



For Immediate Release: May 13, 2021

LA Unified Board Members Pass the **“Equity is Justice Resolution 2021”** with a **6-1 Vote**

VICTORY! On May 11, 2021, Los Angeles Unified School District (LA Unified) Board members voted affirmatively 6-1 to distribute in the 2021-22 academic year an additional \$700 million to schools using the Student Equity Needs Index (SENI). The SENI is a formula used to inform the allocation of funds so that LA Unified can efficiently address the achievement gap. Passage of Board Member Monica Garcia’s “Equity is Justice 2021” Resolution means all LA Unified students across the district will benefit from these dollars, and LA’s high- and highest-need schools will have increased access to the essential resources to level the academic playing field.

The Equity Alliance would like to thank Kelly Gonez, LA Unified School Board President, Board Member Tanya Ortiz Franklin, Board Member Mónica García, and Board Member Nick Melvoin for their leadership in supporting our highest-need students! We also want to make a special acknowledgement of LA Unified Student Board Member Kamarie Brown for helping to pass the SENI Resolution as well as her Wellness Resolution, which had broad support from Crenshaw youth leaders who came out in strong support of her. But most importantly, we thank our youth and parent leaders who have tirelessly stepped up for educational equity and to the organizers who worked with them to deliver powerful statements at the board meetings, in many emails and phone messages to Board Members.

In the current school year, 2020-21, the district invested only \$282 million through SENI despite starting with a budget of approximately \$9 billion. Approval of \$700 million in additional funding through SENI means that the Board has more than doubled SENI allocations in one budget season, and schools serving communities like Watts, Boyle Heights, and South LA will be gaining hundreds of thousands -- or

millions -- of additional dollars effective immediately. These funds will provide critical support for under-resourced schools, including psychiatric social workers, intervention coordinators, attendance counselors, planning time for teachers, and other vital interventions which school communities can use to respond to the specific needs of individual schools. It is especially gratifying to see these funds approved now so that Principals have the time they need to implement these critical services and supports as schools are reopening and we immediately strive to combat structural inequities exacerbated by COVID-19.

We applaud LAUSD Board members for recognizing the urgency in making this commitment to all low-income students and students of color across LAUSD. And we thank the LA Unified staff for providing the background and financial models needed to evaluate the Resolution.

This **\$700 million** investment sends a strong message of hope to our scholars while demonstrating the board's commitment to the educational equity we need to keep building. We look forward to working with the board and LA Unified to keep this momentum going so that we can acknowledge and rectify generations of divestment faced by our communities of color and provide every LAUSD student with the quality education they deserve.

"We are excited about the commitment the district has made to the highest-need schools in LAUSD, which serve essential families who have sacrificed their health and lives to keep our city and county moving and thriving. These same families live in parts of the district, like South LA, that for far too long have experienced disinvestment and been ignored. The Board has made the Student Equity Need Index (SENI) the vehicle for equity, and this \$700 million investment sends a strong message," **states Aurea Montes-Rodriguez, Executive Vice President of Community Coalition.**

"We applaud the LA Unified School Board for supporting the expansion of much-needed resources for our highest need schools. All budgets are a reflection of values, and more than ever before, we need the district's resource allocations to reflect transformation for our young people and our communities," **says Maria Brenes, Executive Director of Inner City Struggle.** "We cannot allow for the opportunity gaps that have harmed Black and Brown students to deepen. Thank you, Board Members Garcia and Franklin, for your leadership! And thank you, Board Member Brown, for your voice!"

“We commend LA Unified’s Board for passing the Equity is Justice 2021 Resolution, which will provide immediate, much-needed, flexible funding to our highest-need schools, including 19 schools in the Partnership’s network,” **says Ryan Smith, interim Chief Executive Officer for the Partnership for Los Angeles Schools.** “What’s more, this flexible funding allows school communities to respond to the specific needs of individual campuses, targeting the dollars where they will have the most impact and the best outcomes to continue to close opportunity and achievement gaps for our scholars.”

“The LAUSD now serves as a beacon of light and hope for students by making a \$700M equity investment in schools with high needs. California’s success and prosperity depend on our public schools’ capacity to offer pathways of equal opportunity,” **states Karla Pletiez Howell, Chief of Policy and Programs at Advancement Project California.** “We applaud Board Members Garcia, Ortiz Franklin, Melvoin, Gonez, Schmerelson, and Brown for leading the charge and recognizing the voices and needs of students and families.”

Photos from Equity Alliance for LA's Kids Press Conference on April 26, 2021:
http://bit.ly/EA_PressConference

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About the Equity Alliance for LA’s Kids

The Equity Alliance is a coalition of policy, advocacy and educational nonprofits that believes public education plays a significant role in eliminating poverty and racism for the future of all Angelenos. Advancement Project California (APCA), Community Coalition (CoCo), Inner City Struggle (ICS) and the Partnership for Los Angeles Schools (Partnership) have worked with parents and student advocates to recodify the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) because, regardless of race, income or ability, every student deserves an education that sees their full potential, invests in their needs and reminds them of the infinite possibilities they have in front of them.

For more information on behalf of the Equity Alliance for LA’s Kids, contact Katie Smith, Director of Communications, Advancement Project California at ksmith@advanceproj.org or 323.997.2194.

About Advancement Project California:

Advancement Project is a next generation, multiracial civil rights organization. In California, the organization champions the struggle for greater equity and opportunity for all, fostering upward mobility in communities most impacted by economic and racial injustice. Advancement Project California builds alliances and trust, uses data-driven policy solutions, creates innovative tools, and works alongside communities to ignite social transformation. Visit www.advancementprojectca.org to learn more.

About Community Coalition:

For nearly 30 years, Community Coalition has provided a hub to elevate South LA's voice and empower residents to take control over the future of their neighborhood. Community Coalition works with residents to build a prosperous and healthy South LA with safe neighborhoods, quality schools, a strong social safety net. The coalition continues to work on positive economic development that reduces crime, poverty and substance abuse in South LA through resident organizing, direct advocacy and community support services. Visit www.cocosouthla.org to learn more.

About InnerCity Struggle:

InnerCity Struggle has worked with youth and community residents since 1994 to promote safe, healthy and non-violent communities in the Eastside. We organize youth and families in Boyle Heights, unincorporated East Los Angeles, El Sereno and Lincoln Heights to work together for social and educational justice. InnerCity Struggle provides positive after-school programs for students to become involved in supporting our schools to succeed. We have empowered students to reach their family's dream of college. The work of InnerCity Struggle demonstrates that youth and parents working together are a powerful force for improving their communities and making real change. Visit www.innercitystruggle.org to learn more.