



## “LAUSD Must Consider Our Voices”

- Student from Benjamin Franklin High School

Board Members and Superintendent Austin Beutner,

Firstly, thank you for the paramount decision to keep school doors closed during impending coronavirus spikes. The unique ways that COVID-19 has aggravated inequities against our most vulnerable communities tell us that it is doubly important we treat the health and safety of students and educators as first and foremost.

These inequities, unfortunately, are worsening. Students are battling learning loss, parents are feeling uncertain, and educators need our support. As we approach the beginning of a new school year, our communities continue to have many questions and are feeling unheard. When students tell us they feel “belittled” because of thin community input on what the new school year should look like, we grow deeply concerned.

Black and Brown families, especially, are experiencing a lack of adequate connectedness to their school communities, including heightened anxieties around what distance learning will look like. This should not be a surprise, considering the gross impacts of the digital divide.

Students depend on their teachers' and school administration's intentional support and connection, year-round, to help them succeed. While, at times, connections between students and teachers have been strengthened by educators' commitment to supporting students, COVID-19 and this country's response has robbed them of a school community that supports their academic progress and social-emotional wellbeing. We can't do it all in an online setting, but we must do more.

As a coalition that has remained adamant about our stance on equity, our primary goal has always been to uplift the voices of those we serve. Today, alongside many families and educators, we are calling on LA Unified to hold a Special Board Meeting in July. Time is running out and we are at a critical moment where it is unacceptable to walk into the school year without having proper avenues for community voice to be at decision-making tables.

Students are requesting more social-emotional support, more meaningful interaction with their peers, and an opportunity to influence decisions that affect the way that they learn in this virtual environment, especially those who must navigate distance learning for younger family members. Now, more than ever, this District has a responsibility to listen and consider the voices of the folks most affected by what is happening to our learners.

We will kindly await your response and truly look forward to your actions.

Thank you,

### Communities for Los Angeles Student Success (CLASS) Coalition



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