



PUTTING KIDS FIRST
NICK MELVOIN



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For Immediate Release

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L.A. Unified Board of Education Unanimously Approves Two Resolutions to Reduce Barriers to College and Career Access

LOS ANGELES, CA – June 19, 2018 – The L.A. Unified Board of Education voted today to unanimously approve two resolutions that remove key barriers to college access for Los Angeles public school students. The resolutions, co-sponsored by Board President Mónica García, Board Vice President Nick Melvoín and Board Member Kelly Gonez show that L.A. Unified has high expectations for all students as they pursue college and careers.

The first will offer the SAT or ACT for free to every high school junior in L.A. Unified during school hours, expanding on a successful pilot from Local District South that nearly doubled the percentage of students who sat for the college entrance exam. It also calls for the Superintendent to find ways to boost linked learning and career pathways education.

The second, authored in partnership with L.A. City Councilmember David Ryu, pursues a College Savings Account for every public school first grader at no cost. These accounts, through savings incentives and matching fund programs, can empower students to set their sights on college from an early age. This program would provide accounts without requiring a social security number or parent bank account.

“Preparing global graduates and lifelong learners is our mission,” said President Mónica García. “These actions today to build bridges toward post-high school opportunities, and ways to pay for them build on our strengths as believers in every learner and personalized pathways for success.”

“Today, the Board demonstrated our commitment to preparing all kids to graduate college - and career-ready—from helping families start saving for college in elementary school to making the SAT and ACT more accessible to our high schoolers,” said Board Vice President Melvoín. “Both of these resolutions may start with a small, simple investment, but they have the potential to produce big, life-changing results for our students.”

“The Board’s action today will open doors to college and careers for our students,” Board Member Gonez said. “It’s part of a broader message we are sending to all of our kids from pre-K to 12th grade – you can graduate high school and achieve in college and careers. By starting early with savings accounts and ending strong with SAT/ACT and career pathways for all, we can help each of our students graduate prepared for lifelong success.”

“Children’s Savings Account programs, already growing in cities across the nation, is a chance to empower L.A.’s students regardless of income, zip code or background,” Councilmember Ryu said. “This is about more than fostering savings, it’s about fostering the expectation that every child should strive for a higher education.”

Superintendent Austin Beutner said, “As we fulfill our promise to provide all students with a high-quality education, we must also build a framework to support their post-secondary success. Helping families pay for college when their child is in first grade, preparing students for college when they are still in middle school and expanding work-experience programs for high school students can all help provide opportunity for our students most in need.”

“I am delighted to see my fellow board members push for this initiative’s continued progress,” said Board Member Dr. Ref Rodriguez. “My staff and I worked with Councilmember David Ryu’s office to create this plan over the last two years, after the Board passed the initial resolution that I co-sponsored, which started this work in August 2016. This resolution continues to advocate that all public students will be able to access these accounts – including students in traditional and charter schools. We will continue working with the county to ensure that students outside of the city of Los Angeles, but within L.A. Unified—like our Board District 5 students in our southeast cities—also have access to these opportunities.”

Board Member Dr. Richard Vladovic added, “Local District South showed us how to get this done and opened the door to offer our students free access to the SAT/ACT; a lack of access to college entrance exams should never be an impediment to higher learning.”

Board Member Dr. George J. McKenna III, said, “As a veteran educator, I have witnessed many times how college changes lives. I support everything we can do to prepare our students as early as possible to not only aim for college, but to succeed at getting a degree.”

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