

Resolution Insights:

A Review of Los Angeles Unified School Board of Education Resolutions From 2006-07 to 2021-22

Introduction

The Los Angeles Unified School District (L.A. Unified) is among the largest government bodies in the country — overseeing \$8 billion in public dollars to serve almost 440,000 students¹ across almost 1,033 schools on an annual basis. The seven member board has districts larger than the Los Angeles City Council and Congress. How they yield their power and represent their constituencies is complex.

The influence the board of education wields is only one of the unique facets of the education policy landscape in Los Angeles. Perhaps unparalleled in any other school district, a constellation of advocacy organizations, educators, civic and grassroots leaders, and philanthropists represent a robust and diverse community with varying political influence and interests that have shaped many of the institutional changes the district has made since the early 1990s.² L.A. Unified's policy

Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction**
- 4 Overview**
- 10 Recommendations**
- 12 Resolutions by Issue Area**
- 22 Methodology**
- 24 Acknowledgments**

¹ Los Angeles Unified School District. "LAUSD Open Data Dashboard." *LAUSD*, 2021.

decisions in the past two decades have been shaped by its constituents as much as its board of education.

There is no doubt that this constellation of activists has seeded a number of new ideas and reform efforts with the intention of improving schools for all students *and* deeply centering the need to address inequities and disinvestments in Black, Latino, and low-income communities in Los Angeles. While significant progress has been made, our schools are still not responsive to the needs of all the communities they serve, resulting in a system that is not working equitably for all students.

L.A. Unified is currently at a multifaceted inflection point that begs the question: *How can our elected leaders best respond to the current moment?* The inflection point is marked by declining enrollment: if the district continues on its current trajectory, it could see a 30% drop in student enrollment over the next decade.³ It is marked by the pandemic that closed school campuses for 17 months, and a racial reckoning that is not new to Los Angeles given the uprisings for racial justice in 1965 and 1992 (to name only two of the many local moments of reckoning). It is also recently preceded by a historic teacher strike that lasted six days, which resulted in half of students not attending school.⁴

And, most recently, Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho unveiled the district's new 2022-26 strategic plan, [Ready for the World](#),

which articulates four overarching goals and five pillars of practice to help meet them. Through its focus on equitably closing opportunity gaps for key student subgroups, an emphasis on stakeholder engagement, and investments in staff and high-quality learning opportunities, the district is poised to address many of the critical challenges and opportunities facing the community it serves.

Given these realities, we take this opportunity to review the legislative history of L.A. Unified over the past two decades to learn from its prior historic reforms and the policies it is currently bound to, with the goal of providing tools to board members, district leaders, and activists alike. By legislative history, we mean reviewing the policies the board passes in its public board meeting that direct district staff in implementation — school board resolutions. Rather than fighting new battles toward new policies, we look back to summarize the legislative progress made in order to continue to build on the institutional change that has already taken place.

To that end, this report reviews all the resolutions the L.A. Unified Board of Education (called L.A. Unified board throughout the brief) adopted from 2006-07 to 2021-22, and provides a deeper review of all resolutions in four key policy issue areas: equity, development of a diverse teacher and administrator workforce, expanded learning opportunities, and COVID-19 response. The time period was selected because it covers the entire terms of current sitting

² Fuller, Bruce. *When Schools Work: Pluralist Politics and Institutional Reform in Los Angeles*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2022.

³ Blume, Howard. "LAUSD expects enrollment to plummet by 'alarming' 30% in the next decade." *Los Angeles Times*, 18 May 2022.

⁴ Blume, Howard, and Sonali Kohli. "LAUSD teachers' strike ends. Teachers to return to classrooms Wednesday." *Los Angeles Times*, 22 January 2019.

board members and spans the tenure of the current longest-standing board member, Mónica García. Board Member García authored or co-authored almost 400 resolutions in the 16-year period.

It is important to note that this report summarizes L.A. Unified’s current board-led policy commitments and does not evaluate or gauge the effectiveness of implementation of any one resolution. The goal is to provide tools (this brief and an [accompanying database of resolutions](#))

that increase advocates’ and school district staff awareness of what policies have been passed, in order to reawaken continued implementation of any currently relevant and important endeavors, and to provide a holistic assessment of the recent efforts made to improve public schools in the aforementioned policy areas in L.A. Unified. Together with the goals and actions articulated in the new 2022-26 strategic plan, we hope these resources can help local leaders build on the district’s successes and opportunities ahead.



⁵ Alonso, Jacob, Julie Marsh, and Eupha Jeanne Daramola. Voter Engagement and Satisfaction with California’s Local School Governance: Evidence from the 2021 PACE/USC Rossier Poll. Policy Analysis for California Education, 2021.

Overview

The Los Angeles Unified School Board, like other school boards across the country, governs resources and has authority over many of the policies made about instruction and operation for schools in its geographic area. In spite of the numerous state policies that direct how students are educated in California, school districts retain a significant amount of authority over their schools.⁵ In L.A. Unified, the school board's discretion has allowed it to implement a significant number of changes over the years, including the [A-G for All Initiative](#) and [Equity on A-G](#), the [Public School Choice Initiative](#), magnet programs, less punitive discipline processes district-wide through banning willful defiance, and implementing the [Positive Behavioral Intervention System](#). The primary approach the board uses to exercise its influence is through passing resolutions, which are the legislative function of the board that directs the superintendent and staff to implement a specific approach in schools within the district or at the central office. Their implementation depends on the superintendent, local district superintendents, and cabinet level leaders within the district.

The scope of resolutions included represent both a great deal of policymaking and are only a part of the story that explains the practices adopted and policies that govern

the school district. While the policies the board makes are one of the school district's strongest forms of commitment, it is important to note that many decisions and practices are set by the superintendent and their staff, which tells us that what is tackled by the board is only a partial picture of what governs the day to day for Los Angeles schools.

