

March 2025

GPSN

CATALYZING EXCELLENCE
IN PUBLIC EDUCATION



**Looking Ahead as LAUSD
Confronts Fire Recovery and
Federal Policy Uncertainty**

Introduction

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is at a critical juncture, facing two urgent and interrelated challenges: the aftermath of historic wildfires, which have displaced families and interrupted learning, and a rapidly changing federal policy environment with implications for both the families the district serves and the district itself. These crises create uncertainty for students and families while introducing new operational and financial pressures to an already strained system.

How LAUSD responds in this moment will have long-term implications. LAUSD has already taken key steps to address these new crises, and past disasters offer additional consideration for the path ahead, but ensuring a strong and equitable recovery will require sustained effort and collaboration.

The urgency of recovery in public education and stability for students and families is even greater when considering what the district, and its students, have

already endured. Guided by its strategic plan, LAUSD has been in a phase of recovery and strengthening — working to improve academic achievement, advance equity-driven initiatives, and expand student support systems — in the face of climate change and natural disasters,¹ financial pressures,² workforce issues,³ declining enrollment,⁴ and the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵ The combined impact of the wildfires and shifting federal policies threatens to disrupt hard-won progress, but it also presents an opportunity: By doubling down on its strategic priorities and working in partnership with policymakers, philanthropic and nonprofit partners, and the community, LAUSD can turn this moment of crisis into a catalyst for resilience and long-term improvement.

This report examines the holistic impact of the wildfires and the federal policy shifts on LAUSD, how the district has responded thus far, and what additional measures will be necessary to ensure an effective and equitable recovery.

The January 2025 Wildfires Caused Widespread Destruction and Disruption for LAUSD Students and Families

In January 2025, a series of wildfires broke out that became the most destructive in Los Angeles's history, causing widespread devastation, displacing thousands of families, and severely disrupting education.⁶ Over the course of the month, the fires burned more than 40,000 acres across the county, destroying thousands of buildings, including at least a dozen K-12 schools.⁷ Total damage and economic losses from this series of wildfires are estimated to be more than \$250 billion, ranking it among the most costly natural disasters in U.S. history.⁸

The first major fire, the Palisades Fire, ignited in the Santa Monica Mountains on January 7 and, driven by powerful winds, spread across the Pacific Palisades, Topanga, and Malibu, directly impacting several LAUSD schools.⁹ Meanwhile, the Eaton Fire, which started in the San Gabriel Mountains and spread into foothill communities like Altadena, remained outside LAUSD boundaries but contributed to districtwide closures starting on January 8.¹⁰

At the height of the crisis, more than 700,000 students and staff were affected by school closures and displacements.¹¹ While some schools were able to reopen relatively quickly, others were rendered

completely unusable, necessitating the relocation of students to other district facilities or temporary learning spaces. Marquez Charter Elementary and Palisades Charter Elementary were among those severely damaged, requiring their student populations to be reassigned to nearby schools. Other schools, such as Topanga Elementary and Paul Revere Middle School, remained inaccessible for weeks due to lingering hazards, including poor air quality and road closures in evacuation zones.

Even for schools that were not directly impacted by the fires, the aftermath has been deeply disruptive. Smoke damage, debris, and environmental hazards have required extensive cleanup efforts before classrooms could reopen.¹² Numerous schools struggled with staffing shortages as displaced employees were unable to return, and poor air quality forced additional temporary closures.¹³

Many of the schools directly affected by the wildfires serve students from across Los Angeles through the district's school choice program, broadening the fires' impact beyond their immediate neighborhoods.¹⁴ For example, Palisades Charter High School, which lost 40% of its campus, drew students from 113 ZIP codes



during the 2024–25 school year.¹⁵ Nearly half of the members of its student body are students of color, and almost one-third are socioeconomically disadvantaged.¹⁶

The fires have left many households across the city grappling with displacement and financial instability. A report by the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation estimates that economic losses from business disruptions in the fire-affected areas could total \$4.6 billion to \$8.9 billion over the next five years (2025-2029), reducing Los Angeles County's overall economic output by 0.3% to 0.6%.¹⁷ In the first year alone, 8,200 jobs are projected to be lost, with total employment impacts reaching between 24,990 and 49,110 job-years.¹⁸ The hardest-hit industries include health care, retail trade, education services, and food services, which employ many LAUSD

families.¹⁹ More than 11,000 single-family homes and nearly all mobile homes in the burned areas were destroyed — including 55.8% of single-family homes in the Palisades Fire burned area and 50.6% in the Eaton Fire burned area — exacerbating the region's housing crisis and leaving thousands without stable living arrangements.²⁰ The fires are also expected to significantly impact public revenue, with federal, state, and local governments facing tax revenue declines of \$0.73 billion to \$1.4 billion due to slowed business activity and job losses.²¹

These widespread economic and housing disruptions have ripple effects on students and their education, contributing to instability that can impact attendance, learning outcomes, and overall well-being — even for those whose schools were not directly damaged.

Federal Policy Changes Have Increased Fear Among Many LAUSD Families and Destabilized Federal Funding

The federal policy landscape under the second Trump administration has been marked by rapid and often destabilizing changes as the administration moves to roll back policies and programs from prior administrations and implement its own agenda. While some of these actions echo familiar approaches from President Trump's first term, many are new and evolving quickly.

Immigration policy has been one of the clearest examples of the new administration's impact. Recent actions by the Trump administration have expanded expedited deportations, increased penalties for undocumented immigrants, ramped up hiring for federal immigration agents, and mandated detention for certain undocumented individuals.²² In its first 30 days, the administration is on track to arrest nearly 25,000 individuals — more than any other month in the last 11 years.²³ Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) averaged 800 arrests per day nationwide in late January, compared to 300 daily arrests under the Biden administration in 2024.²⁴ Reports indicate that, on some days, nearly half of those arrested were nonviolent offenders or had no criminal record.²⁵ Some news reports are emerging that the administration is still not satisfied

with the number of deportations and has issued new, higher quotas.²⁶

The administration has also expanded the reach of immigration enforcement. In January, it rescinded policies that designated schools, hospitals, and churches as protected areas, allowing ICE agents to conduct operations in these locations.²⁷ It also revived and expanded a program that enlists local law enforcement agencies to assist in federal immigration enforcement, which has raised concerns about potential racial profiling and decreased community trust in law enforcement.²⁸

Beyond immigration, the Trump administration's federal policy agenda has introduced uncertainty in other critical areas affecting LAUSD students and schools. In January 2025, a directive to pause federal grants and loans raised fears about the availability of funding for programs that support vulnerable populations.²⁹ A federal judge temporarily blocked the freeze, and the administration ultimately rescinded the order. The Trump administration has also called to eliminate the Department of Education, though it recognizes that doing so would require Congressional action, and there is a legal battle brewing over the administration's

obligation to distribute funds appropriated by Congress.³⁰ Taken together, these raise the specter of volatility in federal funding.

The administration also issued an executive order prohibiting federal funding for schools that teach “Critical Race Theory” or “gender ideology,” threatening key resources for districts that include these subjects in their curricula.³¹ Reflecting a similar policy direction, it issued a February 2025 directive warning schools that race-conscious policies in admissions, hiring, and financial aid could be considered discriminatory, following the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*.³² While not yet focused on K-12 schools, the guidance raises concerns about whether diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and race-based student support programs — such as LAUSD’s Black Student Achievement Plan — could come under federal scrutiny.

These policy changes also extend beyond K-12 schools, impacting nonprofit organizations that depend on federal funding to provide after-school programs, mental health services, and food assistance to LAUSD students and families.³³ Many operate with limited financial reserves, making sudden funding cuts especially destabilizing

and threatening essential services for vulnerable communities.³⁴

The Trump administration recently terminated nearly \$900 million in Institute of Education Sciences contracts, significantly reducing federal funding for education research.³⁵ This has raised concerns about the ability to assess student outcomes, identify effective interventions, and support evidence-based policymaking.³⁶ With fewer resources dedicated to studying the effectiveness of programs, there will be less insight into the long-term impact of federal policy shifts and the best strategies for addressing learning recovery and equity gaps.

Additional orders direct federal agencies to find ways to expand access to private school vouchers and use federal formula funds to support K-12 educational choice initiatives, likely diverting resources from public schools.³⁷ Disaster aid has also become a point of contention, with threats to dismantle the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and withhold wildfire recovery funds unless California complies with federal priorities on water, forestry, immigration, and voter ID policies.³⁸ These actions leave LAUSD and its families facing a future in which vital resources may be contingent on political negotiations.

