

**MOTIONS/RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED TO
THE LOS ANGELES CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR CONSIDERATION**

SUBJECT: TECH App: Transforming Engagement via Communication Hubs: Creating a New LAUSD App (Res-016-17/18)

DATE NOTICED: 10-10-17

PRESENTED FOR ACTION: 11-14-17

PRESENTED BY: Mr. Melvoin, Ms. García,
Dr. Vladovic

MOVED/SECONDED BY: Mr. Melvoin /
Ms. Gonez

MOTION:

RESOLUTION: x

Whereas, The Los Angeles Unified School District is committed to engaging all parents and caregivers as true partners in the success of students through innovative and transparent practices, as reflected in the District’s Local Control and Accountability Plan, the Superintendent’s Strategic Plan, and the Los Angeles Unified School Board’s Kids First agenda;

Whereas, Research shows a strong and powerful correlation between parental involvement and children's GPAs, graduation rates, test scores, and social skills;

Whereas, The District and school sites historically have connected with families through in-person meetings, phone calls, or paper documents sent home with students, which continue to be critical tools but are not sufficient to ensure that every family, and specifically families in the highest needs communities, or who have barriers to engaging during school hours, have timely access to information and can provide relevant feedback;

Whereas, An increasing number of families have access to and rely upon smartphones for essential communications and online access, and the decreasing costs of smartphone technology have led to an increased rate of adoption and usage among families in the highest needs communities, where access to information is often a barrier. In August 2017, the Pew Research Center found that while only around half of African Americans and Latinos from households earning less than \$30,000 per year have traditional broadband service at home, compared to 63% of African Americans and 69% of Latinos owning smartphones; and nearly one-in-four (22%) Latino and almost one-in-seven (15%) African American households are “smartphone only” homes, demonstrating how vital smartphone technology is to bridging the digital divide. In late 2016, Pew also found that, across the board, rates of smartphone ownership have skyrocketed during the last ten years to 92% and 88% of adults ages 18-29, and 30-49, respectively, who represent a large portion of LAUSD’s parent and caregiver population;

Whereas, The internet is often a parent’s first point of contact with LAUSD, presenting a critical opportunity for the District to bring families in by sharing the exciting and innovative ways that it is serving students;

Whereas, The internet and smartphones can provide vital connections to LAUSD for parents and caregivers who work long hours, care for multiple children, or have transportation or other needs that prevent in-person participation in school or District engagement during business hours;

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Whereas, The scope and complexity of the District can make it difficult for parents and caregivers to find the key student-centered information they need;

Whereas, A District-wide smartphone app could provide real-time updates and other critical school and District information to parents and caregivers, and would demonstrate the exciting and innovative practices and programs being implemented across the District, while also giving app users an easy method to communicate back to the District;

Whereas, The District is committed to creating an enrollment system and process that removes barriers to parent and caregiver understanding of school options and enrollment procedures, and the development of an app would further this goal and ensure that parents have access to critical information wherever they are;

Whereas, The District has proven expertise in smartphone app technology, as demonstrated by the District's Maintenance Service Call app, which enables students, teachers, administrators, and the general public to report and send photos of maintenance issues around the District leveraging smartphone and location-based technology (e.g., GPS);

Whereas, Schools now have access to systems with companion smartphone apps that can communicate important information to parents, including PASSport and the newly implemented Schoology systems, and some schools are using these and other app-based solutions to regularly and effectively communicate with or to solicit feedback from parents and caregivers, but not all schools are offering this engagement strategy;

Whereas, Current app-based communications with school sites do not allow the District or Local Districts to directly communicate or receive feedback from parents, which may be important, for example, in cases of emergency or with respect to district-wide policies;

Whereas, Other innovative government agencies have demonstrated the capacity of smartphone apps and technology to increase transparency and improve constituent engagement. For example:

- MyLA311 connects Los Angeles residents with essential city services and information from the City of Los Angeles;
- Mayor Eric Garcetti's innovation lab created The Los Angeles Business Portal, a mobile, multilingual educational app that simplifies the process for launching or growing a business in Los Angeles;
- DeKalb County (GA) School District's mobile app provides parents with real-time information and alerts, and has been effective in streamlining and improving parent communication;
- The City of Denver (CO) created "Pocket Gov," an integrated website and app to improve customer service by allowing users to customize their experience and easily navigate constituent facing services from tracking towed cars to signing up for crime alerts;
- Wichita (KS) Public School's mobile app provides parents with a single calendar of academic and athletic events at any school they follow, helping ensure that families are well informed of activities and events of interest to them;

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Whereas, The District must be bold and seek to revolutionize parents' and caregivers' experiences with LAUSD by transforming how families access information and communicate about their children's education; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the LAUSD Board of Education hereby creates a policy to improve parent and caregiver engagement by employing industry best-practices to create and maintain a District-wide smartphone app so that families can easily access, navigate, and provide meaningful input regarding information that is important to them in supporting their children's academic success;

Resolved further, That within 60 days, the Superintendent, with support from the Information Technology Division and cost-effective experts, will present a plan at a public meeting of the Board of Education showing how the district will create an app, or contract to create an app in a cost-effective manner, that will accomplish the following goals, among others:

1. **Parent Input:** Incorporate specific feedback into the app design and functionality from a task force of diverse parents representing different geographies, ethnicities, languages, socio-economic backgrounds, and education levels; and
2. **Alignment:** Integrate or work seamlessly with the District's website and existing district and school-based apps;
3. **Design and Navigability:** Present a unified branding and high-quality user interface;
4. **Essential Content:** Provide student and parent-centered content, likely including district calendars, graduation requirements, school locations, and "how-to" information regarding student issues such as special education, school discipline, bullying, and school lunches; and ensure that search results are relevant and appropriate;
5. **ADA and Language Accessibility:** Provide accessible content for parents and students with disabilities and in multiple languages;
6. **Notices/Two-Way Communication:** Provide push alerts regarding important District news, and a method to receive feedback from parents to the District to support improved practices and report problems;

In addition, the plan should (1) specify the marketing strategy that will be used to disseminate and encourage usage of the app when completed, (2) plans for an extensive beta-version launch for extensive field/user testing to test all functions and make improvements based on use experiences and debugging, (3) describe what maintenance efforts will be put in place, including funding and a project lead, to assist the District, and schools with subsequent phases, if applicable, and to ensure that the app remains up-to-date and easily navigable, and (4) identify specific and measurable metrics that will be used to identify the success of the app; and, be it finally

Resolved, That once the Superintendent presents the plan, the Superintendent will make best efforts to implement initial steps of the plan and create the beta version of the app within (120) days, and launch the first full phase of the app within another (60) days, understanding that the District will continue to trouble shoot, expand functionality, and adapt to current technology beyond that period, and that the Superintendent will provide quarterly progress updates.

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AYES NOES ABSTAIN ABSENT

Ms. Garcia	X			
Ms. Gonez	X			
Dr. McKenna	X			
Mr. Melvoin	X			
Mr. Schmerelson	X			
Dr. Vladovic	X			
Dr. Rodriguez	X			
TOTAL	7			

ACTION: ADOPTED