



# Increasing Opportunities and Supports for Our Homeless Students and Families

*Board Member Gonez, Co-sponsored by Board President Garcia and Board Member Melvoin  
Adopted November 13, 2018*

Whereas, The Los Angeles Unified School District is committed to the academic success of all students with 100% graduating ready for college and careers;

Whereas, November is National Homeless Youth Awareness Month, a time to acknowledge the students and families suffering from homelessness and to assess how we can improve how we support those families;

Whereas, The District serves approximately 16,200 students who have been identified as homeless, living in shelters, motels, abandoned buildings, cars, doubled up with other families, or unsheltered;

Whereas, Our homeless student population is spread throughout the District, but in some schools homeless students account for as much as 18 percent of the student body;

Whereas, Homeless students are more likely to be absent, fall below grade level standards and, ultimately, drop out than their peers with stable housing (New York Equity Coalition, 2017; University of Chicago, 2017);

Whereas, The District, mainly through the Division of Student Health and Human Services, provides significant supports to homeless students, including enrollment assistance, backpack and school supplies, transportation assistance, resource referrals, as well as providing staff support to the Coordinated Entry System (CES) at six sites throughout Los Angeles County;

Whereas, The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) expanded the supports provided for homeless students, including through amendments to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the federal law requiring supports for homeless students;

Whereas, ESSA presents an opportunity to better serve the District's homeless students and families;

Whereas, The high number of homeless students reflects a countywide crisis, including almost 40,000 individuals of all ages living on the street, according to the 2018 homeless count of Los Angeles County, which excludes Pasadena, Glendale, and Long Beach. While the total number of homeless dropped slightly, the number of individuals living on the street remains almost unchanged and homelessness in the San Fernando Valley actually increased 6 percent from the previous year.

Whereas, To combat this crisis, voters of the City and County of Los Angeles in 2016 passed Proposition HHH, which provides \$1.2 billion, and Measure H, estimated to raise \$3.5 billion over 10 years, respectively, to fund construction of new housing units and improve homeless programs, and those new funds are gradually leading to new opportunities to support homeless individuals and families;

Whereas, No single solution will solve the challenge of homelessness, but it will require innovation and all parts of our society working together to make improvements;

Whereas, Safe Parking LA is an intervention supported by the County and City of Los Angeles to provide parking lots for safe overnight parking and homeless services to some of the more than 12,000 individuals



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and families living out of their cars; the model is based on the successful program in Santa Barbara and has been adapted for success here;

Whereas, San Francisco Unified School District has started a pilot “Stay Over Program,” where one school, supported by a nonprofit provider, will open up its gymnasium nightly to provide meals and shelter to its current homeless students and their families;

Whereas, Los Angeles Valley College, part of the Los Angeles Community College District, has created its Helping Hands Project to provide food, personal items, school supplies, bus passes, and access to showers to students experiencing homelessness or food insecurity;

Whereas, Dallas Independent School District has partnered with local nonprofit After8toEducate to open supportive housing for teenage homeless students at one of its vacant sites, as well as operate a 24/7 drop-in center to meet immediate needs for homeless students including meals, showers, and laundry services;

Whereas, The best way to address the homelessness and its impact on student learning is to get our families off the streets, and we cannot wait for the City, County, and State to solve this problem on their own; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Los Angeles Unified School District will explore innovative solutions to provide permanent and or interim housing for homeless students and their families, especially through establishing partnerships with Los Angeles County, Los Angeles City, the private sector, and our nonprofit partners;

Resolved further, That the Superintendent will report back to the Board within 180 days on the feasibility of

Using select District sites to:

- Allow overnight parking for homeless families as part of the Safe Parking LA Program with security and supportive services, such as maintenance, provided in partnership with our municipal partners or non-profit organizations;
- Provide overnight shelter, meals, and wraparound supports for homeless families throughout the year or, at minimum, during winter and summer recesses;
- Convert or build new buildings using dedicated homelessness bond funds such as City funding under Proposition HHH that provide temporary or permanent shelter for homeless youth or families, in coordination with the existing efforts of the District to review its existing facilities and plan for their best use;
- Convert or build permanent shared housing (potentially using concepts such as the Flyaway Homes modular shipping container apartment model under construction in South Los Angeles), using HHH bond funds and other applicable funding sources,



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- as needed, in coordination with the existing efforts of the District to review its existing facilities and plan for their best use;
- Expanding the wraparound supports provided to homeless students and families by establishing or deepening partnerships with non-profit homeless serving organizations and supporting homeless students as they transition to local institutions of higher education in areas like housing, transportation, food stability, mental health supports and other unique needs of transition-aged homeless youth;
  - Assessing the effectiveness of our current Homeless Education Program and supports, including its impact on student learning;
  - Exploring the possibility of expanding the District's Homeless Education Program, including by increasing staff and seeking additional State, local, and philanthropic funding to provide greater supports to homeless students;
  - Assessing ways to better support school site homeless liaisons, such as increased and improved professional development opportunities so that educators can best meet the unique needs of homeless students and families, providing a differential for designated liaisons, and ensuring that homeless liaisons are not also required to serve other supplemental roles at their school sites (e.g. foster youth liaison), and expanding the role of our Student and Family Resource Navigators to serve as liaisons or support the role in providing more direct resources to homeless students;
  - Assessing the effectiveness of the annual Student Residency Questionnaire, including reviewing best practices from comparable school districts, to identify ways to improve reporting and ensure an accurate count of our homeless students; Resolved further, That the Superintendent will advocate at the local, state, and federal level to increase the number of Section 8 vouchers available for Los Angeles County to meet the growing needs of our homeless students and families, and, be it finally

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Resolved, That the Governing Board of the Los Angeles Unified School District calls on the Federal government to double the amount of funding allocated to State and local educational agencies under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act from \$85 million to \$170 million and that the Superintendent will include this priority in the District's Federal legislative advocacy efforts.