The Impact of Recent Crises Is Most Severe for LAUSD Students Who Were Already Vulnerable

The combined effects of the wildfires and federal policy shifts have disproportionately harmed students who were already at risk. Approximately 80% of LAUSD students are economically disadvantaged.³⁹ Hispanic/Latino students are the largest racial/ethnic group in the district by a significant margin, and one in every five LAUSD students (20% in SY23-24) is an English learner.⁴⁰ In Los Angeles County, which includes 79 districts in addition to LAUSD, over 554,000 children (25% of all children living in the county) either lack documentation themselves or live with undocumented family members.⁴¹ These students and their families face significant systemic barriers, including access to financial and social safety nets. Many of these families work in low-wage, cash-based jobs, leaving them financially precarious and more likely to be unbanked.⁴² These new crises have exacerbated existing challenges.

Housing is an acute concern after the wildfires. For families living paycheck to paycheck, the sudden loss of a home or rental property in the fires is particularly devastating. Without savings or financial reserves to fall back on, displaced families face immense challenges securing stable housing and covering everyday expenses. Students who became housing insecure are now living in temporary shelters, in motels,

or with extended family — conditions that make it harder to focus on learning. Others have been forced to relocate outside the district altogether, exacerbating enrollment declines that were already underway before the disaster.⁴³

Even before the fires, Los Angeles County faced a significant housing shortage, with only 24 affordable and available homes for every 100 extremely low-income renter households and approximately 75,000 people experiencing homelessness.⁴⁴ The influx of displaced families seeking housing has intensified competition, driving up rent prices across the county. In the two weeks following the fires, average rents increased by 20%, with some areas seeing illegal hikes of more than 200%, as bad actors sought to capitalize on reduced housing availability.⁴⁵

Rising demand, reduced inventory, and increasing insurance premiums in high-risk areas are likely to push housing costs even higher. This makes it increasingly difficult for lower-income renters, including many LAUSD families, to secure stable housing. Housing instability and financial hardship are well-documented barriers to student success, affecting attendance, focus, and overall academic performance. There is deep concern around the reality that more families may face homelessness, and LAUSD has long struggled to close

academic gaps for homeless students, who face some of the highest obstacles to success. In 2022, nearly 70% of homeless students in the district were considered chronically absent, and they are significantly less likely to graduate from high school or pursue college.⁴⁶

Superintendent Alberto Carvalho, who experienced homelessness as a child, has emphasized that homeless students often face multiple, compounding challenges, including “poverty, English language limitations, [and] immigration” issues, which further hinder their educational success.⁴⁷ He has expressed deep concern about their vulnerability and advocates for a comprehensive, community-based approach, stressing that solutions “cannot be solely the responsibility of the school district” and must involve collaboration with local social agencies and government entities to provide meaningful support.⁴⁸

Many low-income and Latino families are also dealing with job losses due to the wildfires. These families are more likely to work in industries such as domestic services, construction, and hospitality — sectors that have been directly affected by fire-related damage and economic disruption. Domestic workers — including housekeepers, nannies, landscapers, and gardeners — rely on in-person work that may have been disrupted by evacuations and property loss. In Los Angeles County, 85% of household workers are Latino, meaning that the economic impact has disproportionately affected Latino families.⁴⁹ Nearly 90% of house cleaners statewide are Latino, and more than 80% are foreign-born.⁵⁰ Construction workers, who are disproportionately Latino and often from

immigrant backgrounds, are essential to LA’s recovery but have faced widespread job losses and disruptions in the immediate aftermath.⁵¹ Estimates suggest that up to 35,000 jobs held by Latino workers may have been temporarily or permanently lost due to the fires.⁵²

Undocumented families are in a particularly precarious position. They are ineligible for critical safety nets like unemployment insurance and federal disaster aid, and without these protections, many may struggle to recover financially, making it difficult to afford rent, school supplies, transportation, and other necessities for their children. At the same time, fear of immigration enforcement has deterred many from seeking the assistance they are eligible for. The Trump administration’s expansion of deportation sweeps and the rollback of safe-zone protections for schools have heightened these concerns, leading some immigrant families to withdraw from public assistance programs.

In some cases, parents have stopped sending their children to school altogether, fearing exposure to immigration authorities or law enforcement near public institutions, further contributing to absenteeism among students who were already vulnerable. On February 3 alone, LAUSD attendance was 20% lower than on a typical Monday — equivalent to 80,000 students missing school — due to both fear of immigration enforcement and planned protests in support of immigrant rights.⁵³

Research shows that heightened immigration enforcement disrupts education for Hispanic and immigrant children, leading to absenteeism,

declining enrollment, and widening achievement gaps, while the constant fear of deportation causes chronic anxiety, depression, and PTSD.⁵⁴ In LAUSD, attendance challenges compound the effects of declining enrollment, as the district now serves approximately 408k students, down from its peak of 747k students in SY2022-23 and pre-COVID-19 enrollment of 694K in SY2018-19.⁵⁵

On top of housing and economic challenges, current crises have had severe health consequences for LAUSD students and families, exacerbating both physical and mental health vulnerabilities. Exposure to wildfire smoke has significantly worsened air quality across Los Angeles, a concern particularly acute in low-income communities, where asthma rates were already disproportionately high.⁵⁶ Exposure to fine particulate matter from wildfire smoke can trigger respiratory illnesses, worsen pre-existing conditions, and contribute to higher rates of school absences—making it even harder for students to keep up academically.⁵⁷ During the region’s recent wildfires, fire-related hospital visits spiked 16-fold across Los Angeles County, according to the LA County Department of Public Health.⁵⁸ At the same time, the mental health toll of successive crises is mounting.⁵⁹ UCLA researchers warn that disasters of this scale can lead to increased anxiety, depression, and PTSD — challenges that many students

were already experiencing due to the pandemic’s social and emotional impact.⁶⁰

The students affected by current crises were already struggling due to the lasting impacts of COVID-19. Many had fallen behind academically due to school closures, online learning challenges, and financial stress at home. Just as they were beginning to recover from pandemic-related learning loss, they are now facing another wave of disruption. Some students have been displaced from their school, forced to adjust to a new campus, or unable to fully engage in virtual learning due to a lack of internet access or technology. The compounding effects of these crises have resulted in significant challenges for students.

Research consistently shows that multiple major disruptions can have long-term consequences on students, including lower academic achievement, increased dropout rates, widening opportunity gaps, and diminished mental health.⁶¹ Today’s ninth graders — who were sixth graders during the height of the pandemic — have endured years of instability, making them one of the most destabilized cohorts in modern public education. The compounding effects of the pandemic and current crises create barriers that make it even harder for students to regain their footing. Without targeted interventions and sustained support systems, these disruptions may continue to shape student outcomes for years to come.

LAUSD Was Making Progress on Student Achievement and Key Initiatives Before Recent Crises Disrupted Stability

Before the wildfires and federal policy shifts introduced new challenges, LAUSD was on a trajectory of progress. The 2022-26 Strategic Plan set ambitious targets for increasing college and career readiness, improving literacy and numeracy, and strengthening social-emotional learning.⁶² The Year Two report on the district's strategic plan implementation highlighted measurable progress in these areas.⁶³ Since 2022, students have made significant gains in foundational academic skills, with targeted student groups demonstrating even greater growth.⁶⁴ Smarter Balanced Assessment scores have improved, Algebra I pass rates have increased, and the district is making progress toward its goal of ensuring 70% of students demonstrate college and career readiness by 2026.⁶⁵ Additionally, social-emotional learning competencies — such as growth mindset and self-efficacy — have shown upward trends across all grade levels.⁶⁶

The district has also exceeded pre-pandemic graduation levels and seen an increase in students meeting University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) admission requirements. The 2022-23 four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate reached 84.0%, reflecting a 4.9% increase since 2018-19.⁶⁷ More students are now

meeting UC/CSU A-G requirements, with 53.0% of the graduating cohort completing all necessary coursework — an increase of 2.5 percentage points from the previous year and 4.9 percentage points since 2020-21.⁶⁸ These gains have been consistent across student groups, including English learners, students with disabilities, and socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

LAUSD's progress reflects its investments in college and career readiness initiatives, including expanded tutoring, academic interventions, and holistic student support programs. LAUSD has also implemented student outreach and attendance initiatives, enrollment strategies, and expanded access to additional instructional time in an effort to mitigate learning loss, reduce chronic absenteeism, and provide students with the necessary resources to succeed beyond high school.

