

Los Angeles Unified School District

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News Statement

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Dec. 3, 2013
#13/14-074

DEASY INVITES STATE OFFICIAL TO VISIT POOR AREAS IN LAUSD

John Deasy, Superintendent, Los Angeles Unified School District, refutes any need to prove that low-income students exist at schools where parents are exempt from filling out annual income verification forms because the total enrollment qualifies for free or reduced-price lunches. Without those forms, the California Department of Education (CDE) refuses to count them when distributing additional dollars, based on the new Local Control Funding Formula, to disadvantaged students.

I invite Rich Zeiger to walk with me through Florence-Firestone, Pacoima, and Watts -- among the poorest neighborhoods served by L.A. Unified -- for vivid evidence that this District serves thousands of students living in circumstances of abject poverty.

I'm offended by his presumption that middle-class students are sneaking into schools in poor areas to reap the benefits of additional funding. As I've noted before, it's profoundly disturbing that because of a unilateral change in the reporting procedure, the state is threatening to shortchange schools that serve our students in greatest need.

Contrary to Chief Deputy Zeiger's statement that L.A. Unified wants to circumvent an unnecessary rule, we want to advocate strenuously for students who have been historically underserved, so that they can receive their fair share of support, as the governor intended.

I'm also deeply distressed that the CDE did not require us to assess poverty levels prior to the state taking millions of dollars from kids as the result of devastating cuts the past five years, and, even more, that categorical cuts removed resources from the neediest youth. Now, we're being asked by the state to recertify these same youth to provide them resources.

I remain distressed that the fundamental purpose of the governor's brilliant and courageous funding formula will be undercut and undermined through this process. I call on the CDE to partner with all districts to make providing much-needed revenue to our underserved youth easier, and not harder.

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