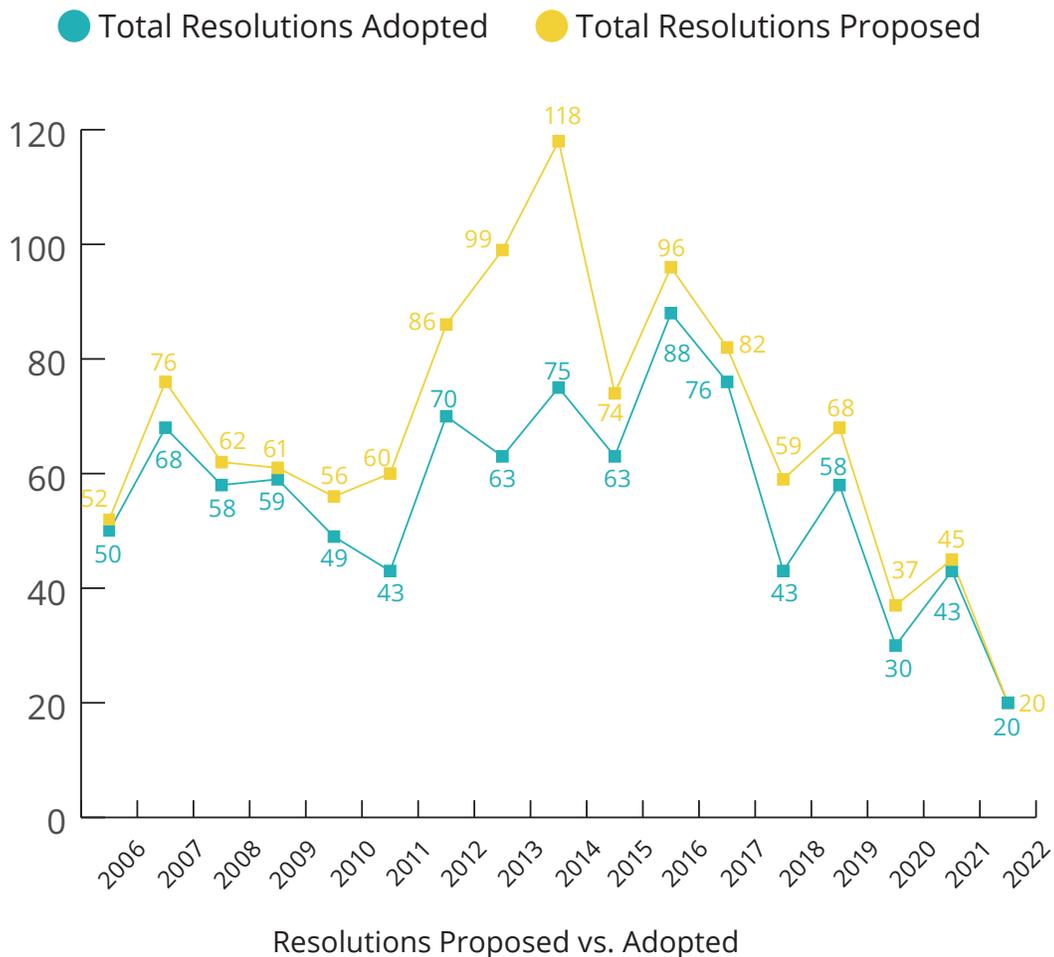
The board proposed over 1,000 resolutions over the past 16 years.

The board is responsible, at minimum, for passing an annual budget and overseeing the superintendent; yet has the discretion to govern much more. The number of resolutions passed indicates the number of activities and issues the board has considered over the course of that legislative year, which we include in this study as an academic school year. Figure 1 provides an overview of the number of resolutions proposed and adopted from the 2006-2007 school year to present. Over the past 16 years, the board has proposed a total of 1,151 resolutions and passed 83% of those policies (956). The year with the highest number of resolutions proposed and passed is the calendar year 2014 with a total of 118 resolutions considered by the board, followed by 2013 and 2016.

Figure 1.

TOTAL RESOLUTIONS PROPOSED AND ADOPTED FROM 2006-07 TO 2021-22

Note: Proposed includes adopted, failed, and withdrawn resolutions



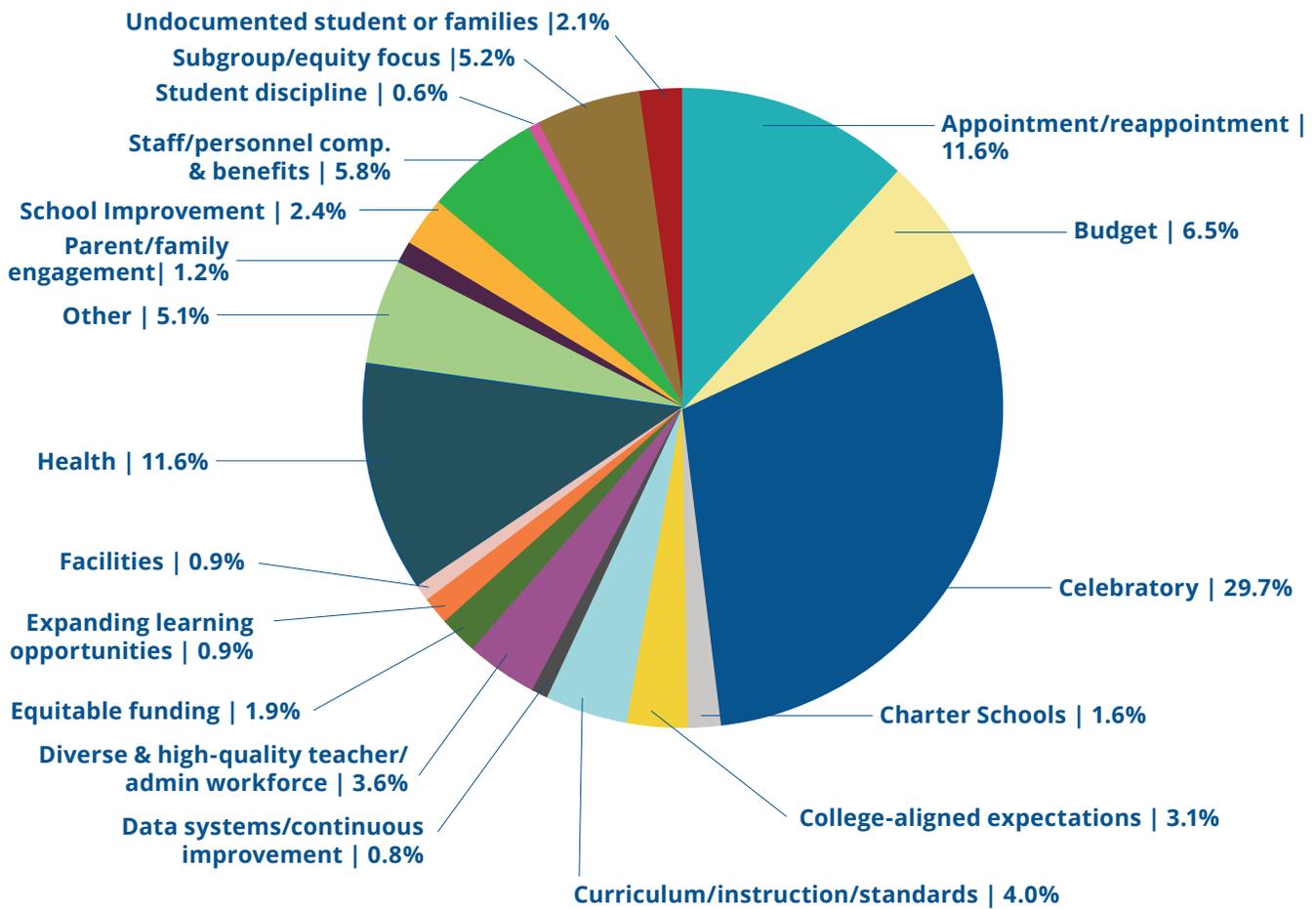
Superintendents have led 17% of all Los Angeles Unified resolutions.

Typically, one or two school board members sponsor a resolution (i.e., they author it and shepherd support) and the rest of the school board is tasked to vote for, against,

or abstain from deciding on the resolution. However, superintendents can and do author resolutions that are considered by the board. This power complements their executive authority to lead the operations and make decisions and implement directives with their cabinets. During the time we reviewed resolutions, the majority were authored by

Figure 2.