LAUSD has advanced equity through targeted programs for historically underserved student populations. The Black Student Achievement Plan, launched in 2021, allocates over \$36 million annually to address opportunity gaps through academic support, mental health services, and culturally responsive curriculum in schools with high Black student enrollment.⁶⁹ Similarly, the Master Plan for

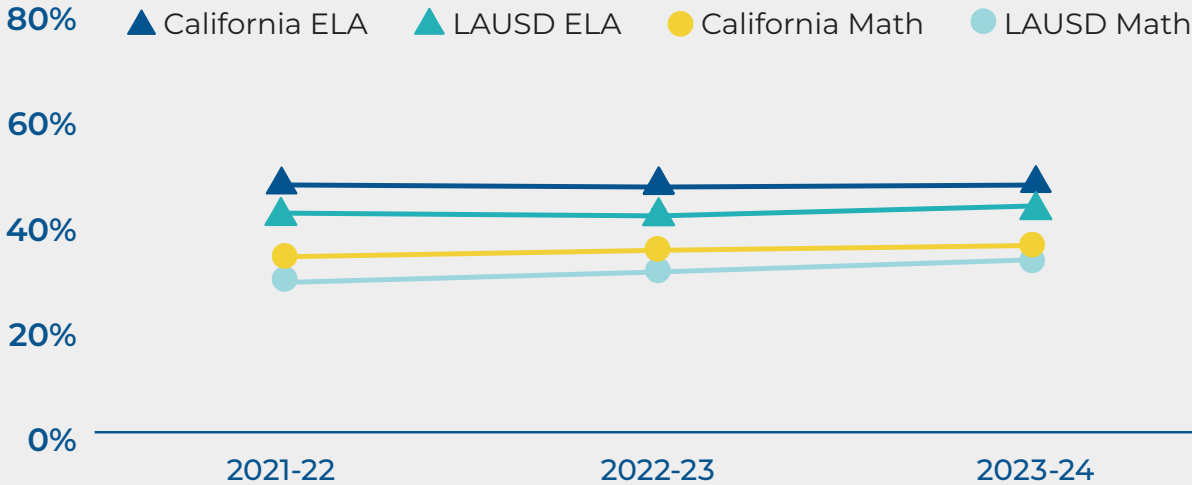
English Learners (ELs) and Standard English Learners (SELs), introduced in 2018, has expanded bilingual programs, enhanced language instruction, and strengthened academic and social-emotional support for linguistically diverse students.⁷⁰

The district’s recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is particularly noteworthy given the new challenges it faces today. Recent analyses show that LAUSD has outpaced many other large districts in recovering from pandemic-era learning loss. LAUSD was one of only three large districts where the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth-grade math scores didn’t decline from 2019 to 2024, and eighth-grade math scores fell by less than a point. By comparison, other large cities overall saw an eight-point drop in the same period.⁷¹ According to Stanford University’s Education Recovery Scorecard, by 2024, LAUSD fully regained pandemic learning losses in math, surpassing 2019 levels by 0.08 grade

equivalents — outpacing both the California average and similar districts.⁷² Preliminary results from the California Smarter Balanced Assessments reinforce this trend, showing that English proficiency among students increased from roughly 41% in SY22-23 to 43% in SY23-24, while math scores rose by more than two percentage points over the same period, reaching a 32.8% proficiency rate districtwide.⁷³ Gains on this assessment were particularly strong among English learners and economically disadvantaged students.

This progress demonstrates LAUSD’s capacity to respond to crises. At the same time, the disruptions caused by wildfires, housing instability, and shifting federal policies pose significant challenges to sustaining this trajectory of improvement. To maintain progress, LAUSD must prioritize stability, equity, and expanded support systems that meet the evolving needs of its students, ensuring they have the resources necessary to succeed.

Percent of Students in Tested Grades Meeting or Exceeding Standards on Smarter Balanced Assessment



Source: California Assessment of Student Progress and Performance, <https://caaspp-elpac.ets.org/caaspp/>.

LAUSD Has Taken Decisive Action to Support Students and Families in Response to the Wildfires and Federal Policy Changes

LAUSD has taken some early, important steps to stabilize its schools, protect students, and ensure continuity in education. The district has focused both on addressing immediate needs — such as reopening schools and supporting displaced students — and on implementing longer-term strategies to safeguard vulnerable populations from the impact of federal policy shifts.

In the aftermath of the wildfires, LAUSD prioritized getting students back into classrooms as quickly as possible and was able to reopen most schools and district offices by January 13, after a week of closures.⁷⁴ However, some schools were completely destroyed and some remained in evacuation zones or sustained significant damage, requiring temporary relocations. Governor Newsom issued an executive order to assist in recovery efforts, allowing displaced students to enroll in schools outside their home district and facilitating the use of temporary facilities for fire-damaged schools.⁷⁵ Marquez Charter Elementary School and Palisades Charter Elementary School were either leveled or nearly destroyed, with their students reassigned to Brentwood Elementary Science Magnet and Nora Sterry Elementary. Many other schools

in evacuation zones were temporarily relocated to other district schools; those schools have since reopened, though many students and families there continue to grapple with the lasting effects of displacement, housing instability, and economic hardship described above.⁷⁶ Some schools have continued offering virtual learning options for displaced students.⁷⁷

To support students' overall well-being, LAUSD launched recovery efforts expanding access to critical resources. The district published a “Family and Community Recovery Guide” that provides information on food assistance, mental health services, school-based wellness programs, transportation, and legal aid.⁷⁸ The district expanded options for counseling for both students and staff, prioritizing campuses with high concentrations of displaced students. School-based wellness centers and mobile health units ensured students had access to essential medical, dental, and mental health care. To combat food insecurity, LAUSD also established emergency meal distribution centers, offering free breakfast and lunch to displaced students and families.

As the Trump administration ramped up immigration enforcement, LAUSD



reaffirmed its commitment to being a “sanctuary district” and took deliberate steps to protect and support its immigrant communities. In November 2024, the LAUSD Board of Education passed an updated “sanctuary” resolution, reinforcing and expanding prior measures to shield students and families from immigration enforcement at school.⁷⁹ The resolution bars district employees from voluntarily cooperating with any immigration enforcement actions and emphasizes that schools remain safe spaces for all students, regardless of immigration status.⁸⁰

To further mitigate the effects of immigration enforcement and reassure families, Superintendent Carvalho and district leaders held press conferences

affirming the district’s commitment to protecting students.⁸¹ They also met with advocates and parents to hear concerns firsthand.⁸² LAUSD implemented mandatory training for staff on how to respond if federal immigration officers appear at or near schools and distributed “know your rights” cards to students with guidance on what to do if approached by immigration agents.⁸³

LAUSD’s continued leadership and advocacy will be critical to protecting students in the months ahead. While the district has taken strong initial steps to support students and families, sustained effort and long-term planning will be essential to ensuring an equitable recovery.

Lessons From Other School Districts Can Strengthen LAUSD's Recovery Approach

LAUSD is not the first district to experience large-scale disruptions due to natural disasters. Lessons from other communities — including New Orleans post-Hurricane Katrina, Lahaina after the 2023 wildfires, and other California districts affected by wildfires — offer valuable insights into effective recovery strategies. These examples highlight the importance of long-term planning, community engagement, and sustained investment in rebuilding efforts.

Lahaina, Maui, Post-2023 Wildfires

In August 2023, wildfires devastated Lahaina, Maui, destroying over 2,200 acres and displacing thousands of residents.⁸⁴ The wildfires had a direct impact on West Maui's public schools. King Kamehameha III Elementary School was destroyed, and the three remaining campuses — Princess Nāhi'ena'ena Elementary, Lahaina Intermediate, and Lahainaluna High — were temporarily closed due to unsafe conditions.⁸⁵

In the months following the disaster, the Hawaii Department of Education implemented comprehensive measures to ensure students and staff could return to learning. These included providing alternative learning hubs, conducting extensive environmental testing to guarantee safety, and establishing a temporary campus for King Kamehameha III Elementary.⁸⁶ The department and community partners also prioritized mental health services, offering trauma-informed care to support students and staff during recovery.⁸⁷

Community-driven efforts played a central role in Lahaina's recovery.⁸⁸ Residents resisted relocation, advocating for rebuilding within Lahaina to maintain community ties.⁸⁹ Through forums, town halls, and partnerships with local organizations, families actively shaped the recovery process.

The West Maui Long-Term Recovery Plan was developed to guide the island's resurgence.⁹⁰ This plan, formulated with input from county, state, and federal partners and community members, outlines projects focusing on education, housing, and economic revitalization.⁹¹ The plan includes initiatives like the Affordable Rental Housing Program, aiming to reconstruct and expand affordable housing units lost in the wildfires. Additionally, the plan emphasizes workforce development and

community health projects to diversify the local economy and enhance residents' well-being and outlines improvements in emergency communication networks and energy infrastructure.⁹²

Lessons for LAUSD:

- Community input is vital; Lahaina's residents were vocal about not wanting to be displaced, emphasizing the importance of keeping families in the community during recovery.
- Trauma-informed support services are essential to help students and staff recover from the emotional toll of displacement and loss.
- Recovery must address both education and infrastructure to support long-term community stability and student well-being; Lahaina's recovery plan went beyond reopening schools and aimed to solve larger-scale community problems like housing, workforce development, and emergency preparedness that ensure resilience.

