

January 27th, 2021

The Honorable Councilman Mike Bonin  
Council Member District 11  
7166 W. Manchester Ave.  
Westchester, CA 90045

Dear Councilman Mike Bonin--

On behalf of The Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa, the Education Committee is writing to communicate our full support and request for the Los Angeles County and State Departments of Public Health to immediately authorize schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (Los Angeles Unified) to serve as COVID-19 vaccine sites for school staff and the community at large. We hope that state and local agencies will expedite the review process for applications coming from Los Angeles Unified. We are asking for your leadership to help expedite approvals of Los Angeles Unified Schools as vaccine sites.

The Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa's mission is to serve the families of Westchester, Playa del Rey, and Playa Vista. We have seen first hand the leadership and safety net that our neighborhood schools have provided since the pandemic began. Schools are trusted community partners, are accessible to and can accommodate large groups of individuals with safe social distancing, and have trained and qualified staff on site.

Our neighborhood schools are uniquely situated and qualified to help in the vaccination effort:

***Our Neighborhood Schools Are Trusted Community Partners***

Los Angeles Unified schools are conveniently located in the middle of neighborhoods where people live, which will help make vaccines accessible to people in all communities, in particular those who may lack access to health care services and reliable transportation. Families trust schools to keep their children safe and that trust extends to all aspects of a child's life. Providing the vaccination at a trusted location will increase the chances of a successful and more speedy vaccination effort.

Since this crisis began, Los Angeles Unified has proven its ability to meet the needs of the community on a dramatic scale. The 63 food distribution centers at schools have provided our families and community members over 96 million meals along with 18 million items of much-needed supplies. They have distributed computers and internet access to 500,000 students, and operate 42 COVID testing centers at schools that have administered more than 350,000 tests to staff members, students and their families – the largest school-based program in the nation.

### ***Our Neighborhood Schools Keep Visitors, Staff, and Families Safe***

Schools have the space needed to allow individuals to wait safely after their vaccine dose to make sure they aren't having an adverse reaction. Schools have all the necessary infrastructure already in place – security, electricity, restrooms and both covered and open areas – to support the vaccination process.

Los Angeles Unified has school-based health clinics in high-needs areas which are already licensed to provide vaccinations. These sites can immediately provide COVID-19 vaccinations while more locations at additional schools become qualified under state guidelines.

### ***Our Neighborhood Schools Have the Necessary Infrastructure***

Los Angeles Unified has the staffing, both clinical and logistical, to begin administering vaccinations now. The District employs more than 450 registered nurses and 120 licensed vocational nurses, all of whom can administer the vaccine and can attend to those who may have an adverse reaction to the vaccine. Moreover, these nurses have experience working with and caring for members of our neighborhood school and community.

Los Angeles Unified has a technology and data system which can register individuals, schedule vaccination appointments and share the data with appropriate authorities. Microsoft is connecting the District's existing COVID-19 technology capabilities with the vaccine platform Microsoft has deployed in other cities and states across the country. This platform includes registration and scheduling, reporting on complications/adverse effects, tracking of vaccines in stock, contactless appointment check-in and data capture at time of appointment, rules to sort high-risk individuals and offer waitlists to low-risk individuals and dashboards to view data, among other features.

### ***Equity in Community Access***

As you know, access to health care services is a real barrier for many people in low-income communities. More than 80% of the families served by Los Angeles Unified live in poverty and 83% are Black and Latino residents, which have been the demographics most impacted by the virus. It's critical that the vaccine be made available to these families. In a typical community we serve, there are about three drug stores, two fire stations and 25 schools. No organization has the infrastructure to provide easier access to vaccinations than schools.

### ***Other Communities Have Made Schools a Priority***

New York has begun providing vaccinations to those who work in schools and Kansas City has committed to provide vaccinations to all school district staff in February. Locally, vaccinations are available in Riverside for all who work in education, in Ventura teachers will start receiving

vaccinations next week and Long Beach will begin providing vaccinations to school employees later this month.

We need our schools to reopen as soon as possible, and in the safest way possible; having Los Angeles Unified as a vaccination partner would be an important and unprecedented benefit to this cause.

We are asking for your support in expediting approvals for Los Angeles Unified as a vaccination partner. We need your voice and leadership to get these vaccines distributed effectively, efficiently, and through trusted school sites.

Thank you,

Paula Gerez  
NCWP, President

Cc:

[Mike Bonin, Council Member District 11]

[Holly Mitchell, LA County Supervisor - District 2]

[Janice Hahn, LA County Supervisor-District 4]