ISSUE BREAKDOWN OF ALL PASSED RESOLUTIONS FROM 2006 TO 2022



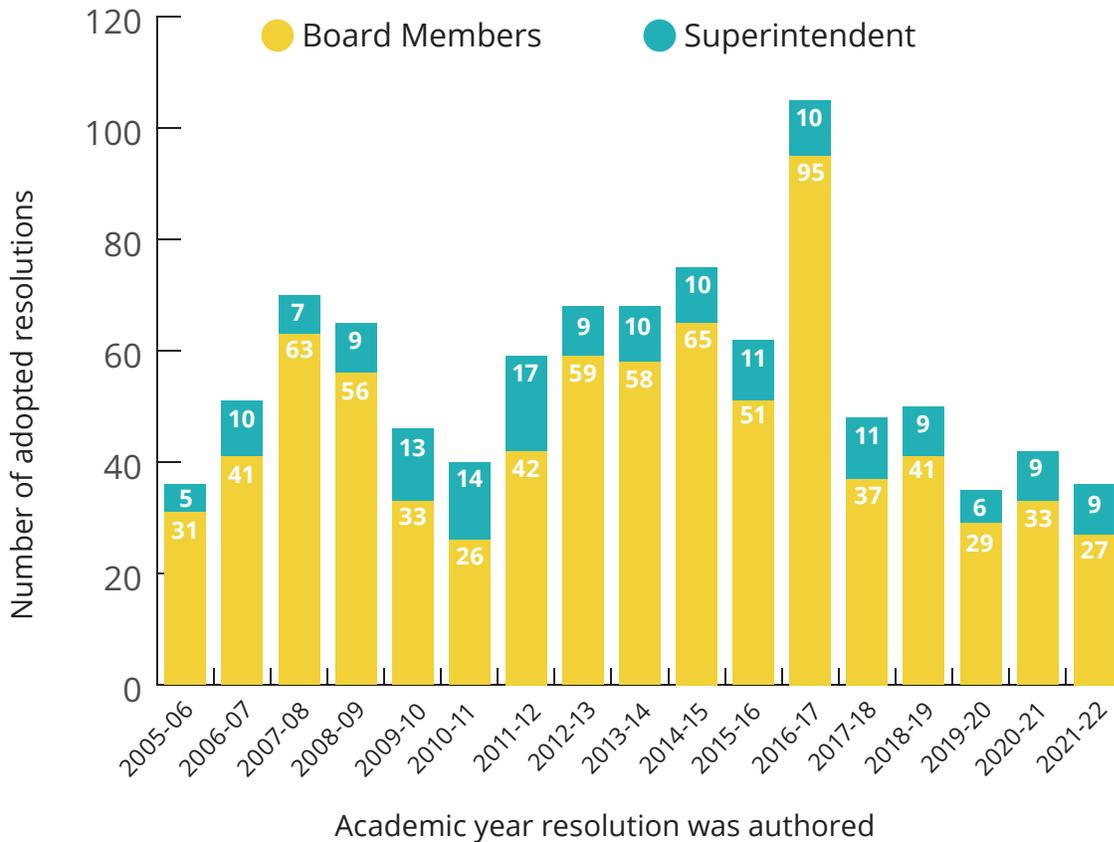
school board members. This low percentage varied over the years. The highest years of superintendent-led resolutions are in 2010-11, when Superintendent Ramón Cortines authored 35% of resolutions passed in that year, and 2011-12, when Superintendent John Deasy authored 29% of resolutions. The fewest superintendent-led resolutions were in 2007-08 under Superintendent David Brewer III (10%) and 2016-17 under Superintendent Michelle King (10%).

The majority of resolutions passed by the board have been celebratory.

Although the L.A. Unified board has passed several major resolutions intended to create substantive change, not all adopted resolutions directed any change for district staff to influence. To review the types of resolutions the board passed and to identify several within our issue categories of interest, we

Figure 3.

NUMBER OF ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS AUTHORED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OR BOARD MEMBERS



categorized all policies by a primary issue area. As previewed in Figure 3, the board has passed policies in a number of areas. The largest categories of resolutions are celebratory (e.g., commemorating individuals and holidays, or honoring groups of people), which made up 30% of all resolution categories, followed by appointments (12%) and health-related resolutions (12%). These three categories make up over half of the resolutions considered over the years. Starting in 2018-19, the school board has seen a higher percentage (11% or more) of its policies primarily focus on equity, either in

funding strategies or in targeted support for certain student groups.

Most of the boards over the past 16 years have voted as a uniform block, and consensus has only increased.

The board also reports the individuals who voted for, and the level of support provided for, each resolution. Reviewing this data presents important findings about the level

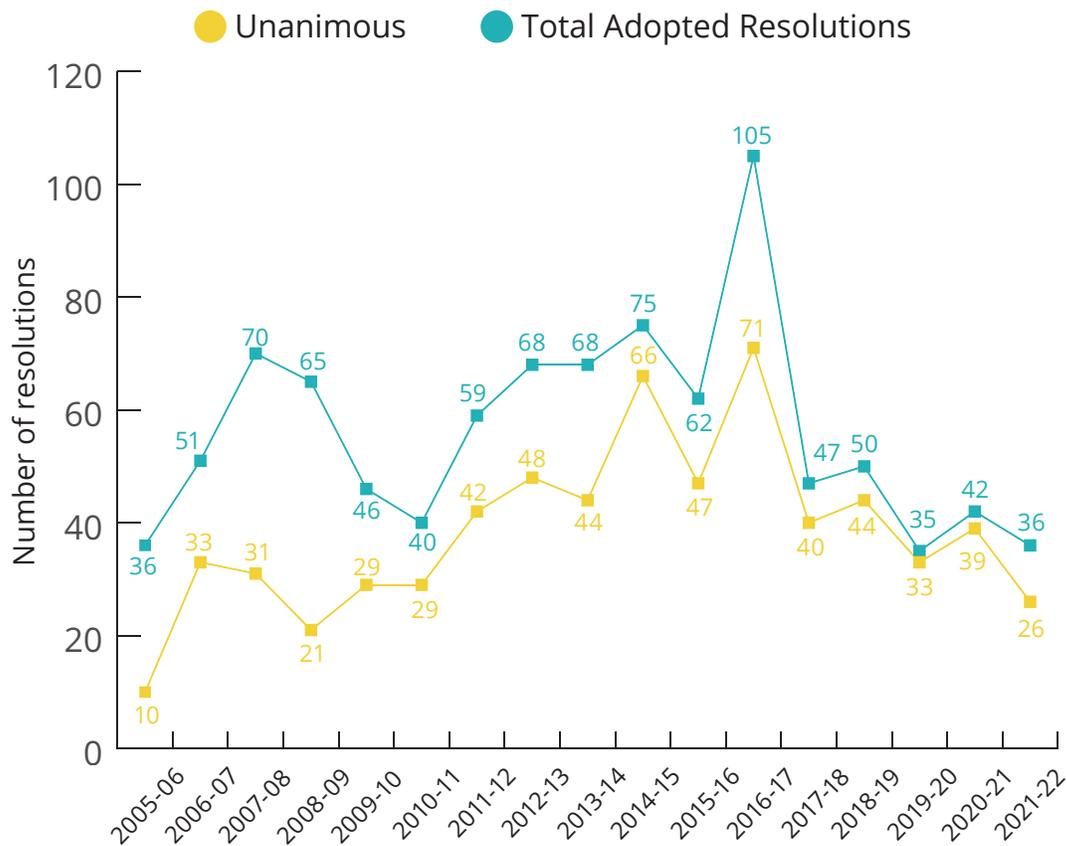
of consensus or lack thereof among the school board in L.A. Unified. In reality, 67% of policies have been unanimously supported by board members. Figure 4 shows the level of agreement on resolutions has been increasing over the years, with the highest number of unanimous votes taking place in the most recent years. It's also clear the number of resolutions being adopted and considered are decreasing, suggesting the resolutions that do make it to the floor are signals of what the board can build consensus around and support.

