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Superintendent

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May 8, 2023

Mayor Karen Bass and Los Angeles City Council
200 N Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Proposed 2023-24 Los Angeles City Budget

Dear Mayor Bass and Los Angeles City Council Members,

In the spirit of strengthening collaboration and partnership between the Los Angeles Unified School District (Los Angeles Unified) and the City of Los Angeles in the upcoming fiscal year, we would like to offer insights based on our staff's preliminary review of the Mayor's proposed 2023-24 Los Angeles City budget.

Safe Passages and Traffic Safety

With regards to securing the safety of students, families, and staff, Los Angeles Unified appreciates the recommended line items to fund safety measures and street enhancements this fiscal year. Your actions and support in addressing ongoing concerns could help address the unacceptable and preventable frequency of vehicular incidents impacting the health, well-being and safety of our children. A few days ago, there were two additional students struck by vehicles at Joyner Elementary School and near Fairfax High School.

To this end, we are encouraged by the City Council's prioritization of crossing guards in recent weeks along with the \$10 million budget for the **Crossing Guard Program**. The District looks forward to collaborating with the City on ensuring that the 600 locations funded to receive a crossing guard for the 2023-24 fiscal year are filled expeditiously. We urge a commitment to make approximately 130 of these positions that are currently paid with one-time funding be converted to ongoing positions.

Los Angeles Unified is also in support of the continued funding of the **Speed Hump Program**, and urge the City to consider fully funding the program to make our school communities safer for pedestrian traffic. The District would also like to acknowledge the increased proposed budget for **Vision Zero** (close to \$500,000), which will support lighting around the top 50 schools in need in the City; and the over \$14.7 million intended to fund programs under the Bureau of Street Services, which includes the **Safe Route to Schools Program**. Finally, with regards to the \$750,000 allocated to implement a 15 Mile Per Hour school

zone, we urge the City to consider expanding this funding for more than 200 schools. This program is crucial to supporting pedestrian safety around our schools. We need the City's partnership to provide the appropriate signage and flashing lights and greater level of enforcement of speed limits around schools, particularly at the elementary school level.

School Climate and Student Safety

All of our students deserve to go to school free of fear and full of hope. To accomplish this, we must work together to provide safe passages to and from school to ensure a safe environment in and around our schools for our students, staff, and families. Recently, two students were victims of another senseless stabbing in our community near Los Angeles High School and we need to identify solutions to prevent additional incidents.

The growing prevalence and intrusion of fentanyl and other drugs onto school campus continues to be a concern. In the 2022-23 school year alone, Los Angeles Unified staff has used Narcan 31 times since we introduced Narcan in our school campuses to save lives. Addressing the increased access to drugs for our youth will require the concerted effort and collaboration between our District and the City as this is a societal concern that we cannot address on our own. Los Angeles Unified has identified over 25 city parks or recreation areas near schools that continue to be a concern where there has historically been an issue with sales of drugs, gang activity, and other suspicious activities.

For these reasons, we continue to urge City officials and departments to engage and inform our Office of School Operations and Los Angeles Unified School Police, as appropriate, in your work to reduce crime and violence in our neighborhoods. The proposed increased city funding for the **Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) Office**, from \$28 million this year to \$41 million, provides an opportunity to collaborate and ensure that our school communities are prioritized.

Summer Youth Recreational and Employment Opportunities

Los Angeles Unified supports the continued funding to provide young Angelinos with employment opportunities, workforce training, and financial literacy through the **Summer Youth Employment Program**. More specifically, the District appreciates the nearly \$3 million of one-time funding allocated to **Summer Play LA**, and urge the City to consider transitioning these funds into the annual budget, instead of allocating them as one-time funding. The City and District can collaborate in this goal to support students' physical and mental health while also keeping our students engaged over the summer.

The District is also supportive of the continued funding focused on creating workforce opportunities for our youth, such as the nearly \$3 million in continued funding for the **Hire LA Youth program, YouthSource Centers and Cash for College**, which support youth ages 14-24. Additionally, the District supports the \$3 million in funding allocated for **LA:RISE**, to continue programming for youth or individuals who have been homeless or incarcerated aimed at building pathways from unemployment to permanent work.

Lastly, we are motivated by the **Summer Night Lights program** and its expansion to 43 sites across the City. With this expansion, we continue to elevate the need for the City and District to work together and explore a master facility joint-use agreement, where both the City and the District can share facilities more efficiently and expand community use. This includes continuing funding to expand the partnership with the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) to pursue more **Community School Parks**

where the District provides access to designated areas on a school campus for recreation and play during non-school hours and RAP pays for the programming, staffing and maintenance.

Other Funding Items

- Los Angeles Unified supports the increased funding of the **LA's Best program** to nearly \$4 million, as this program provides crucial afterschool programming for our students, and we look forward to the continued partnership.
- The District appreciates the proposed \$3.2 million in continued funding, which includes \$200,000 to provide emergency housing assistance for the 16 **Family Source Centers**, that focus on increasing family income and financial security, improving housing stability, and supporting successful academic outcomes.
- As the City moves towards **electrification** with over \$12 million allocated towards fleet and public charging, the District welcomes a partnership with the City on this effort, since the District has its own goals around bus electrification. Recently, Los Angeles Unified announced we are committing to the electrification of the Sun Valley Bus Yard, with the purchase of 180 electric buses. This is the largest single-purchase of new electric school buses, chargers and electric infrastructure in the nation that is owned and operated by a school district.
- Los Angeles Unified appreciates the continued \$1.8 million in funding for **Discovery Cube Los Angeles** to support our teachers with curriculum and professional development.
- With regards to the proposed repurposing of the \$700,000 funding previously provided to the **Kids First program**, we urge the City to consider tangible ways to leverage the proposed \$1.3 billion **budget for homelessness strategies** to address the needs of our students and families experiencing homelessness. This month, Los Angeles Unified shared that our overall number of students experiencing homelessness increased by over 15 percent, growing from over 11,100 in the 2021-22 school year to close to 13,000 this year. Collaborative efforts between the City and County of Los Angeles and Los Angeles Unified are essential to strengthening our collective impact to provide educational, life-needs and housing assistance to our youth and families experiencing housing insecurity. We urge consideration for the allocation of additional Section 8 housing vouchers for our students and families.
- We urge the City to provide funding for at least one more year for the **Children's Saving Accounts/Opportunity L.A Program**, benefiting future first-grade students in Los Angeles Unified. While the budget includes over \$340,000 for program support funding, it does not allocate increased funding for the establishment of additional college savings accounts. Providing funding for at least one additional year could enable City staff to assess how to leverage the California Kids Investment and Development Savings Program (CalKIDS), and whether any programmatic changes need to be considered to continue this universal program to benefit all school-aged children.

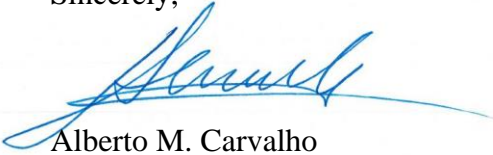
In closing, we are encouraged by the overall investments provided through the City of Los Angeles to support the students, families, and staff of Los Angeles Unified. I look forward to supporting a continued partnership with Los Angeles Unified and ensuring that education represents the forefront of a regional

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approach to reducing poverty and increasing opportunities for youth so they can be ready for the world. Please direct any questions to Martha Alvarez, Los Angeles Unified's Chief of Legislative Affairs and Governmental Relations at martha.alvarez1@lausd.net.

Sincerely,



Alberto M. Carvalho
Superintendent of Schools

c: Los Angeles Unified Board of Education