New Orleans Post-Hurricane Katrina

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, leading to the destruction or severe damage of over 100 of the city's 128 public schools.⁹³ Partly in response, the Louisiana Legislature transferred most Orleans Parish public schools to the state's Recovery School District (RSD), an entity originally created in 2003 to take over and improve persistently low-performing schools.⁹⁴

Through the recovery period, the city was addressing the extensive infrastructure damage caused by Hurricane Katrina. To rebuild and modernize school facilities, the RSD and the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) collaborated on the School Facilities Master Plan (SFMP), a multi-year initiative aimed at restoring the city's public schools.⁹⁵ In 2010, a historic \$1.8 billion settlement was reached with FEMA, providing the necessary funds to help implement the plan.⁹⁶ The SFMP called for the construction of 35 new schools, 18 full renovations, and 28 refurbishments, ensuring that all public school students in New Orleans would have access to updated, high-quality learning environments.

Lessons for LAUSD:

- Sustained financial investment is essential to support both school rebuilding and long-term academic and wraparound services.
- School modernization is critical for improving infrastructure and making schools more resilient to future disasters.

Other California School Districts Affected by Wildfires

California has a long history of wildfire-related school disruptions, with multiple districts implementing recovery strategies. Among the most devastating were the 2018 Camp Fire in Paradise and the 2017 Tubbs Fire in Santa Rosa, both of which caused significant displacement and long-term challenges for schools and students.

The 2018 Camp Fire nearly destroyed Paradise Unified School District (PUSD), leveling most of the town, including schools and family homes. The fire destroyed 18,804 structures and displaced nearly all residents, reducing the town's population from 26,800 to just over 9,000 five years later.⁹⁷

The district prioritized mental health support by implementing Project Cal-Well, which expanded access to school-based mental health services, created wellness centers, and provided trauma-informed training for educators.⁹⁸ Through partnerships with Butte County Behavioral Health and other agencies, PUSD established dedicated mental health clinician positions, launched mental health awareness campaigns, and implemented universal screening tools to identify students in need of support.⁹⁹ Additionally, PUSD developed suicide prevention initiatives and social-emotional learning programs, leading to measurable improvements in student well-being, including a reduction in reported feelings of chronic sadness and hopelessness among secondary students¹⁰⁰

As part of the rebuilding process, PUSD collaborated with the state and federal government to secure funding, including nearly \$14 million in FEMA grants, and passed a local bond measure to support reconstruction efforts.¹⁰¹ However, long-term challenges remain. The district continues to struggle with declining enrollment due to the slow return of residents, affecting school funding and operations.¹⁰²

The 2017 Tubbs Fire brought similar devastation to Santa Rosa, where multiple schools were destroyed. The recovery process focused on infrastructure resilience, insurance negotiations, and securing legislative support to fund rebuilding efforts. One of the greatest challenges was retaining displaced students, as the fire destroyed thousands of homes, making it difficult for families to remain in the district.¹⁰³ School leaders worked to provide temporary housing solutions and support services to help families stay connected to their school communities. In addition to physical rebuilding, the district prioritized long-term mental health services, and educators underwent trauma-based training to provide appropriate support upon their return.¹⁰⁴ The school environment became a crucial space for healing, offering stability and a sense of normalcy as students navigated their recovery.¹⁰⁵

Lessons for LAUSD:

- State and federal advocacy is crucial to securing necessary funding for rebuilding efforts and supporting long-term recovery as declining enrollment and housing challenges impact school operations.
- Flexible school relocation plans are essential to ensure displaced students can continue their education through temporary learning sites or virtual options while schools are rebuilt.
- Sustained mental health support is critical to help students and staff recover from trauma, with school-based services, trauma-informed training, and long-term social-emotional programs playing a key role in recovery.

While LAUSD must act quickly to address immediate challenges, crises also present an opportunity to tackle big challenges. Rather than simply restoring what was lost, recovery efforts present an opportunity to drive lasting improvements in public education, including modernizing infrastructure, enhancing instructional models, and expanding support services — all highlighted as priorities in the 2022-26 Strategic Plan that are even more important now. By responding effectively to short-term needs, leveraging lessons from past disasters, and continuing to prioritize long-term progress on its strategic plan, LAUSD can create a more resilient, equitable, and student-centered school system.



A Coordinated Approach Is Essential to Ensure a Strong Recovery and Long-Term Resilience for LAUSD

As LAUSD works to recover from the recent wildfires and navigate an increasingly volatile federal policy landscape, the district faces a dual challenge: addressing the immediate needs of students and families while building resilience for the future. This recovery effort requires coordination across multiple stakeholders, each of whom has a critical role to play. LAUSD, elected leaders, and philanthropic organizations all have unique opportunities to contribute to a comprehensive and sustainable recovery.

Opportunities for LAUSD:

- **Continue implementing the strategic plan** to maintain momentum on key educational initiatives while adapting to new challenges.
- **Ensure equitable resource distribution**, balancing support for directly affected schools while sustaining services across the entire district.
- **Expand wraparound services** by improving coordination between schools and community organizations, strengthening housing partnerships, and enhancing mental health, social services, and trauma-informed educational practices.

Opportunities for Elected Leaders:

- **Secure state and federal education funding** to ensure that recovery efforts do not come at the expense of long-term investments in public education.

- **Advocate for displaced students and families**, pushing for policies that protect student stability and prevent educational disruption.
- **Support expanded social services** through local and state initiatives to help affected communities rebuild and recover.

Opportunities for Philanthropy:

- **Fill critical funding gaps left by federal recovery programs**, ensuring that essential services and innovative education initiatives continue uninterrupted.
- **Balance long-term systemic investments and short-term relief**, recognizing that resilience-building requires sustained support.
- **Increase support for nonprofit organizations** that advocate for improved educational outcomes and provide direct services to vulnerable students and families.

Through the actions of these stakeholders, LAUSD students can experience an equitable and sustainable recovery while LAUSD strengthens its ability to withstand future crises. With thoughtful planning, community engagement, and strong partnerships, the district can emerge from this period stronger, more resilient, and better equipped to serve all students.

Endnotes

¹ “Extreme Heat and Climate Change,” County of Los Angeles Public Health, accessed March 7, 2025, <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/safety/extreme-heat-climate-change.htm>; Marissa Wenzke, “Los Angeles Faces Scorching 119° as Heat Wave Affects 31 Million in CA, Nevada and Arizona,” CBS News, September 7, 2024, <https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/los-angeles-faces-scorching-119-as-heat-wave-affects-31-million-in-ca-nevada-and-arizona/>; Fox 11 Digital Team, “Triple-digit temperatures knock out power to 2 LAUSD schools, students let out early,” Fox 11 Los Angeles, September 6, 2024, <https://www.foxla.com/news/triple-digit-temperatures-knock-out-power-2-laUSD-schools-students-let-out-early/>; “Drought in California,” UCLA Sustainability, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://www.sustain.ucla.edu/drought/>.

² Mariana Dale, “LAUSD Budget Outlook Improves, But Financial Challenges Remain,” LAist, May 15, 2024, <https://laist.com/news/education/lausd-budget-may-revise-2024-school-funding>.

³ Chelsea Hilton and Jonathan Lloyd, “How the LAUSD Plans to Fill Gaps in Staffing as the New School Year Approaches,” NBC Los Angeles, August 10, 2022, <https://www.nbclosangeles.com/education/k-12-education/lausd-staffing-teacher-shortages-staffing-school/2960278/>; Kurtis Lee and Jill Cowen, “Los Angeles School Workers Are on Strike, and Parents Say They Get It,” New York Times, March 22, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/22/us/la-schools-strike.html>.

⁴ Nova Blanco-Rico and Balin Schneider, “Enrollment Continues to Decline in LAUSD, a Trend Many Large Public School Districts Are Also Experiencing,” 74, September 12, 2023, <https://www.the74million.org/article/enrollment-continues-to-decline-in-laUSD-a-trend-many-large-public-school-districts-are-also-experiencing/>.

⁵ Mallika Seshadri, “LAUSD Celebrates Academic Recovery, but a Rough Road Lies Ahead without Covid Relief Money,” EdSource, October 11, 2024, <https://edsources.org/2024/lausd-celebrates-academic-recovery-but-a-rough-road-lies-ahead-without-covid-relief-money/720504>.

