

# 2023–24 STATE BUDGET PRIORITIES

## **Fully Fund the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) COLA and Remain Committed to Sustaining Existing Programs**

Los Angeles Unified supports the proposed 8.13% statutory cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) in the LCFF and other complimentary programs. School districts rely on stable funding to continue providing student programs at existing levels including Transitional Kindergarten (TK) and universal meals. The proposed COLA is key to retaining and recruiting staff and balancing rising costs for salaries, pensions, and healthcare in amid inflationary cost pressures. Considering the revenue challenges facing California and the compounding effect of major education initiatives implemented in recent years to meet student needs, we urge the prioritization of funding existing programs over the creation of new initiatives. Lastly, we urge the State to consider funding schools based on student enrollment as proposed by Senate Bill 98 (Portantino).

## **Increase Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) Flexibility**

Los Angeles Unified supports the goals of the ELOP, yet the allowed uses of the existing \$3.5 billion annual allocation are narrow. School districts could provide additional complimentary services with these funds including push-in tutoring, one-on-one or small group learning supports in the classroom, and reducing or stabilizing class size. Other allowable uses could be replicated from the Learning Emergency Recovery Block Grant for initiatives that support academic learning, accelerate student academic proficiency or English language proficiency, and promote staff and pupil social and emotional well-being. Current law is too restrictive and stifles creativity and the ability to serve students in a comprehensive way in and outside the classroom.

## **Oppose Retroactive Cuts to the Arts, Music and Instructional Materials Discretionary Block Grant**

Los Angeles Unified unequivocally opposes the proposed \$1.2 billion reduction to this Discretionary Block Grant, an estimated \$85 million cut to our District. This retroactive cut creates challenges for districts that already have plans in place for this discretionary funding. Proposition 28 and block grant funds have significantly different allowable expenditures--districts will not be able to replace block grant funds with the new Proposition 28 funds. We urge the State to not create new programs in the 2023–24 fiscal year and instead restore the Discretionary Block Grant to the full amount adopted in the 2022 Budget Act.

## **Support Funding for TK Implementation, and Request Flexibilities on TK Ratio and Staff Education Requirements**

As an early adopter of TK for all four-year-olds, Los Angeles Unified appreciates the Governor fulfilling his commitment to rebench the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee by providing \$690 million in additional funds to support the next cohort of TK students and another \$165 million in ongoing funding to support additional certificated or classified staff. We are concerned with the proposed additional educational requirements for paraprofessionals in TK classrooms and request further discussions over the next year. We join other education stakeholders in requesting an extension of the time for teachers to obtain the additional 24 Early Education units to teach TK. We urge flexibility for meeting the 12:1 child to adult ratio if districts budgeted for the positions but were unable to fill them due to vacancies. Lastly, we urge the State to adopt Senate Bill 767 (Rubio) that would make Kindergarten a mandatory grade level.

## **Support Maintenance of One-time General Fund for School Facilities Projects and 2024 State School Facilities Bond**

Los Angeles Unified appreciates the Administration's decision to maintain \$2 billion of last year's General Fund allocation to support school construction projects. Critical school repair and safety needs continue to grow, construction costs continue to increase, and our statewide unfunded facilities needs are estimated at more than \$117 billion, far exceeding available funding. We continue to be actively engaged in negotiations on a 2024 State Facilities Bond that includes investments in school infrastructure to address the growing backlog of qualified school projects, and the dire need to modernize and replace aging facilities. While Los Angeles Unified was successful in getting voter support of our local school bond through the passage of Measure RR in November 2020, we expect to leverage state matching funds to complement our local efforts.

## **Special Education**

Los Angeles Unified supports the proposed 8.13% COLA to special education. However, we are opposed to the proposal to restrict Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPAs) spending and distribution of funds as it restricts local control and could disrupt student services.

# 2023 SPONSORED LEGISLATION

In addition to the bills identified below, Los Angeles Unified will advocate in support of legislative proposals and initiatives that are consistent with the District’s 2022–26 Strategic Plan.



**AB 439 (Carrillo): Task Order Procurement Contracting**

Extends by 10 years the authorization to use the task order contracting method for maintenance and repair projects.



**AB 483 (Muratsuchi): Local Educational Agency Medi-Cal Billing Program**

Requires the California Department of Health Care Services to update the school health and mental health services audit process to improve timely reimbursements for eligible services provided to students.



**SB 98 (Portantino): Funding for Student Enrollment**

Establishes a more equitable funding model for schools based on student enrollment rather than on student attendance.



**SB 223 (Menjivar): Child Welfare and Attendance Services**

Authorizes local educational agencies to apply to offer a specialized program in child welfare and attendance services to increase the school counselor pipeline.



**SB 515 (Stern): Shade Structures**

Streamlines the process for installing inexpensive, heat-reducing, shade structures on schoolyards and community colleges.



**SB 551 (Portantino): Expansion of School-based Behavioral Health Services**

Strengthens collaboration between school districts and counties in allocating existing mental health funding towards expanding school-based services.



**SB 767 (Rubio): Mandatory Kindergarten**

Formally establishes Kindergarten as a necessary grade level before entering first grade.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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