



Neighborhood Council of Westchester Playa

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December 6, 2016

Steve Zimmer, School Board President
Board of Education
Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)
333 South Beaudry Avenue, 24th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017

RE: **Support for the New Middle School Pathway for Westchester/Playa del Rey/Playa Vista at Westchester Enriched Sciences Magnets**

Dear Board President Zimmer,

On behalf of the Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa (NCWP), we would like to express our enthusiastic support for the proposed collaborative partnership between Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and Loyola Marymount University (LMU) to create a new demonstration laboratory Middle School Pathway (MSP) for the Westchester, Playa del Rey, Playa Vista community co-located on the campus of Westchester Enriched Sciences Magnets (WESM).

The NCWP Education Committee has been working very closely with Local District West, particularly Superintendent Cheryl Hildreth and Director Karen Long. They have been exceptional to work with, dedicating great efforts to engage the broader Westchester/Playa community. A recent example is the Community Meeting co-hosted by LAUSD Facilities Services and Local District West held at WESM in which hundreds of parents, teachers, staff, and stakeholders attended. Superintendent Hildreth stated LAUSD's commitment to "Reclaim, Retain, and Recruit" the Westside community into the public schools. As you know, many Westchester/Playa schools are under-enrolled yet this is not due to an insufficiency of school-aged children residing in Westchester/Playa. At the same meeting you highlighted that there is a "public education Renaissance in the Westside." As such we greatly appreciate your recognition of the need to tangibly and significantly invest in the publicly-funded schools to address the population growth in Westchester/Playa families. This would attract, enroll, and retain these families in public schools.

To that end, we ask you to please strongly consider several issues:

- 1) **Enrollment priorities** for LAUSD/LMU New Middle School (see attached letter from Superintendent Hildreth dated November 28, 2016, "*Enrollment of the New Middle School Pathway in Collaboration with Loyola Marymount University*"). Although most desirable would be to have priority Group 1 composed of resident families in Westchester/Playa del Rey/Playa Vista, we understand why Group 1 is identified as "students currently enrolled in Playa Vista Elementary School." However, we ask you to **please divide eligibility priority Group 2:**
 - a. Group 1 would remain current Playa Vista Elementary students;
 - b. **Group 2 would be residents of Westchester, Playa Del Rey, and Playa Vista.**
 - c. Group 3 would be current LAUSD feeder elementary school students.

- d. Groups 4-6 would be as previously written:
 - i. Group 4 – Students residing within the LAUSD Local District West boundaries;
 - ii. Group 5 – Students residing within the LAUSD boundaries;
 - iii. Group 6 – Students residing outside the LAUSD boundaries.

This modification would convey to the community that you heard them at the Community Meeting and gives hope to resident families in Westchester/Playa (especially those currently outside of LAUSD) that their children have a reasonable chance of attending the new MSP. They would therefore likely stay within the LAUSD schools until they graduate high school.

We recognize the importance of protecting the current students in the feeder schools; they would be assured admission to Wright STEAM Magnet Middle School as has always been the case. The new MSP is in part an outgrowth of the changing needs of the community which is in part why Playa Vista has been given priority over every other group. However, this prioritization has created *significant* animosity within the community. By providing the Westchester/Playa community the second level priority -- separate from the feeder schools -- clearly conveys the District's support of a resident community school that is also available to the broader region (in Groups 3-6). Wright remains an excellent option for all.

- 2) **Facilities upgrades for WESM** - It is unclear where on the WESM campus the new MSP will be housed, but we would like assurances that sufficient infrastructure upgrades will be made to the WESM campus for the shared facilities as well as those dedicated to the new MSP (e.g., buildings, classrooms, auditorium, cafeteria, sports courts and fields).

We understand that Venice High School has been awarded \$108M to modernize its campus. WESM will have between three to five co-located schools (e.g., The Incubator School, Ocean Charter, the new MSP) on its campus in 2017 and needs commensurate upgrades to repair/modernize its currently sub-standard and/or outdated facilities before the new school opens.

- 3) **Security** – Given the additional 300-450 6th-8th grade students, what additional security measures will be put in place on the high school campus?
- 4) **Community impacts** for residents proximal to WESM will necessarily occur with 300-450 new students added to the campus. What measures will be taken to address concerns of residents living near the high school (e.g., additional traffic, parking, students, noise, campus activities)? What steps is the District taking to notify adjacent neighbors about this change to the WESM campus?
- 5) **Provide assurances** that the resources for extant publicly funded secondary schools (WESM, Wright STEAM Magnet and Incubator School) in our area will remain priorities.

Again, we are enthusiastically supportive of the new LAUSD-LMU demonstration school as well as other significant investments that LAUSD is placing in our Westchester, Playa del Rey, Playa

NCWP – Westchester/Playa Middle School Pathway
December 6, 2016

Vista community. We dedicate our resources in assisting you in this Westside “public education Renaissance” and remain most appreciative on behalf of our stakeholders.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Cyndi Hench

Cyndi Hench
President

Cc: Superintendent Michelle King, LAUSD
Cheryl Hildreth, Superintendent, LAUSD Local District West
Karen Long, Director, LAUSD Local District West
Monica Garcia, District 2, LAUSD Board of Education
George McKenna, District 1, LAUSD Board of Education
Mónica Ratliff, District 6, LAUSD Board of Education
Ref Rodriguez, District 5, LAUSD Board of Education
Scott Schmerelson, District 3, LAUSD Board of Education
Dr. Richard Vladovic, District 7, LAUSD Board of Education
Dr. Manny Aceves, Associate Dean, LMU School of Education
Dr. Shane Martin, Dean, LMU School of Education
Mike Bonin, Council District 11, Los Angeles City Council