⁶ Julie Cart, “California Infernos in January? Here’s Why Wildfire Season Keeps Getting Longer and More Devastating,” CalMatters, January 16, 2025, <https://calmatters.org/explainers/california-wildfire-season-worsening-explained/>; Patricia McIlreavy, “Beyond the Flames: Addressing the Ripple Effects of California’s Wildfires,” Center for Disaster Philanthropy, updated January 10, 2025, <https://disasterphilanthropy.org/blog/beyond-the-flames-addressing-the-ripple-effects-of-californias-wildfires/>;

Victoria Bekiempis, “Los Angeles’ Palisades and Eaton Wildfires Are Now Fully Contained,” Guardian, February 1, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/01/los-angeles-palisades-eaton-fires-contained>; Lilia Luciano and Kelsie Hoffman, “L.A. Area Schools Look for Normalcy Amid Wildfires: ‘Uncertainty Is the Biggest Challenge,’” CBS News, January 15, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/los-angeles-california-schools-wildfires/>.

⁷ Bekiempis, “Los Angeles’ Palisades and Eaton Wildfires Are Now Fully Contained”; Luciano and Hoffman, “L.A. Area Schools Look for Normalcy Amid Wildfires.”

⁸ Roger Vincent, “Estimated Cost of Fire Damage Balloons to More Than \$250 Billion,” Los Angeles Times, January 24, 2025, <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2025-01-24/estimated-cost-of-fire-damage-balloons-to-more-than-250-billion>; Abené Clayton, “LA Fires Forecast to Be Costliest Blaze in US History with Estimate of over \$200bn in Losses,” Guardian, January 13, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jan/13/la-fires-wildfire-economic-losses>; Brian Contreras, “The Cost of the Los Angeles Fires Is Looking Like \$30 Billion—and Counting,” Inc., January 23, 2025, <https://www.inc.com/brian-contreras/the-cost-of-the-los-angeles-fires-is-looking-like-30-billion-and-counting/9111116/>; Monica Danielle, “AccuWeather Estimates More Than \$250 Billion in Damages and Economic Loss from LA Wildfires,” AccuWeather, January 13, 2025, <https://www.accuweather.com/en/weather-news/accuweather-estimates-more-than-250-billion-in-damages-and-economic-loss-from-la-wildfires/1733821>.

⁹ “Palisades Fire,” California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, updated March 4, 2025, <https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2025/1/7/palisades-fire/>; Jacob Margolis, “The Palisades Fire Continues to Grow Due to Strong Winds and Dry Conditions,” NPR, January 7, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/01/07/nx-sl-5251630/the-palisades-fire-continues-to-grow-due-to-strong-winds-and-dry-conditions#:~:text=The%20Palisades%20fire%20is%20driven,residents%20to%20heed%20those%20orders>; “Los Angeles Unified Update on Fire and Wind Related School Operations (1-08-25),” LAUSD, updated January 7, 2025, <https://www.lausd.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DoMainID=4&ModuleInstanceID=4466&ViewID=6446EE88-D30C-497E-9316-3F8874B3E108&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=184162&PageID=1>.

¹⁰ “Eaton Fire,” California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, updated March 4, 2025, <https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2025/1/7/eaton-fire/>; “Understanding the Impact of Santa Ana Winds in the Eaton Fire,” California Curated, January 16, 2025, <https://californiacurated.com/2025/01/16/understanding-the-impact-of-santa-ana-winds-in-the-eaton-fire/>; “Wildfire Smoke in Los

Angeles Brings Hazardous Air Quality and Health Risks,” Respiratory Therapy, updated January 10, 2025, <https://respiratory-therapy.com/public-health/healthcare-policy/environmental-news/wildfire-smoke-los-angeles-brings-hazardous-air-quality-health-risks/>.

¹¹ Mariana Dale and Ross Brenneman, “The Air Is Bad, the Staff Is Displaced. But Schools Are Reopening as Fires Come Under Control,” LAist, January 13, 2025, <https://laist.com/news/education/school-closures-palisades-eaton-fire-los-angeles>; Srishti Prabha, “As Wildfires Disrupt Los Angeles Schools, Experts Begin to Study Mental Health Effects on Students,” CapRadio, January 30, 2025, <https://www.capradio.org/articles/2025/01/30/as-wildfires-disrupt-los-angeles-schools-experts-begin-to-study-mental-health-effects-on-students/>.

¹² Krysta Fauria, et al., “Fires Scorched Campuses across Los Angeles. Many Schools Are Seeking Places to Hold Classes,” AP, January 17, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/los-angeles-california-wildfires-school-education-1da9321c921cb9fa5889cc6d6a6affc1f>.

¹³ Dale and Brenneman, “The Air Is Bad, the Staff Is Displaced.”

¹⁴ Carolyn Jones, “A Beloved Altadena School, Destroyed in the Eaton Fire, Looks to the Future,” CalMatters, January 27, 2025, <https://calmatters.org/education/k-12-education/2025/01/la-fires-2/#:~:text=Los%20Angeles%20County%20has%20a,principals%20also%20lost%20their%20homes>.

¹⁵ “At a Glance,” Palisades Charter High School, accessed March 7, 2025, https://www.palihigh.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=412621&type=d; “Palisades Charter High,” California School Dashboard, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://www.caschooldashboard.org/reports/19647331995836/2024>.

¹⁶ “At a Glance”; “Palisades Charter High.”

¹⁷ Matt Horton, et al., Impact of 2025 Los Angeles Wildfires and Comparative Study (Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, 2025), https://laedc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/SCLC_2025-LA-Wildfires-Study-FINAL.pdf.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² “Protecting the American People against Invasion,” The White House, updated January 20, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/protecting-the-american-people-against-invasion/>; “After Day One: A High-Level Analysis of Trump’s First Executive Actions,” American Immigration Council, updated January 22, 2025, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/>

after-day-one-high-level-analysis-trumps-first-executive-actions; “President Trump Signs the Laken Riley Act into Law,” Homeland Security, updated January 29, 2025, <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2025/01/29/president-trump-signs-laken-riley-act-law>.

²³ Will Craft, “Misleading Ice Data ‘Laying Groundwork’ for Mass Deportations, Advocates Say,” Guardian, February 12, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/12/trump-ice-deportation-data>.

²⁴ Jeanne Kuang, “Trump’s Executive Orders on Immigration Are Creating Fear. What You Need to Know about Them,” CalMatters, February 10, 2025, <https://calmatters.org/california-divide/2025/02/trump-executive-orders-immigration/#:~:text=The%20new%20order%20expands%20the%20process%20to,boarder%2C%20said%20UCLA%20law%20professor%20Ahilan%20Arulanantham>.

²⁵ Gabe Gutierrez and Nicole Acevedo, “ICE Makes Close to 1,200 Arrests in One Day,” NBC News, January 27, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/ice-trump-deportations-numbers-rcna188937>; Craft, “Misleading Ice Data.”

²⁶ Gloria Oladipo, “Two senior Ice officials reassigned over slow rate of deportations and arrests,” Guardian, February 12, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/12/ice-officials-reassigned-deportation>; Kristen Welker and Julia Ainsley, “Trump is ‘angry’ that deportation numbers are not higher,” NBC News, February 7, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/trump-angry-deportation-numbers-are-not-higher-rcna191273>.

²⁷ Ximena Bustillo and Sergio Martínez-Beltrán, “Trump Administration Strips Schools, Churches of Immigration Enforcement Protections,” NPR, January 21, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/01/21/nx-s1-5269899/trump-immigration-enforcement-schools-churches>.

²⁸ David A. Lieb, “Trump Is Signing Up Local Law Officers to Help with Immigration Enforcement,” AP, February 7, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/illegal-immigration-ice-states-trump-7246e8248cada0dddf078ad1dc79d1a>.

²⁹ Asma Khalid, et al., “Judge pauses Trump’s federal funding freeze as confusion and frustration spread,” NPR, January 28, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/01/28/nx-s1-5277029/trump-memo-halt-funding>; Barbara Sprunt, et al., “White House Response Adds to Confusion on Federal Funding Freeze,” NPR, January 29, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/01/29/g-s1-45313/trump-federal-funding-freeze-reversed>.

³⁰ Zachary Price, “A Primer on the Impoundment Control Act,” The Lawfare Institute, updated January 28, 2025, <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/a-primer-on-the-impoundment-control-act>.

³¹ Dana Goldstein, “With Sweeping Executive Orders, Trump Tests Local Control of Schools,” New York Times, January 30, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/30/us/trump->

executive-orders-local-control-schools.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare; "Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling," The White House, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/ending-radical-indoctrination-in-k-12-schooling/>; Lexi Lonas Cochran, "Trump Signs Executive Order to Defund Schools Teaching CRT, 'Radical Gender Ideology,'" The Hill, January 29, 2025, <https://thehill.com/homenews/education/5113202-trump-schools-executive-order-crt-gender-ideology/>.