Few policies include stakeholder engagement and public reporting mechanisms.

One of the core areas of our analysis focused on policy design — in particular, the extent to and ways in which the district engaged community members, educators, students, and families in policymaking. We identified 16 resolutions that incorporated some element of stakeholder engagement. These resolutions either directly consulted families and key stakeholders in the creation of policy or created intentional

Figure 4.

NUMBER OF RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE



channels of communication with families and communities as they implemented new policies. The majority of resolutions (79%) fell into the former category of stakeholder engagement, while a smaller portion (21%) included some element of stakeholder communication.

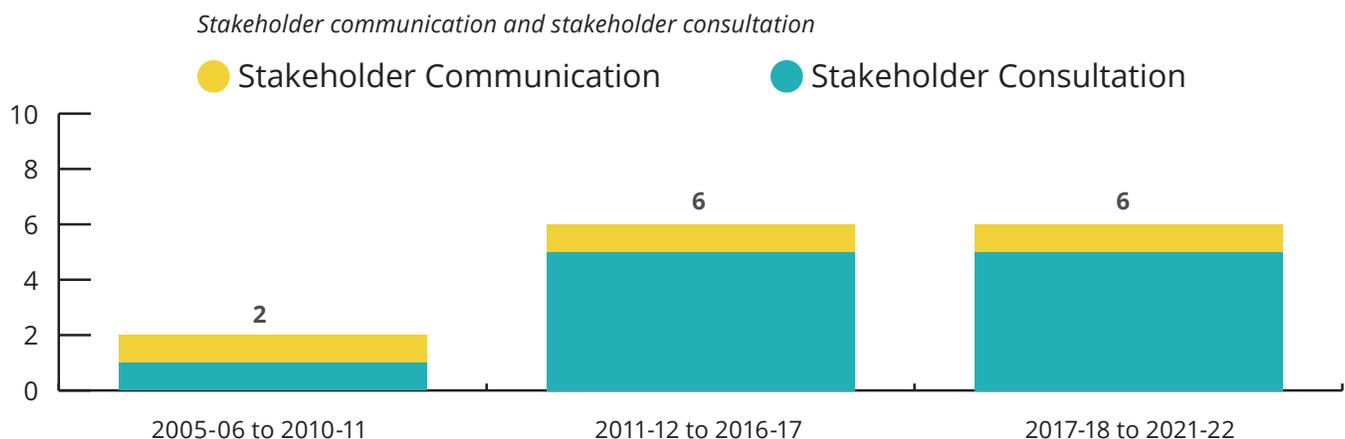
The two issue areas with the highest prevalence of stakeholder engagement were diverse and effective administrator workforce and equitable funding resolutions. A total of six of the 33 (18%) teacher and administrator workforce resolutions included some form of stakeholder engagement. Most often, this engagement took the form of working groups and other community policy advisory bodies. There was a shift over time from engagement of educators, district staff, and other high-level stakeholders to engagement of community and families. The most prominent example of this was the “Black Student Excellence through Educator Diversity, Preparation and Retention” resolution in 2022 that called on the district to “collaborate with Black students, families and staff and relevant community groups,

educators and professional associations.” Around half of equitable funding resolutions (seven of 15) included some form of stakeholder engagement. The three Student Equity Needs Index (SENI) resolutions were one of the key drivers of this emphasis on stakeholder engagement. The evolution of the SENI metrics is a prime example of district stakeholder engagement that leveraged the strengths of advocates and community members to craft impactful policy.

These shifts towards more direct community engagement in policy making are relatively recent. Half of the resolutions with stakeholder engagement (seven of the 14) were brought to the board in the last five years. Only one of the stakeholder engagement resolutions passed during that period — [Equity is Justice 2021](#) — faced any opposition. This shift also coincided with a shift towards a decrease in board opposition to resolutions and more unanimous policy adoption. Since 2018, the percentage of unanimous board votes has ranged from 72% to 94%.

Figure 5.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT RESOLUTIONS OVER TIME, 2005-06 TO 2021-22



Recommendations

This review of all resolutions passed in the last 16 years shows that L.A. Unified school boards, and the advocates that influenced the board, have taken on a tremendous amount of policymaking, increased stakeholder engagement in recent years, and attempted to operationalize equity based on targeted support for certain groups and through funding allocation. We look back at this recent legislative history to urge both district leaders and advocates to take stock of what has already been committed to in order (see below for a deeper review of resolutions within our policy areas of interest) to focus on ensuring the district starts or continues to effectively implement the policies that have great potential for students and equitable outcomes, rather than starting new policy efforts that could be addressed by existing efforts from the past 16 years.

Resolutions are a powerful tool and should be used sparingly.

The various boards of the past 16 years have taken different approaches to the number of resolutions they attempt and adopt — with some school boards issuing more than 100 in a year and others as few as 31. While at least a third of resolutions have been symbolic over this time period, the majority set new rules or direction for district staff. Given the reality of shared power between the school board and superintendent, we suggest that resolutions can be a powerful force for setting important new policy for students, and they can also be overutilized as a mechanism of change.

When resolutions are proposed, create transparency in resolution implementation by including stakeholder engagement and public reporting.

The number of resolutions that build in stakeholder engagement or public accountability via public reporting mechanisms are few and far between. Though they are more frequent in recent years, we recommend the L.A. Unified school board and advocates that are crafting or influencing policies build in more public reporting and transparency mechanisms with periods of mandated reporting by the board that can increase visibility during the implementation process.

Focus on the implementation of important past resolutions rather than focusing on passing more resolutions.

Rather than spending effort passing more resolutions on topics already addressed by the board, we recommend advocates use this tool sparingly and spend more time focused on accountability and implementation of the significant policies already passed. There are a number of key policies within the equity area passed in the last decade that deserve revisiting and faithful implementation. The tool that accompanies this brief allows the public to search resolutions based on topic, to

see brief summaries of the policies committed to by the board, and to build change efforts based on existing commitments.

