

Board Member Resolutions For Action

Ms. Martinez, Mr. Kayser, Mr. Zimmer – Resolution in Support of Aligning Preschool through 3rd Grade (Noticed June 18, 2013, 9am)

Whereas, The Los Angeles Unified School District is committed to providing every student with a quality education in a safe, caring environment and ensuring that every student will graduate college-prepared and career ready;

Whereas, To ensure that all children are on the path to college and career readiness, we must lay the foundation early, focusing on children's learning starting at birth, preparing them for Kindergarten and building on their progress in early elementary grades;

Whereas, PreK-3 alignment is a national initiative to transform how children ages three to eight learn in schools based on research demonstrating that the cornerstone of a successful education is the learning that takes place from preschool through third grade;

Whereas, Currently, there is little instructional coordination from year to year, even within the same school, much less across a school district or a state;

Whereas, Without early education programs, children growing up in low-income households lose ground to their middle-class peers and that gap only widens as they advance through elementary school;

Whereas, According to decades of developmental and educational research, the first eight years of life are critical because that is when children acquire three distinct types of skills and knowledge:

- Developing a strong foundation in cognitive skills such as early reading and math;
- Building social and emotional capabilities that allow children to interact productively with both peers and adults; and
- Establishing engagement in school and learning¹;

Whereas, During a child's first three years of life, their brains are being wired for future success. Brain development is more rapid during this period than at any other, with more than 700 neural connections created each second. Children are learning everything from smiling, walking and speaking to making choices, exploring and developing relationships²;

Whereas, In the pre-Kindergarten years, young children not only develop core academic knowledge in pre-literacy and early math, they develop important learning skills, such as paying attention, managing emotions and completing tasks. Over a hundred studies, in the U.S. alone, show that quality preschool significantly benefits children's school success;

¹ Kauerz, K. (2012). "Pre-K-3rd Grade: A Comprehensive Approach." Retrieved from: <http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/NewsUpdates/20120807-prek-3rd-comprehensive-approach.pdf>

² Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (n.d.). "Five Numbers to Remember About Early Childhood Development." Retrieved from: http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/multimedia/interactive_features/five-numbers

Whereas, There is an increasing number of English Language Learners under the age of five in our community and there is also a growing body of research indicating the ability of young children to learn more than one language in a supportive environment and that acquiring more than one language in the early years increases brain development and promotes academic achievement;

Whereas, The early elementary grades are when children learn to understand foundation math, reading, and reasoning skills that allow them to tackle more complex subjects in fourth grade and beyond;

Whereas, California is failing to meet the needs of all its children and far too many of California's children do not have access to the high-quality early learning experiences they need and deserve;

Whereas, Our students are not getting a strong start when it matters most;

Whereas, In California, 52 percent of 3rd graders test below proficient in English-Language Arts and more than 30 percent are not proficient in Mathematics. For low-income students and those of color, significant barriers exist, with nearly half testing below proficient in both English and Math³;

Whereas, In 2011-2012, only 43 percent of the District's 3rd graders were proficient in 3rd grade English Language Arts and 62 percent of 3rd graders are expected to be proficient in English Language Arts by 2013-2014;

Whereas, The District currently educates over 35,000 young children in early learning programs intended to prepare them for K-12 success;

Whereas, While well-designed pre-Kindergarten does improve children's social and cognitive skills, these gains frequently fade as children advance beyond Kindergarten;

Whereas, Since adopting a preschool through 3rd grade approach within its school district, the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) in Maryland has seen nearly 88 percent of 3rd graders read proficiently and a narrowing of the achievement gap and increase in benefits for English Learners;

Whereas, Research shows that students who start out behind too often stay behind and those who are not reading proficiently in 3rd grade are four times more likely to not graduate from high school⁴;

Whereas, There is increasing evidence that high quality curricula and instruction, data-driven improvement, and instructional leadership that creates and sustains a supportive environment for

³ California Department of Education. (2012). "2012 STAR Test Results." Retrieved from: <http://star.cde.ca.gov/star2012/ViewReport.aspx?ps=true&lstTestYear=2012&lstTestType=C&lstCounty=&lstDistrict=&lstSchool=&lstGroup=1&lstSubGroup=1>

⁴ Hernandez, D. (2012). "Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation." Retrieved from: <http://www.aecf.org/~media/Pubs/Topics/Education/Other/DoubleJeopardyHowThirdGradeReadingSkillsandPoverty/DoubleJeopardyReport030812forweb>

young learners are central to effective reforms and that, in concert, they help to narrow achievement gaps and provide children with a solid foundation for lifelong learning; and

Whereas, When these crucial efforts are connected and aligned to create continuity between early care and education (ECE) and elementary schools, the gains are even greater; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Governing Board of the Los Angeles Unified School District reaffirms its commitment to its youngest learners by committing to the development of a framework based on educational standards, curricula, assessment and professional development that are strongly aligned across high-quality pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, first, second and third grades;

Resolved further, That the Board directs the Superintendent to establish a Preschool Through 3rd Grade (P-3) Alignment and Articulation Task Force comprised of the Office of Early Childhood Education, Office of Curriculum, Instruction and School Support, Parent and Community Services Branch, early learning content and curriculum experts, community stakeholders, Facilities Services Division, school leaders, teachers, key public institutions including universities and philanthropies, and others as appropriate for the purpose of developing a framework by which the District can adopt a preschool through 3rd grade approach;

Resolved further, That the aforementioned Task Force is charged with developing goals and a comprehensive plan to position the District to become a leader in the nation around aligning preschool through 3rd grade, primarily focusing on issues of preK-3 implementation across both school- and community-based sites; and, be it finally,

Resolved, The Task Force will issue a report within 90 days outlining recommendations for improvements to the District's long-term educational challenges that begin with creating an aligned and high-quality system of early learning across early childhood and elementary education.

The report shall focus on:

- Funding sources for increasing access to high quality preschool for children in all of the District's early learning programs from birth to age five, particularly in areas in the District where early learning opportunities are severely limited.
- High-quality parental engagement in early learning programs that help position parents to serve as their child's first and lifelong teacher, as well as, educating them to become critical advocates for all children in the District.
- Child development and early childhood curriculum
- Data systems to track progress of children across preschool through 3rd grade
- Explore potential collaboration with internal and community based providers who can offer developmental screenings to diagnose and treat early developmental delays
- Explore joint ECE and K-3 professional development
- Work with the Facilities Services Division to identify and prioritize highest need communities for expansion.