

September 29, 2014

Hon. Dr. Richard Vladovic, President, District 7

Hon. Dr. George McKenna, District 1

Hon. Mónica García, District 2

Hon. Tamar Galatzan, District 3

Hon. Steve Zimmer, District 4

Hon. Bennett Kayser, District 5

Hon. Monica Ratliff, District 6

Dear LAUSD Board Members,

As leaders in service to Los Angeles' children and families, we are united in urging the LAUSD Board of Directors to put our children's interests first and retain Superintendent John Deasy. The calling of an emergency closed session meeting to discuss the Superintendent's evaluation heightens our concern about the real motives behind this action. There have been too many external distractions keeping this Board from maintaining a strong focus on improving the quality of education across the district, especially for low-income communities. Discharging Superintendent Deasy will have devastating implications to the education of our children, throwing the district into chaos with yet another transition at LAUSD. We ask that the School Board uphold its charter to L.A.'s families, cast aside politics and work with Superintendent Deasy to continue advancing the gains the district has made over the last two years, particularly in serving our most vulnerable children.

Superintendent Deasy has brought an unrelenting focus on poor children of color and there has been much progress as a result of his leadership including increased graduation and attendance rates, increases in the numbers of African American and Latino students taking Advanced Placement courses and exams, and reduced suspensions along with an overhaul of the school discipline policy. Further, he has made an investment in hiring more teachers, counselors, and principals after devastating budget cuts, developed a strategy to bridge the technology gap for poor students, and a thoughtful strategy for investing Prop 30 tax dollars for our most at-risk students including foster children, special needs students and English language learners.

Superintendent Deasy is not perfect. But progress made in boosting the education of our children under his leadership outweighs the business decisions by which he is being judged. If the Board remains unfocused, we run the risk of losing the student achievement gains we have made during a short period of time. We have a responsibility to work together and bring the focus back to improving academic achievement and fostering student learning.

We have fought for, invested in, and supported the district in taking accountability of our collective responsibility to educate the next generation. We hope you appreciate the support our Civic Alliance continues to offer the District in service of a better future for our children. We are very concerned that the Board of Directors is going backwards in terms of more closed sessions that curtail community engagement and transparency and potentially allow political influence. This approach fails to prioritize the students at stake in the decision-making process.

We must be able to count on this Board to act in good faith with our current Superintendent. We must stabilize this district during this fragile time period and we count on you to do the work that will move us forward. The Board's history of cycling through superintendents creates instability, which puts the public's faith in our public school system in jeopardy. If the Los Angeles school board acts rashly, they affirm the perception of this board and district as ungovernable. If this board truly prioritizes children, it will hold Supt. Deasy in place through an orderly process of transparent performance review. And better yet, conduct an open process to allow community members and stakeholders to have their voices heard.

We have worked alongside you when you have asked us to support your bonds, your advocacy, and when faced with challenges. We have high expectations of you as our district leadership and expect you to be transparent and inclusive. We look forward to continuing this partnership to benefit the futures of all of LAUSD's children.

Sincerely,

Civic Alliance Members