



Los Angeles Unified School District

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BY EMAIL: 20thstreetparentsunion@gmail.com

Re: Response To Parent Empowerment Petition, And Plans For Further School Improvement

Dear 20th Street Elementary School Parent Union,

The Los Angeles Unified School District is inspired by the courageous conversations that parent leaders at 20th Street Elementary School have initiated to continue improving the teaching and learning for all student learners. LAUSD's commitment is to tirelessly work toward a continued partnership with all parents to address the recommendations that were addressed by all stakeholders and community members over the last few months.

For the past six months, multiple District representatives have spoken to students, parents, teachers and civic partners about the growth of the instructional program at 20th Street Elementary School, as well as the socio-emotional and parent engagement strategies that are part of the school community. One consistent message articulated by all is a desire to continue improving 20th Street Elementary School while also celebrating that there are multiple bright spots of greatness on the campus that have a positive impact on student performance outcomes.

One of the approaches that has been proposed by some parents is a petition recently submitted under California's Parent Empowerment law ("Petition").

There are numerous state, federal, and local interventions that exist to enable underperforming schools to improve the delivery of educational services. The Parent Empowerment petition process is one of those interventions, but it applies in only a very narrow set of circumstances.

Among other things, for the Parent Empowerment petition process to apply, a school must meet the following three conditions:

1. The school has an "academic performance index" (API) score of less than 800;
2. The school has to have failed to make "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP); and
3. The school must be "subject to corrective action" under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

In this instance, 20th Street Elementary School ("20th Street ES") does not meet any of these conditions.

First, 20th Street ES does not have an API score of less than 800. Because the State is in the process of transitioning to the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CASPP), there was no API score for the 2014-15 school year, so 20th Street ES does not have an API score under 800.

Second, with respect to the second condition, adequate yearly progress (AYP), the school has in fact made AYP as reflected in the California Department of Education's recently released official December 2015 AYP results.

Finally, the school is not subject to corrective action because LAUSD obtained a federal waiver (the California Office to Reform Education or CORE waiver) that exempts the District from corrective action provisions under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and relieves LAUSD from the requirement of taking improvement actions.

For these reasons, 20th Street ES is not a so-called "subject school" under the Parent Empowerment law and implementing regulations. Therefore, the Petition is hereby being returned as required under the regulations, including Regulation 4802.1(g).

The Petition is also being returned because, even if 20th Street ES were a "subject school," the Petition is defective in that it does not specify which option of "restart model" intervention was being requested. The Petition mistakenly was written in the alternative so that the parents signing could not know whether what was being proposed was an in-district EMO, or an independent charter school. The Petition requests to "create a partnership with an in-district EMO *or* convert into an independent charter school" (emphasis added.), but the Regulations set forth different procedures for LAUSD to follow depending on whether a petition requests that a subject school be reopened under a "charter school operator, charter management organization or education management organization," or under an "educational management organization that is not a charter school." (5 C.C.R. § 4802.2.) As such, the Petition is noncompliant because it fails to specify which intervention is being sought.

Even though the Petition is being returned, the District remains committed to working with parents in order to implement reforms that will improve the delivery of services and student performance at 20th Street ES.

We hope that you will consider the additional resources we proposed to address the elements outlined by the 20th St. Steering Committee as essential supports to continue improving student outcomes. LAUSD is also open to exploring additional autonomies offered through the various District governance models. In the end our goal is to offer and immediately implement additional supports at 20th St. ES that prepare all students to be proficient and ready to transition to middle school.

In the coming weeks, the District looks forward to convene the entire 20th St. Elementary School Community to build a unified vision that addresses the needs of all student learners on the campus.

Sincerely,



David R. Holmquist
General Counsel