³² Craig Trainor to colleague, letter, February 14, 2025, <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/dear-colleague-letter-sffa-v-harvard-109506.pdf>.

³³ Laura Tomasko, "Government Funding Cuts Put Nonprofits at Risk across the Nation," Urban Institute, February 21, 2025, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/government-funding-cuts-put-nonprofits-risk-across-nation>; Jeffrey S. Tenenbaum and Kevin M. Serafino, "DEI Initiatives in the Crosshairs of the Administration: What Nonprofits Need to Know to Mitigate Their Risk," Nonprofit Alliance, updated February 9, 2025, https://tnpa.org/dei-mitigate_risk/; "General FAQs on Executive Actions Impacting Nonprofits," National Council of Nonprofits, updated February 24, 2025, <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/files/media/documents/2025/faq-executive-orders-nonprofits.pdf>.

³⁴ Tomasko, "Government Funding Cuts Put Nonprofits at Risk"; "General FAQs on Executive Actions Impacting Nonprofits."

³⁵ Jonaki Mehta and Cory Turner, "Trump Administration Targets Education Department Research Arm in Latest Cuts," NPR, February 10, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/10/nx-s1-5292444/trump-musk-education-department-schools-students-research-cuts>; Collin Binkley and Bianca Vázquez Tones, "DOGE cuts \$900 million from agency that tracks American students' academic progress," AP, February 11, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/ies-musk-doge-education-cuts-4461d7bdbe9d55c5a411d8465999b011>; Cara Jackson, et al., "Cutting Research Funding Would Make Education Less Effective and Efficient," Brookings, updated February 24, 2025, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/cutting-research-funding-would-make-education-less-effective-and-efficient/>.

³⁶ Mehta and Turner, "Trump Administration Targets Education Department"; Eliza Relman and Ayelet Sheffey, "Can America's Kids Read? It'll Be Harder to Know after Trump's Education Cuts, Researchers Say," Business Insider, February 26, 2025, <https://www.businessinsider.com/doge-education-department-cuts-nations-report-card-fund-poor-schools-2025-2>; Jackson, et al., "Cutting Research Funding."

³⁷ Dana Goldstein, "With Sweeping Executive Orders"; Yamiche Alcindor, et al., "Trump Signs Sweeping Executive Order to Expand School Choice," NBC News, January 29, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/trump-sign-sweeping-executive-order-expand-school-choice-rcna189779>.

³⁸ Nandita Bose and Steve Holland, "Trump Mulls Scrapping FEMA," Reuters, January 24, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-visit-north-carolina-los-angeles-disaster-tour-2025-01-24/>; Elyse Perlmutter-Gumbiner, et al., "Trump floats overhauling or eliminating FEMA while touring hurricane damage in North Carolina," NBC News, January 24, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/trump-floats-overhauling-eliminating-fema-rcna189157>; Alexei Koseff, "Trump and Newsom Embrace in Fire-Ravaged LA, but Now the President Wants to Tie Federal Aid to Voter ID," CalMatters, January 24, 2025, <https://calmatters.org/politics/2025/01/trump-la-fires-newsom/>; Lisa Mascaro and Chris Megerian, "Trump Says He May Withhold Federal Aid for Los Angeles if California Doesn't Change Water Policies," AP, January 23, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-republicans-taxes-eea4754a0f580d451aa0588f0639d52c>.

³⁹ "Los Angeles Unified," California School Dashboard, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://www.caschooldashboard.org/reports/19647330000000/2024>; analysis of data from "Enrollment," LAUSD, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://my.lausd.net/opendata/dashboard?language=en#>.

⁴⁰ For more information on the students LAUSD serves, please refer to the Appendix.

⁴¹ "Districts and Schools," Los Angeles County Office of Education, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://www.lacoe.edu/education/districts#:~:text=Los%20Angeles%20County%20is%20home,elementary%20through%20high%20school%20students>; "Mixed-Status Families," California Immigrant Data Portal, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://immigrantdataca.org/indicators/mixed-status-families?breakdown=by-age-group>.

⁴² FDIC National Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked Households (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, 2023), <https://www.fdic.gov/household-survey/2023-fdic-national-survey-unbanked-and-underbanked-households-appendix-tables>; Edmund Khashadourian and Syldy Tom, The Unbanked Problem in Los Angeles (United Way of Greater Los Angeles, 2007), http://www.insightccd.org/uploads/assets/Khashadourian_Edmund/unbanked-la.pdf; Ellen Seidman, et al., A Financial Services Survey of Low- and Moderate-Income Households (Center for Financial Services Innovation, 2005), <https://www.findevgateway.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/mfg-en-paper-a-financial-services-survey-of-low-and-moderate-income-households-2005.pdf>; Giacomo Bagarella, et al., "The Cost of Financial Exclusion," HR&A Advisors, Inc., updated May 2021, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/602cbf4db6168b10a62817f3t/60cce903cca7252f8cd96dac/1624041732571/CostOfFinancialExclusion_May2021.pdf.

⁴³ Ben Chapman, "After LAUSD Enrollment Falls by 11,000, Board President Says Schools May Close," 74, February 24, 2025, <https://www.the74million.org/article/after-lausd-enrollment-falls-by-11000-board-president-says-schools-may-close/>.

⁴⁴ “Los Angeles Wildfires Exacerbate Longstanding Housing Crisis in Southern California,” National Low Income Housing Coalition, updated January 27, 2025, <https://nlihc.org/resource/los-angeles-wildfires-exacerbate-longstanding-housing-crisis-southern-california>; Andrew Gumbel, “Apartments for \$20,000 a Month: Residents Scramble after Wildfires Deepen LA’s Housing Crisis,” Guardian, January 22, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jan/22/la-wildfires-housing-crisis>.

⁴⁵ “Los Angeles Wildfires Exacerbate Longstanding Housing Crisis”; Gumbel, “Apartments for \$20,000 a Month”; Rachel Siegel, et al., “Rent Rose by 20 Percent across L.A. County after Fires. That’s Illegal,” Washington Post, January 25, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/01/25/la-county-rent-gouging-wildfires/>; Jason Ma, “Listed Rents Soared More Than 200% in Parts of LA after the Wildfires, Despite Anti-Gouging Rules,” Fortune, January 26, 2025, <https://fortune.com/2025/01/26/la-housing-crisis-home-rents-wildfires-price-gouging-laws/>.

⁴⁶ Katie VanArnam, “LA Housing Crisis Hits LAUSD as Number of Homeless Students Continues to Grow,” 74, October 15, 2024, <https://www.the74million.org/article/la-housing-crisis-hits-laUSD-as-number-of-homeless-students-continues-to-grow/>.

⁴⁷ VanArnam, “LA Housing Crisis Hits LAUSD”; Ben Chapman, “‘Tip of the Iceberg’: LA Schools Chief Carvalho Warns Student Homelessness Across City Worse Than Data Shows,” 74, June 5, 2024, <https://www.the74million.org/article/tip-of-the-iceberg-homeless-kids-in-laUSD-worse-than-data-show-says-carvalho/>.

⁴⁸ VanArnam, “LA Housing Crisis Hits LAUSD”; Chapman, “Tip of the Iceberg.”

⁴⁹ Silvia R. González, et al., “Wildfires and Latino Communities: Analysis of Residents, Workers, and Jobs in LA County Fire Evacuation Zones,” UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Institute, updated January 15, 2025, <https://latino.ucla.edu/research/wildfires-and-latino-workers-analysis/>; Saba Waheed, et al., Profile of Domestic Workers in California (UCLA Labor Center and California Domestic Workers Coalition, 2020), <https://www.labor.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Profile-of-Domestic-Workers-in-California.pdf>.

⁵⁰ Alejandra Reyes-Velarde and Jeanne Kuang, “It All Ended in a Second: Thousands of Low-Income and Immigrant Workers Lost Jobs in LA Fires,” CalMatters, January 17, 2025, <https://calmatters.org/environment/wildfires/2025/01/la-fires-workers-lost-jobs/>.

⁵¹ González, et al., “Wildfires and Latino Communities.”

⁵² González, et al., “Wildfires and Latino Communities.”

⁵³ Mariana Dale, “Immigration Activism and Fear Deflate Attendance at LA Schools,” LAist, February 4, 2025, <https://laist.com/news/education/immigration-laUSD-attendance->

[trump-administration; Zaidee Stavely, “Hundreds of Students Walk Out to Protest Trump’s Immigration Policies,” EdSource, February 5, 2025, <https://edsources.org/updates/hundreds-of-students-walk-out-to-protest-trumps-immigration-policies>.](trump-administration; Zaidee Stavely, “Hundreds of Students Walk Out to Protest Trump’s Immigration Policies,” EdSource, February 5, 2025, https://edsources.org/updates/hundreds-of-students-walk-out-to-protest-trumps-immigration-policies.)