By prioritizing thoughtful implementation of existing policies and the authentic engagement of stakeholders in the policymaking and implementation processes over the development of new resolutions, board members can demonstrate their commitment to their constituents' priorities and concerns.

While there is an opportunity for the school board to make these adjustments to its

policy making approach, we are heartened by the commitment of current school board leadership — particularly President Kelly Gonez and Vice President Nick Melvoin — as well as Superintendent Carvalho and other district leaders, as evidenced by the new strategic plan, to articulate a clear and intentional vision for holistically serving all L.A. Unified students. We hope this approach to developing a vision through strong consensus building serves as the model going forward for how local leaders can best work together to develop and implement effective policies in service of its diverse community.



Resolutions by Issue Area

Equity

The term “equity” has become increasingly used in education, though it is not always applied consistently. Striving for equity can take many different forms, but the central idea remains the same — that an educational system meets the needs of *all* students, regardless of their background and starting place.

For this report, we analyzed the extent to which the L.A. Unified board has passed policies since 2006 that are focused on two specific approaches to achieving more equitable outcomes for students: targeted efforts to support specific student subgroups in order to close opportunity and achievement gaps, and the equitable allocation of funding based on student need. These areas are particularly relevant because working toward equitable opportunities and outcomes often requires dedicated financial resources and intentional targeting of those resources and supports to ensure that specific student groups stand to benefit most directly and immediately from those investments. There were 68 resolutions from 2006-2022 that were primarily focused on one of these two topics.

Targeted efforts for specific student groups

A central focus for our analysis was understanding the extent to which the Los Angeles Unified board has passed resolutions that aim to close opportunity and achievement gaps across student groups — including racial and ethnic groups, English Learners, and LGBTQIA+ students. More specifically, we

looked at whether policies passed by the board have intended to provide targeted supports and services to specific student groups, with the goal of ensuring that every student has access to the same opportunities and ability to be successful in their academic and non-academic endeavors.

Overall, there were 50 resolutions primarily focused on equitably supporting particular student subgroups. Many of these resolutions included language intended to increase student access to rigorous instruction through strategies such as better technological access, college and career supports, and library access. Some included cultural proficiency/competency training and school/climate discipline issues. Over one-third of resolutions are intended to support particular racial and ethnic groups, particularly Black students. We also noted significant alignment between equitable student supports and other policy areas in our analysis, such as teacher workforce and equitable funding — making it clear that board members have identified these areas as central strategies to increasing equitable opportunities and outcomes for underserved students.

In our review of policies oriented around the student subgroup equity, we identify which student groups have been the primary targets for specific, additional supports via board resolutions, along with examples of notable policies supporting those students. We also identify student groups that have not been identified for support in these types of equity-focused policies.

Closing opportunity gaps

Some resolutions in our analysis were passed in an attempt to support and close gaps for multiple student groups. This was accomplished through key pieces of sweeping legislation that made a significant impact on issues related to college and career readiness, access to bilingual programming, and broader student wellness.

One such resolution is “Equity on A-G: Reaffirming Our Commitment to A-G Life Preparation for All” (2014-15). This resolution commits equitable access to strategies, interventions, and supports to help students successfully complete the A-G course sequence. It mandates an equity audit of A-G courses offered and successfully completed by students to identify gaps related to A-G access and success, along with a requirement to publicly report findings, followed by an implementation plan that addresses community engagement on the topic, aligned instructional plans and benchmarks, and allocation of resources to support these efforts. It also directs the superintendent to modify graduation requirements by eliminating the “C” or better requirement for A-G courses. The resolution includes a subgroup equity component by requiring that these policies focus on students most at risk of not successfully completing A-G courses, including English Learners, Standard English Learners, long-term ELs, foster and homeless youth, and special education students, and that supportive funding be distributed via the Student Needs Index.

Another key resolution is “Realizing the Promise for All: Close the Gap by 2023!” (2017-18). It publicly committed to closing opportunity gaps to ensure all students graduate eligible for college and are prepared for career and postsecondary options

(specifically calling out English Learners, Standard English Learners, Long-term ELs, foster and homeless youth, and students in special education). The resolution commits to a number of academic and non-academic goals the district should accomplish by 2023, including ensuring students make supportive adult connections at their school site, to academic proficiency at key grade levels, to reclassification and Seal of Biliteracy award targets, to A-G and other college readiness metrics. The resolution articulates specific support mechanisms to support the success of these goals, including creating stronger school-home connections, strengthening the Single Plan for Student Achievement development process, implementing evidence-based college and career readiness strategies and goals, and strengthening the teacher workforce through specialized credentialing programs and professional development (particularly to support EL students). It also aims to support the district’s lowest performing schools based on the School Performance Framework and Student Equity Needs Index (SENI), with consideration for teacher assignments to the highest-need schools.

Targeted supports for racial and ethnic student groups

Since 2006, L.A. Unified has adopted 15 resolutions that aim to increase equitable opportunities and outcomes for specific racial and ethnic student groups, all of which are still active. Black students were the only racial or ethnic group that was explicitly and primarily targeted in board policies, with the exception of one resolution. “Everyone Counts: Increasing Equity for All of Our AANHPI AMEMSA Students and Employees” (2018-19) focused on Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian students by declaring its support for this broader student

population, instituting data disaggregation policies for the subgroups within this population, and establishing a steering committee to identify low-performing groups along with necessary supports.

Nine resolutions focused on or contained language articulating L.A. Unified's commitment to specifically addressing inequities facing Black students, the most substantive of which were passed in more recent years — particularly 2016-17 and beyond. Six of these nine resolutions focused on closing achievement gaps and improving academic outcomes, such as "Making Good on Los Angeles Unified School District's Commitment to All Students: Maximizing the Talents and Gifts of African American Students by Putting Equity into Action" (2018-2019) and "Strategic Priorities for Elevating and Advancing Black Student Success" (2020-2021). These resolutions developed goals related to reading at grade level by third grade and closing English language arts gaps in elementary and middle school through targeted academic supports like math and literacy coaches, academic counselors, and Academic English Mastery Program (AEMP) coordinators.

The recent resolutions focused on uplifting academic outcomes and wellbeing in school for Black students are coupled with other related efforts in L.A. Unified's budget and district-wide plans: a \$25 million reduction in funding for the Los Angeles School Police Department that would be redirected to support Black students in the district, and a [Black Student Achievement](#) plan that would be supported by those dollars in June of 2020.⁶ The full scope of the plan was adopted in February 2020-21 by the board.

The remaining three Black student-focused resolutions aimed to increase the representation of people of color in the educational curriculum through ethnic studies courses and correct past racial injustices (for example, working with parent and community groups to explore methods of addressing the disparate treatment of youth). Efforts to implement curriculum and grading changes have increased since 2020, following long-lasting and far-reaching civil unrest across the country. "Ethnic Studies for All Students: Reaffirming Our Commitment to Ethnic Studies in Los Angeles Unified School District" (2020-2021) mandated Ethnic Studies as a graduation requirement by 2023-2024, as part of a broader effort to increase BIPOC representation and anti-racist perspectives in L.A. Unified curriculum and instructional materials. Along these lines, "Exploring Mastery-Based Learning and Grading" (2020-2021) includes a commitment to establishing a grading advisory group that will recommend SMARTER (specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, time-bound, and equitable) goals leading to improved outcomes and college readiness for Black students.

