna III said. “The prioritization of schools in the HEET, Black Student Achievement Plan and those with significant low-income enrollments will direct much needed investments in our students who need the most support to succeed.”

"Community schools have been a successful strategy in Board District 2 for over a decade," Board Member Mónica García said. "We have learned that belief systems and human capital along with financial resources are the frame for students like we have seen at Felicitas & Gonazalo Mendez High School, Esteban E. Torres High School and Robert F. Kennedy Community Schools."

“Innovation and transformation are only as good as the impact it has on our schools and students,” Board Member Schmerelson, a co-sponsor, said. “Community Schools have proven to be effective models. I applaud the Board for expanding investments for the community schools initiative. These efforts will continue to close opportunity gaps, tailor supports and services for our most vulnerable students and make it easier for them to strive.”

“The Community Schools pillars help us create transformative and systemic changes in our schools by integrating student support, extending learning time, strengthening family and community partnerships and fostering collaborative leadership,” Board Member Tanya Ortiz Franklin, a co-sponsor, said. “As we continue to work toward rectifying historical and systemic inequities in our schools, I’m proud to co-sponsor the investment and expansion of our Community Schools.”

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