⁵⁴ Olga R. Rodriguez, “Some Parents Weigh School Attendance Amid Fear of Immigration Arrests,” KQED, January 22, 2025, <https://www.kqed.org/news/12023442/some-parents-weigh-school-attendance-amid-fear-of-immigration-arrests>; Bianca Vázquez Toness, “Schools Are Bracing for Upheaval over Fear of Mass Deportations,” AP, November 27, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/immigration-school-deportation-9747be35d2eb109693930f114f148b94>; Laura Bellows, “Increased Immigration Enforcement Means Increased Chronic Absenteeism for Hispanic Students of Immigrants,” Center for Education Policy Research, updated February 3, 2022, <https://sdp.cepr.harvard.edu/blog/increased-immigration-enforcement-means-increased-chronic-absenteeism-hispanic-students>; Chelsea Connerly, “Issue Brief: The Impact of Undocumented Status on Children’s Learning,” UConn NEAG School of Education, updated July 23, 2018, <https://education.uconn.edu/2018/07/23/issue-brief-the-impact-of-undocumented-status-on-childrens-learning/>; Lisa M. Edwards and Jacki Black, “Stress Related to Immigration Status in Students:

A Brief Guide for Schools,” Marquette University, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://www.ilctr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Immigration-Related-Stress-A-Guide-for-Schools.pdf>; “U.S. Citizen Children Impacted by Immigration Enforcement,” American Immigration Council, updated June 24, 2021, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/us-citizen-children-impacted-immigration-enforcement#:~:text=Since%20late%202016%2C%20doctors%20and,Latino%20adolescents%20in%20Atlanta%2C%20Georgia>; Randy Capps, et al., *U.S. Citizen Children Impacted by Immigration Enforcement* (Urban Institute, 2015), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/ASPE-ChildrenofDeported-Lit%20Review-FINAL.pdf>.

⁵⁵ “Enrollment,” LAUSD; “2018-19 Superintendent’s Final Budget,” LAUSD, accessed March 7, 2025, https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/123/18_2018-19%20District%20Enrollment%20Trends%2006-05-2018%20Combined.pdf.

⁵⁶ Sandy Cohen, “How’s the Air Quality in Fire-Ravaged Los Angeles? Here’s What You Should Know,” UCLA Health, January 29, 2025, <https://www.uclahealth.org/news/article/hows-air-quality-fire-ravaged-los-angeles-heres-what-you#:~:text=%E2%80%9CIt’s%20hard%20to%20say%2C%20because,it%20might%20take%20two%20years.%E2%80%9D>; Sandy Cohen, “Moving Forward after the Los Angeles Fires,” UCLA Newsroom, February 4, 2025, <https://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/moving-forward-after-the-los-angeles-fires-experts-discuss-physical-psychological-and-environmental-recovery>; Valeria Macias, “Q&A: Boyle

Heights Is Already a Toxic Hotspot for Air Pollution. How Wildfires Are Making It Worse,” Boyle Heights Beat, January 13, 2025, <https://boyleheightsbeat.com/boyle-heights-pollution-wildfires-eastside/>; “Breathing Easy? Child Asthma in Los Angeles County,” County of Los Angeles Public Health, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://admin.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/reports/LAHealthBrief2011/Asthma/ChildAsthma.pdf>; Susan H. Babey, et al., “Low-Income Californians Bear Unequal Burden of Asthma,” Policy Brief UCLA Cent Health Policy Res PB2007-1 (2007):1-7, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17338092/>.

⁵⁷ “Which Populations Experience Greater Risks of Adverse Health Effects Resulting from Wildfire Smoke Exposure?” United States Environmental Protection Agency, updated January 30, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/wildfire-smoke-course/which-populations-experience-greater-risks-adverse-health-effects-resulting#:~:text=Symptoms%20of%20wildfire%20smoke%20inhalation,limitations%20of%20normal%20childhood%20activities>; Marshall Burke, “Wildfire Smoke Exposure Hurts Learning Outcomes,” Stanford Report, updated September 29, 2022, <https://news.stanford.edu/stories/2022/09/wildfire-smoke-exposure-hurts-learning-outcomes>.

⁵⁸ Tony Briscoe, “The Long-Term Health Effects of L.A. County Wildfire Smoke,” LA Times, January 16, 2025, <https://www.latimes.com/environment/story/2025-01-16/la-wildfire-smoke-impacts>.

⁵⁹ “First Covid, Now Wildfires: Calif. Teens Say Their Mental Health Is Suffering,” KFF Health News, updated January 16, 2025, <https://kffhealthnews.org/morning-breakout/first-covid-now-wildfires-calif-teens-say-their-mental-health-is-suffering/>; Cohen, “Moving Forward.”

⁶⁰ “First Covid, Now Wildfires”; Cohen, “Moving Forward.”

⁶¹ Sarah D. Sparks, “Extreme Weather Disruptions Compound Students’ Lost Learning,” Education Week, March 2, 2025, <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/extreme-weather-disruptions-compound-students-lost-learning/2025/03>; Eileen Segarra-Alméstica, et al., “The Effect of Consecutive Disasters on Educational Outcomes,” International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction 83 (2022): 103398, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2212420922006173>; Maciej Jakubowski, et al., “COVID-19, School Closures, and Student Learning Outcomes. New Global Evidence from PISA,” npj Science of Learning 10, no. 5 (2025), <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41539-025-00297-3>; Melinda Morrill and John Westall, “Heterogeneity in the Educational Impacts of Natural Disasters: Evidence from Hurricane Florence,” Economics of Education Review 94 (2023): 102373, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272775723000201?via%3Dihub>; Amy H. Auchincloss, et al., “Adolescent Mental Distress in the Wake of Climate Disasters,” Preventive Medicine Reports 39 (2024): 102651, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211335524000664>; Sherry Everett Jones, et al., “Mental Health, Suicidality, and Connectedness Among

High School Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic — Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey, United States, January–June 2021,” Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 71, no. 3 (2022): 16–21, <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/su/su7103a3.htm>.

⁶² Ready for the World (LAUSD, 2022), <https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1371/Strategic-Plan22-26.pdf>.

⁶³ “Year Two (2023-24) Report,” LAUSD, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://sites.google.com/lausd.net/lausdstrategicplan/year-2-2023-24-report>.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ “Los Angeles Unified Graduation Rate Exceeds Pre-Pandemic Levels (12-14-23),” LAUSD, updated December 14, 2023, <https://www.lausd.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=4&ModuleInstanceID=4466&ViewID=6446EE88-D30C-497E-9316-3F8874B3E108&RenderLoc=0&FlexDatalID=141759&PageID=1>.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ “Black Student Achievement Plan,” LAUSD, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://www.lausd.org/bsa>.

⁷⁰ L.A. Unified 2018 Master Plan for English Learners and Standard English Learners (LAUSD, 2018), <https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/domain/22/el%20sel%20master%20plan/Executive%20Summary%20-%20Master%20Plan%20EL%20SEL.pdf>.

⁷¹ John Fensterwald, “California Still Lags Behind Pre-Pandemic Reading and Math Scores on National Assessment,” EdSource, January 28, 2025, <https://edsources.org/2025/california-still-lags-behind-pre-pandemic-reading-and-math-scores-on-national-assessment/725806>; “California NAEP Results,” California Department of Education, January 30, 2025, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/nr/caresults.asp>.

⁷² Sam Stockwell, “Press Release,” Education Recovery Scorecard, updated February 11, 2025, <https://educationrecoverycorecard.org/states/california/>; “Los Angeles Unified, CA,” Education Recovery Scorecard, accessed March 7, 2025, https://educationrecoverycorecard.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/report_CA_0622710_los-angeles-unified.pdf.

⁷³ Mallika Seshadri, “Preliminary LAUSD Test Scores Show Recovery from Pandemic Learning Loss,” EdSource, July 23, 2024, <https://edsources.org/2024/lausd-test-scores-show-recovery-from-pandemic-learning-loss/716255>; Seshadri, “LAUSD Celebrates Academic Recovery”; Howard Blume, “LAUSD Students Approach

Pre-Pandemic Achievement Levels, Outpacing State,” LA Times, November 22, 2024, <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-11-22/lausd-outpaces-state-in-academic-gains-approaching-pre-pandemic-test-scores>; Diana Lambert, et al., “Statewide Test Scores Improved in 2024, but Achievement Still Not Back to Pre-Covid Levels,” Piedmont Extra, October 11, 2024, <https://piedmontexdra.com/2024/10/statewide-test-scores-improved-in-2024-but-achievement-still-not-back-to-pre-covid-levels#:~:text=Statewide%20test%20scores%20improved%20in,pre%2DCovid%20levels%20%7C%20Piedmont%20Exedra.>

⁷⁴ “Los Angeles Unified to Reopen Most Schools and All Offices on Monday, Jan. 13,” LAUSD, updated January 12, 2025, <https://www.lausd.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=4&ModuleInstanceID=4466&ViewID=6446EE88-D30C-497E-9316-3F8874B3E108&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=184347&PageID=1&os=hkes7&ref=app>.