The L.A. Unified board also passed a series of resolutions in support of Standard English Learners (SEL) — "students for whom Standard English is not native, and whose home languages differ in structure and form from the language of school."⁷ We identify these resolutions as primarily in support of Black students because Black students as a racial group are most frequently identified for SEL supports.

⁶ Blume, Howard, and Sonali Kohli. "L.A. Unified police chief resigns after district slashes department budget." Los Angeles Times, 30 June 2020.

⁷ McLurkin, Kandice. "Instructional Services for Standard English Learners." LA School Board, Accessed 6 July 2022.

The first such policy was “Strengthen Support for Standard English Learners” (2013-14), which affirms L.A. Unified’s commitment to the district’s Master Plan for English Learners and aims to implement a district-wide instructional model for SELs. It required the development of a plan to identify appropriate assessments, provide teacher and administrator professional development, and evaluate student progress. “Making Good on L.A. Unified School District’s Commitment to All Students: Maximizing the Talents and Gifts of African American Students by Putting Equity into Action” (2018-19) developed a comprehensive action plan that included goals around ensuring appropriate assessments for academic language proficiency, language development supports, and related funding. “Strategic Priorities for Elevating and Advancing Black Student Success” (2020-21) also addresses SELs by allocating funding to cover services such as expansion of the existing academic English mastery program and the hiring of support coordinators.

English Learners

Since 2006, L.A. Unified’s board has passed 31 resolutions that articulate some level of support for English Learners, all but four of which still appear to be active. The bulk of these resolutions have incorporated some substantive policy changes with the goal of better supporting ELs through a strengthened teacher workforce, closing gaps via academic supports, early education programming, family engagement, and pandemic-specific supports. Very few resolutions passed since 2006 have focused primarily on English Learners as the target population for a particular policy, a significant finding given sweeping state-level policy changes impacting ELs that occurred in the last five years — most notably the English Learner Roadmap

Policy passed in 2017, which articulates a comprehensive vision for serving ELs.

The first substantive resolution that was passed during the timeframe and focused primarily on ELs was “English Learners: Hope on the Horizon” (2006-07). It develops a program to monitor progress, provide support, and ensure access of recently reclassified ELs to a rigorous curriculum. It provides for ongoing professional development for teachers of English Learners, and articulates the programs (such as Structured English Immersion and dual language programs) and support systems that must be in place to comprehensively meet the needs of ELs. The resolution also strengthens home-school communication related to bilingual program options and reporting academic and linguistic progress.

One-quarter of the resolutions addressing English Learners focused on strengthening the teacher workforce, specifically by addressing the shortage of teachers qualified to teach ELs and/or to teach in bilingual programs. From 2010-2017 and again in 2021, eight resolutions were passed with the name “Declaration of Need for Fully Qualified Educators,” declaring the need for teachers to become authorized to teach ELs or teach in bilingual classrooms by applying for the emergency Crosscultural Language and Academic Development (CLAD) and/or Bilingual CLAD certificates that are required to teach English Learners or teach in bilingual classrooms, respectively, while working to become fully certified in those areas.

Another set of resolutions sits at the intersection of English Learner supports and early childhood education. “Reaffirming Our Commitment to Early Education through

the Local Control Funding Formula and an Improved Economic Climate in the L.A. Unified School District” (2014-15) requires the prioritization of additional resources for early education and family literacy program sites based on a set of criteria that include the proximity of elementary schools serving high concentrations of EL students to early education sites. In 2016-17, the board also passed “Preparing LAUSD Students for the Global Economy: Building a Dual Language Immersion Pilot in Early Childhood Education,” which required the superintendent to create a plan for a dual immersion pilot program in early childhood settings, to be implemented in 2017-18, with potential expansion throughout the district thereafter.

Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic brought about a set of resolutions that aimed to improve equitable access to distance learning, with English Learners being one of the student groups prioritized in that effort. These efforts included additional support, resources, and family outreach; childcare access via a daytime supervision program; and additional instructional time and targeted funding.

LGBTQIA+ students

Since 2006, L.A. Unified has put forth eight resolutions in support of LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual or ally) students. Though limited in number and scope, the trajectory of these resolutions offers insight into the district’s approach to supporting LGBTQIA+ students and their families. Substantive support efforts were adopted in the last five years.

The first LGBTQIA+-focused resolution, adopted by the board in 2013-14, recognized October 11 as National Coming Out Day and served as a statement of support for

LGBTQIA+ students, staff, and families. This resolution was reiterated in 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2019-20.

The board passed three substantive resolutions to support and protect LGBTQIA+ students, all in the 2018-19 academic year. The first substantive resolution, “Supporting an Expanded and Identity-Affirming Dress Code Policy for all Schools,” updated dress code standards that included affirming gender and sexual diversity in consultation with LGBTQIA+ with students’ preferences. The second substantive resolution was “Increasing Supports for LGBTQ+ Students, Their Families and Schools” (2018-19). Through this policy effort, L.A. Unified increased competency training for faculty and staff, mandated LGBTQIA+ representation in future textbook adoption committees, directed the creation of a centralized resource platform for LGBTQIA+ students, and required a review of the availability and visibility of all-gender restrooms across schools in the district.

The third substantive resolution in this area was “All Means All: Enhancing Supports and Resources for Our LGBTQ+ Students” (2018-19). It built on “Increasing Supports...” by directing the inclusion of gender-affirming restrooms in every main instructional building in all future modernization projects and requiring increased accessibility of existing all-gender restrooms. The board also recognized Pride Month and supported a Safe School Campaign, as well as mandating LGBTQIA+-specific sex education in secondary schools and nondiscrimination policy training for all school site staff. Lastly, the resolution directed the superintendent to establish partnerships with nonprofits serving LGBTQIA+ youth and higher education institutions in order to evaluate the treatment, resources, and perceptions held about LGBTQIA+ students in the district and

provide resources and training to promote their safety.

Funding equity

Los Angeles Unified has put forth 18 resolutions related to the key area of funding equity since 2006. Our analysis explored how the board has historically prioritized funding based on school sites versus student subgroups, transparency in distribution and spending, and efforts to align and maximize funding streams. There are a few notable threads of policy action in this area, starting with resolutions related to the Local Control Funding Formula that were followed by a series of “Equity is Justice” resolutions, charting a pattern of equitable resource distribution efforts in the district. All resolutions are still active other than a one-time translation services allocation in 2007.

The legislative history of equitable funding in L.A. Unified in recent years is primarily defined by two distinct approaches: targeting school sites based on student demographics (allocating funds and resources according to the concentration of students who are struggling or have been historically disinvested in), and targeting student subgroups (allocating funding to certain student groups who are struggling, without targeting entire school sites). Since 2006, eight of the funding equity resolutions adopted have targeted school sites, while five have targeted student subgroups.

