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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 2, 2018

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18/19-057

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Board Approves Resolution to Educate, Encourage Families to Participate in the 2020 Census

Concerned that a potential undercount in the 2020 Census could impact the L.A. Unified community, the Board of Education voted unanimously today to create a plan to help educate and encourage families to participate in the national population count.

An accurate count is needed to ensure that local families and students are represented in the nation's democracy and that L.A. Unified receives its fair allocation of federal funding to serve its schools and communities.

The U.S. Census Bureau has warned of the difficulty in getting accurate counts of some groups of residents, such as immigrants, renters, children and teens and those with limited English proficiency.

Under the board resolution, L.A. Unified will create a plan to ensure an accurate count, including the incorporation of census outreach and education into existing programs and services and in multiple languages. In addition, the 2020 Census will be incorporated into the campaign, "We Are One L.A. Unified: Standing with Immigrant Families."

"L.A. Unified is committed to ensuring that all of our families understand the importance of participating in the 2020 Census," said Superintendent Austin Beutner. "We must educate and engage our families so that we receive our fair share of the federal funding we need to serve our students as well as the representatives to lead our communities and our nation."

"We at L.A. Unified are fully committed to a thorough and complete 2020 Census because we know that federal resources will be distributed more adequately that way," said Board President Mónica García, who sponsored the resolution. "We want each of our students and families to be counted, regardless of their citizenship status. That is why we will be developing a plan that includes community partners as well as all local and state governments to maximize our efforts for this initiative."

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"The census is not only foundational to representative democracy but also critical to our District's future," said Board Vice President Nick Melvoin, a co-sponsor of the measure. "The census count determines how much Title 1 funding we get for high-need schools and professional development, as well as how many representatives our communities will have fighting for them locally and nationally. That is why it's imperative that everyone in our diverse community is counted – and that any attempts to undermine that count are vigorously challenged. I am proud that we joined a lawsuit fighting the Trump Administration's unnecessary decision to add a question about citizenship to the census and that we unanimously passed this resolution reaffirming a commitment that everyone in our community matters."

Board Member Kelly Gonez, who also co-sponsored the resolution, said, "Representation matters, and it is critical that the census count represent all of us regardless of our background, status in society, or citizenship. This resolution will ensure that L.A. Unified is doing its part to stand up for our communities and ensure they are included in the 2020 census."

Board Member Dr. George J. McKenna III said, "We recognize the value of thorough and comprehensive enumeration of L.A. Unified families and students. Federal resources are vital to the support of many supplemental services that augment student learning such as medical, health and nutrition services."

"The importance of a complete and accurate census in 2020 is critically important for the future of our students, their families and our local communities," said Board Member Scott M. Schmerelson. "We need to do everything we can, on behalf of the children we serve, to actively promote census outreach and education."

"As the second-largest public school district in the nation, we owe it to our students to assist in all efforts to get a full and proper count of the residents of our area," said Board Member Dr. Richard Vladovic. "We want to make sure we get not only our fair share of resources but our fair share of elected representatives who will stand with us to get our students what they need to be successful."

Civic leaders also voiced their support for the measure.

"The stakes for the 2020 Census are high – especially for states like California with large immigrant populations," said Vanessa Aramayo, executive director of the Alliance for a Better Community. "Billions of dollars in federal funds stand to be lost due to a low count of hard-to-count residents, and L.A. Unified families are among the hardest-to-count in our state. The school board's adoption of this resolution is an important step in the nation's second-largest school district doing its part to ensure a complete count of our most underrepresented families."

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