⁷⁵ “Governor Newsom Signs Executive Order to Quickly Help L.A. schools, Children and Families Affected by Firestorms,” Governor Gavin Newsom, updated January 14, 2025, <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2025/01/14/governor-newsom-signs-executive-order-to-quickly-help-l-a-schools-children-and-families-affected-by-firestorms/#:~:text=The%20executive%20order%20issued%20by,fires%20to%20use%20temporary%20facilities.>

⁷⁶ Kayla Jimenez, “LA fires damaged at least a dozen schools. Here’s what we know,” USA Today, January 14, 2025, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2025/01/14/la-fires-schools-destroyed/77692692007/>; “Los Angeles Unified Welcomes Back Palisades Charter ES and Marquez ES Students and Families (1-15-25),” LAUSD, updated January 15, 2025, <https://www.lausd.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=4&ModuleInstanceID=4466&ViewID=6446EE88-D30C-497E-9316-3F8874B3E108&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=184507&PageID=1>; Jamie Paige, “‘We Don’t Feel Safe’: Palisades Parents Torn as Elementary School Reopens Monday,” Westside Current, January 27, 2025, https://www.westsidecurrent.com/news/we-don-t-feel-safe-palisades-parents-torn-as-elementary-school-reopens-monday/article_b1bbd828-dc0f-11ef-9113-3b4eaf95e0c5.html.

⁷⁷ Family and Community Recovery Guide (LAUSD, n.d.), <https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1439/Family%20and%20Community%20Recovery%20Guide%20V1.pdf>.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Marissa Wenzke, “Los Angeles Officials Approve Sanctuary City, School Policies as Trump Mass Deportation Plan Takes Shape,” CBS News, November 19, 2024, <https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/los-angeles-california-sanctuary-mass-deportation-trump/>; “Regular Meeting Revised Order of Business,” Board of Education of the City of Los Angeles, updated November 19, 2024, <https://www.>

[lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1057/11-19-24RegBdOBpostRevised.pdf](https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1057/11-19-24RegBdOBpostRevised.pdf).

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ “Update on Fire Recovery - Press Conference February 4, 2025,” LAUSD, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://lausd.wistia.com/medias/kuopi8xnzp>; Alejanda Molina, “Some Eastside Schools Drop to 32% Attendance Amid Immigration Protests,” Boyle Heights Beat, February 5, 2025, <https://boyleheightsbeat.com/eastside-student-immigration-rights-walkout-rally/>; Ben Chapman, “Los Angeles Schools Prepare for Trump’s Immigration Crackdown,” 74, January 9, 2025, <https://www.the74million.org/article/los-angeles-schools-prepare-for-trumps-immigration-crackdown/>.

⁸² Chapman, “Los Angeles Schools Prepare for Trump’s Immigration Crackdown.”

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ “Preliminary After-Action Report: 2023 Maui Wildfire,” U.S. Fire Administration, updated February 8, 2024, <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/blog/preliminary-after-action-report-2023-maui-wildfire/>; “HIDOE Releases After-Action Report on Maui Wildfire Response and Recovery Efforts,” Hawai’i State Department of Education, updated January 26, 2025, <https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ConnectWithUs/MediaRoom/PressReleases/Pages/HIDOE-releases-after-action-report-on-Maui-wildfire-response-and-recovery-efforts.aspx>.

⁸⁵ “HIDOE Releases After-Action Report.”

⁸⁶ “HIDOE Releases After-Action Report.”

⁸⁷ “Maui Strong Fund Awards over \$2 Million to Support Mental Health,” Maui News, December 9, 2024, <https://www.mauinews.com/news/local-news/2024/12/maui-strong-fund-awards-over-2-million-to-support-mental-health/>; “HIDOE Brings in National Mental Health Expert to Support Staff, Students, Families Affected by Maui Wildfires,” Hawaii State Teachers Association, updated August 31, 2023, <https://www.hsta.org/news/recent-stories/hidoe-brings-in-national-mental-health-expert-to-support-staff-students-families-affected-by-maui-wildfires/>; “HIDOE Releases After-Action Report.”

⁸⁸ Aaron Clark-Ginsberg, et al., “Community-Driven Recovery: The Lahaina Wildfires a Year Later,” RAND, updated August 16, 2024, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2024/08/community-driven-recovery-the-lahaina-wildfires-a-year.html>.

⁸⁹ Victoria Budiono, “Lahaina Parents Criticize DOE Plan to Temporarily Relocate Students,” Honolulu Civil Beat, August 30, 2023, <https://www.civilbeat.org/2023/08/lahaina-parents-criticize-doe-plan-to-temporarily-relocate-students/>; Jolanie Martinez, “‘No One Asked’: Some Disappointed with DOE’s Plan to Relocate West Maui Students,” Hawaii

News Now, August 25, 2023, <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2023/08/25/no-one-asked-some-west-maui-teachers-disappointed-with-does-plan-relocate-students/>.

⁹⁰ “Lahaina Long-Term Recovery Plan,” Maui Recovers, updated December 2024, <https://www.mauirecover.org/lahaina>.

⁹¹ Victoria Budiono, “Maui County Releases Lahaina’s Long-Term Recovery Plan,” Hawaii Tribune Herald, December 26, 2024, <https://www.hawaiitribune-herald.com/2024/12/26/hawaii-news/maui-county-releases-lahainas-long-term-recovery-plan/>; “Lahaina Long-Term Recovery Plan.”

⁹² “Enhance Emergency Communication Networks,” Maui Recovers, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://www.mauirecover.org/recover/enhance-emergency-communication-networks#viewprojects>.

⁹³ “Hurricane Katrina Impact on Education,” LSU, updated January 31, 2024, <https://guides.lib.lsu.edu/Hurricanes/KatrinaEducation#:~:text=Hurricane%20Katrina%20destroyed%20100%20of,operation%20prior%20to%20the%20storm>.

⁹⁴ “Recovery School District,” Louisiana Department of Education, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://doe.louisiana.gov/docs/default-source/katrina/final-louisiana-believes-v8-recovery-school-district.pdf?sfvrsn=2#:~:text=In%202003%2C%20the%20Louisiana%20Legislature,Ethnicity;Recovery%20School%20District,> Louisiana Department of Education, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://doe.louisiana.gov/docs/default-source/recovery-school-district/rsd-defined.pdf>.

⁹⁵ “About SFMPNOLA,” School Facilities Master Plan New Orleans, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://sfmpnola.org/home/about-sfmpnola/>.

⁹⁶ Erik W. Robelen, “New Orleans in Early Phase of School-Building Boom,” Education Week, October 15, 2010, [https://](https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/new-orleans-in-early-phase-of-school-building-boom/2010/10)

www.edweek.org/policy-politics/new-orleans-in-early-phase-of-school-building-boom/2010/10.

⁹⁷ J. Matt, “Paradise Redux,” Places Journal, March 2024, <https://placesjournal.org/article/paradise-redux-five-years-after-camp-fire/>.

⁹⁸ “Paradise Unified School District: Building School Mental Health Systems to Support Healing and Recovery Through Project Cal-Well,” WestEd, accessed March 7, 2025, <https://www.wested.org/resource/paradise-unified-school-district-building-school-mental-health-systems-to-support-healing-and-recovery-through-project-cal-well/>.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ “FEMA Grants \$14 Million to Repair Paradise Unified School District Infrastructure,” FEMA, updated June 5, 2020, <https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20250121/fema-grants-14-million-repair-paradise-unified-school-district>.

¹⁰² Matt, “Paradise Redux.”

¹⁰³ Austin Murphy, “Santa Rosa’s Coffey Park Residents Have Something to Share with Los Angeles Fire Survivors,” Press Democrat, January 17, 2025, <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/los-angeles-fires-santa-rosa-neighborhood-tubbs/>.

¹⁰⁴ Lauren Migaki and Haley Samsel, “After Wildfires Destroyed Their Homes, Students Find Healing Help at School,” NPR, December 14, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/12/14/567729683/after-wildfires-destroyed-their-homes-students-find-healing-help-at-school>.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

GPSN

CATALYZING EXCELLENCE
IN PUBLIC EDUCATION