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News Release

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LAUSD Communities Unite for Student Success

LOS ANGELES – Uniting behind the goal of student achievement, Los Angeles Unified School District leaders and employees have come together to ensure that classes begin Aug. 18 with a functioning computer system, fully-staffed classrooms and a supportive environment for learning.

Under the direction of Superintendent Ramon C. Cortines, the District has spent the last year overhauling its troubled student-records system, revamping its instructional plans and creating a network of educators, employees and parents to promote student success.

“Despite the challenges we’ve faced, I’ve never seen so much excitement and enthusiasm for the start of the school year,” said Mr. Cortines, who took over as superintendent last October, his third time at the helm of the District. “Everyone has come together to help pick up the broken pieces of our schools and put them back together again. I’m very grateful that the LAUSD community was there to take action.”

Technical teams have spent the last year rebuilding the My Integrated Student Information System (MiSiS) to ensure that class schedules and attendance programs will be up and running when the first bell rings. Although they’ve tested and retested the network to identify potential problems, the MiSiS experts will staff the command center resolve any last-minute issues.

“MiSiS is the heart of this District,” Mr. Cortines said. “After months of tireless repairs, our heart has some new stents, replaced valves, a pacemaker, and reduced cholesterol, and it is pumping much stronger.”

Mr. Cortines noted that L.A. Unified has increased staffing this year at its 1,000-plus campuses, using a windfall in state funding to hire more nurses, counselors and librarians; reduce the size of math and English classes in secondary schools; keep class sizes small in the primary grades; and expand transitional kindergarten offerings.

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And unlike 2014-15, when the District started school with more than 200 teacher vacancies, every classroom will have a permanent educator – not a substitute – on opening day. All of the administrative positions at school sites also will be filled.

Since last year, L.A. Unified has been reorganized into smaller local districts, each with its own superintendent and an instructional plan tailored to their community's schools and students. While differing slightly in their approach, each plan aligns with the Common Core State Standards, the rigorous curriculum designed to better prepare students for college and the workforce. With new investments in arts education, students will have more opportunities to take music, visual and performing arts classes. And each of the nearly 650,000 students will get lessons in computer science.

In addition, the District beefed up its maintenance crews with scores of skilled craftsmen, who have begun whittling away at a years-long backlog of repairs and upgrades. There is a renewed awareness that the environment of each campus must support and encourage student achievement.

The District is also pushing forward with its Instructional Technology Initiative, the plan to integrate computers into the learning environment. The more than 230,000 tablet computers and laptops purchased over the last two years will be deployed to schools by mid-September, but only after each principal submits a plan for how the devices will be used to support instruction.

"With this technology coming to our neighborhood, it's really going to help our kids and motivate them more," parent Isaac Parades said of the plan.

"Students are getting more involved with technology, so I can't wait to see what more is out there," said Marcos Carranza, a sophomore at UCLA Community School. "Sometimes change can be hard, but that's just because it's new. It's not just sticking to tradition."

The superintendent said he's been inspired by the commitment of the school community in tackling obstacles facing the nation's second-largest school district.

"We overcame a lot of challenges over the last year," Mr. Cortines said, "and we will continue to overcome them, thanks to the inexhaustible determination of our entire LAUSD family."

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