The first substantive equitable funding resolutions were passed in 2013, marking the start of an ongoing effort at equitable resource distribution that was prompted by statewide funding formula changes. “Resolution Supporting the Local Control Funding Formula” (2012-13) announced L.A.

Unified’s support for the proposed state policy that allocates supplemental funding for English Learners, low-income students, and foster youth. A year later, the board passed “Reaffirming Our Commitment to Early Education through the LCFF and an Improved Economic Climate in the LAUSD” in support of promoting equitable outcomes via the increased funding allocated to the district through LCFF. This is the only funding equity resolution that makes substantive changes to early education policy, and it earmarks funding for expanding access, increasing staff, conducting quality assessments, and teacher coaching in that area.

The LCFF-related policies in 2013-2014 represent the bulk of the efforts to target student subgroups. “Reaffirming Our Commitment...” simultaneously represents an early indication of the school site allocation focus of later years and establishes a plan to identify outstanding early education needs by site. Specific support of various student subgroups (such as particular racial or ethnic groups, foster youth, or low-income students) or emphasis on their needs has been included in eight resolutions since 2006.

In 2014, the board pivoted to a second wave of equitable funding policy, developing a school site ranking mechanism in order to leverage and equitably allocate LCFF funds. This began with “Equity is Justice” (2014), which directed the development of an equity-based student need index (the “SENI”) for school site-based funding distribution. The Equity is Justice resolution series marks a transition to focusing on targeting resource distribution primarily to schoolsites rather than student subgroups, along with a number of resolutions tied to parent engagement, student health, and school performance passed between 2014

Figure 6.

SUBSTANTIVE POLICIES BY OUR FOCUS ISSUE AREAS

Issue Area	Resolution Name	Academic Year
Closing Opportunity Gaps	Equity on A-G: Reaffirming Our Commitment to A-G Life Preparation for All	2014-15
COVID-19 Response	Providing a High Quality Distance Learning Program for Every Student	2020-21
Diverse and High Quality Teacher and Administrator Workforce	Black Student Excellence through Educator Diversity, Preparation and Retention	2021-22
Expanded Learning	Embracing Community School Strategies in the Los Angeles Unified School District	2016-17
Funding Equity	Equity is Justice	2013-14
Funding Equity	Equity is Justice 2.0: Moving toward a New Direction	2017-18
Targeted Supports: English Learners	English Learners: Hope on the Horizon	2006-07
Targeted Supports: LGBTQIA	Increasing Supports for LGBTQ+ Students, Their Families and Schools	2017-18
Targeted Supports: Racial and Ethnic groups	Everyone Counts: Increasing Equity for All of Our AANHPI AMEMSA Students and Employees	2018-19
Targeted Supports: Racial and Ethnic groups	Ethnic Studies for All Students: Reaffirming Our Commitment to Ethnic Studies in Los Angeles Unified School District	2020-21

and 2019. The initial resolution was followed by “Equity is Justice 2.0: Moving toward a New Direction” in 2018, which updated the SENI to more comprehensively cover academic, disciplinary, and health indicators. It also established a community working group for future SENI revisions. Most recently, “Equity is Justice 2021: A New Standard for Public Education Centered on Racial Justice and Equity for the Highest-Need Students in our Most Impacted Schools,” acknowledged the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on certain communities and incorporated

subsequent relief funding into the SENI formula. This resolution also called for a new community task force to evaluate the impacts and public transparency of SENI policies.

Another factor to note is the board’s tendency to pass resolutions allocating supplemental funding to existing or new areas of policy rather than replacing or redirecting existing funding streams (also known as “supplanting”). None of the key resolutions we analyzed supplanted funds, while 42% explicitly mentioned the allocation of supplemental/

additional funding. In general, there has been an effort to maximize resources through aligning federal, state and local funding sources. This is evidenced particularly in the Local Control Funding Formula and Equity is Justice policy series, as well as with COVID-19 relief funds in 2021.

Few of the resolutions we analyzed incorporate explicit goals around transparency in the formula and distribution of funding, though this has shifted somewhat in recent years. SENI resolutions have been transparent around the funding formula, and more recent iterations have required that spending details be made publicly available. The most recent notable resolution related to equitable funding, “Accelerating Achievement through Equity in Action” (2021), indicates a potentially greater degree of transparency in the future as it requires the annual budget process to make public the allocation of money spent equitably out of the budget.

Development of a diverse, high-quality teacher and administrative workforce

Since 2006, L.A. Unified has put forth 34 resolutions related to a high quality and diverse educator and administrator workforce, 18 of which are still active. Over half of the 34 resolutions (18 total) focused on strengthening the workforce to increase equity among student subgroups. Our analysis focused on three key levers of educator workforce policy: recruitment, retention, and performance/management. This allowed us to consider trends in how the district strengthened the teacher and administrator pipeline, strategies the district employed to retain teachers and administrators, and practices the district implemented to support educators and administrators.

Just one resolution focused specifically on increasing racial and ethnic parity between students and the workforce, and it happens to cut across the three aforementioned workforce levers. “Black Student Excellence through Educator Diversity, Preparation and Retention” (2021-22) resolution required an analysis of gaps in representation, and a plan to be developed by the superintendent for how the district will recruit, prepare, and retain more Black teachers and administrators in alignment with the Black Student Achievement Plan. It is the most race-explicit workforce resolution the board has passed and is one of only two workforce resolutions that mentions strategies and support for specific racial and ethnic student groups. It also represents the first mention of the district’s commitment to “the importance of diversity, preparation, and retention in the District educator workforce” — recognizing the need to work towards racial and ethnic parity — and identifies the need to support Black students, educators, and administrators.

Recruitment and Hiring

We identified 26 resolutions related to recruitment or hiring strategies; 92% led to substantive programmatic changes and policy reforms around staffing. These resolutions aimed to strengthen or address challenges in the teacher and/or administrator pipeline through hiring strategies designed to attract qualified candidates. Indeed, we found that staffing shortages were the largest driver of educator workforce policy shifts, as a result of educator shortages in every academic year of our analysis besides 2018-19 and 2019-20. Authorization of emergency credentialed teachers was the most frequently employed recruitment and hiring strategy, making up half (53%) of all recruitment and hiring focused

resolutions. Because these resolutions were passed to ensure a sufficient number of teachers were in classrooms during periods of shortage, we characterize these policy efforts — most of which are now inactive — as stopgap measures rather than longer-term practices to improve teacher quality. The district passed its first substantive recruitment and hiring resolution in 2006. The “Teach for LAUSD” resolution set forth a series of strategies to strengthen the educator and administrator applicant pool. The resolution was a response to [SB 1133](#), legislation that directed funds to closing achievement gaps in low-performing schools. The funds were used to establish new teacher recruitment pipelines, identify target goals for teacher recruitment, improve teacher and principal training, and provide tuition reimbursement for credentialed educators choosing to work in L.A. Unified as well as performance-based bonuses to educators.

Another key arc in recruitment policy was the expansion of the “grow your own” Career Ladder Pathway program. This program was originally introduced in 1994 and provided tuition reimbursement for classified staff — particularly paraeducators — who were interested in earning their teaching credential. The program was expanded twice, once in 2013-14 to support additional participants and fund program recruitment, and again in 2016-17 to include early childhood and bilingual teacher candidates as well as special education assistants and behavior intervention specialists looking to enter the field.

Retention

A smaller subset of resolutions (six total) focused on efforts to retain educators and administrators; 75% of retention resolutions led to substantive programmatic changes and policy

reforms. These retention resolutions had a specific focus on policy to incentivize educators and administrators to remain in the district.

One of the first mentions of equity and retention is in the “Creating Equitable and Enriching Learning Environments for All Los Angeles Unified School District Students” (2012-13) resolution. Although the heart of this resolution is about class size reduction, it touched on the utilization of weighted student formula funds to retain teachers through the exploration of strategies like implementing competitive wages.

The 2008-2009 “Quality Leadership and Teaching to Ensure a World Class Education for All Students” resolution represents one of the more substantial retention policy shifts. This policy was unique in that it was one of two teacher workforce resolutions that set forth a collective bargaining directive to UTLA. This resolution was also one of the only teacher workforce resolutions with a directive to engage in statewide legislative advocacy around seniority-based termination reforms like the “Protecting Dual Language Programs for Maximum Academic Achievement” resolution in 2009-2010, which authorized the district to deviate from seniority-based termination practices for certificated staff who received district training and were assigned to teach in dual language immersion settings.

Performance and Management

Around one quarter (eight) of the workforce resolutions addressed ongoing support for and management of the educator and administrator workforce throughout their employment in L.A. Unified. Seven of the eight resolutions led to substantive programmatic changes and policy reforms that are still active in the district.

Often, these resolutions secured professional development to support changes in curriculum and course access policy, such as the expansion of dual language immersion programs and the introduction of ethnic studies. For example, “Supporting Ethnic Studies in the Los Angeles Unified School District” (2013-14) resolution directed the district to develop a plan to provide professional development and support systems for educators as they implemented the new ethnic studies curriculum.

Expanded learning opportunities

In the area of extended learning opportunities, our analysis reviewed the extent to which board resolutions since 2006 sought to expand learning opportunities for individual students, or groups of students, outside the traditional classroom. Of the key policy areas analyzed in this report, resolutions that primarily focused on extended learning opportunities made up the smallest number of resolutions (12 total), with four explicitly aiming to prioritize equitable access to expanded learning opportunities for particular student groups that have been underserved. Two resolutions addressed individualized learning opportunities, and three addressed small-group learning opportunities. These opportunities spanned various settings, including after school, summer, tutoring, and early childhood education. All resolutions are still active.

The first expanded learning resolution in our review was passed by the board in 2011-12. “Expanding Digital Education” established a working group to create a plan for blended

learning and provided more individualized technological support for students, with the intention of expanding hybrid learning opportunities, including during supplemental summer instruction.

In recent years, the board has passed extended learning resolutions that are increasingly equity focused. “Embracing Community School Strategies in the Los Angeles Unified School District” (2016-17) highlights and builds on the district’s intent to create equitable extended learning opportunities by recognizing that additional resources during and after school positively impact student success. It develops a community schools pilot program in specific schools to meet the needs of students living in poverty, including the expansion of enriching extra-curricular activities (among many other supports). “Volunteering on the Clock” (2016-17) establishes a program for district employees to mentor young men of color at risk of falling behind at specific schools during the school day. In 2020-21, the board passed “Fully Funding Access to Immersive, Outdoor Learning Opportunities” to expand funding for outdoor learning experiences in after school, weekend, and summer programs, with priority given to students who may not otherwise have access to these types of opportunities. Most recently, the board passed “Arts Justice: Access and Equity Across the Disciplines and the District” (2021-22), which commits to equitable access to high-quality, culturally relevant arts education across pre-K through grade 12, both during the school day and beyond (including extracurricular/after school opportunities). The district must analyze and report on current access gaps, then build and strengthen the quantity and quality of arts education offerings to increase equitable opportunities.

Methodology and Data Sources

Data sources

Los Angeles Unified board resolutions served as the primary data source for this analysis. We accessed board resolutions passed from the 2005-06 through 2021-22 school years through the LAUSD — Resolutions search tool available through the Los Angeles Unified Board of Education website. This time period allowed us to cover the tenure of each board member in order to capture all of their authored or passed resolutions.

Data collection and analysis

We downloaded all resolutions that were “Adopted” or “Adopted as amended,” as indicated under “Action.” A total of 956 resolutions met this criteria for the relevant time period. We recorded key information about each resolution, including: year, action date, title, author (sponsor/co-sponsor), resolution language, and supporting/opposing/abstaining votes. Where applicable, we added an academic year indicator that ran from August to July. We assigned resolutions that fell within that time frame to an academic year. In instances where we were unable to apply that indicator (Figure 1), we applied the calendar year instead.

We then categorized all resolutions according to our inclusion/exclusion criteria and relevant issue areas. We included any substantive resolutions about equitable funding; diverse, high-quality teacher and administrator workforce; expanded learning opportunities; equitable access for student subgroups; or college-aligned expectations. A total of 114

of the resolutions adopted during that time period were included as part of our full-text analysis. We excluded any celebratory resolutions or substantive resolutions about any issues not included above. We did not complete a full-text analysis of any excluded resolutions (n=842).

For the second stage of analysis of the 114 relevant resolutions, we took the following steps:

- 1 We developed a codebook to identify and articulate subcategories (71 total) relevant to each of the four policy areas. For example, in the funding equity policy area, we identified the following categories: targeting student subgroups; targeting school sites based on student demographics; transparent ref formula/distribution/spending; supplement vs. supplant; mitigate unintended impacts / “hold harmless”; and coherence/alignment with other funding sources.
- 2 We coded each resolution against the categorical codes using Dedoose software to identify where a resolution being analyzed incorporates policy and practice considerations relevant to the particular policy areas under consideration. We also utilized inductive coding to surface themes/trends arising in resolutions that were not included in our codebook.

3

We analyzed quantitative trends based on data summaries available in Dedoose to identify counts and percentages by policy area.

We also conducted a deeper qualitative review of specific resolutions and policy issues to allow for descriptive explanations of particular policy decisions made by the board.



Acknowledgments

The report was written by Jeimee Estrada-Miller, University of Southern California Sol Price School of Public Policy; Leni Wolf, Kelsey Taeckens, Abby Ridley-Kerr, and Corran Bellman (independent consultants).

Data collection and research support was provided by Riley Erion, Marisabel Hernandez and Solany Lara through EDMG. The GPSN Board of Directors contributed thoughtful partnership and expertise.

About GPSN

GPSN is a nonprofit intermediary organization exclusively focused on improving Los Angeles public education. GPSN envisions a public school system in Los Angeles that prepares all students to succeed in school and to live thriving adult lives.

Guided by this vision, our mission is to bring together the Los Angeles community to catalyze the transformation of the public education system so that students of color and students living in poverty gain the knowledge, skills, and experiences to lead thriving adult lives.