May 27, 2014

To: Los Angeles Unified School District, Members of the Board of Education

CC: Dr. Sylvia Rousseau, Liaison to LAUSD Board Superintendent John Deasy
    Rowena Lagrosa, Executive Director, Parent Community Services Branch

Re: Request for One Percent of Total 2014-15 LAUSD Budget for Parent Engagement

Dear Members of the Board:

In a few weeks, you will approve an unprecedented, historic spending and accountability plan that will reflect both the district’s priorities and values. It will be a plan whose desired effect is to produce more high school graduates ready for college and career. We hope the plan will have an even deeper impact, one that develops more meaningful and sustained relationships between parents and teachers, and parent engagement practices that effectively lead to improving student achievement.

Toward that end, we respectfully ask that you approve a budget that reflects an equitable commitment of one percent of the TOTAL school budget (base, supplemental, concentration) on high impact parent engagement strategies. Put another way, it is an investment of just $1 out of every $100 LAUSD would spend on parent engagement.

In 2013-14, LAUSD invested only .04% of the LCFF budget ($1.8 million) for parent engagement. This equates to 4 cents for every 100 dollars. Our proposal bumps it up to $1 because we believe that parents are worth more than spare change.
Meaningful parent engagement practices will only be truly effective if the will to implement them is present. Listen to parents talk about what schools can do to improve school/parent partnerships:  http://youtu.be/0om7X8IuxPg

Finally, we understand that in a district that has over 600 plus schools, one percent can only go so far. If we want to see transformative change, we must start with and invest more in the **highest need school communities**, with an emphasis on **preschool to 3rd grade**. Specifically, we would like to see:

1. Training of school leadership, teachers, and support staff
2. Quality programming for parents (workshops and support services)
3. Training of parent leaders of school site councils and other advisory committees
4. Dedicated and qualified parent engagement staffing
5. Effective communication strategies (such as home-visitations)

The research is clear. What makes a difference is the collaboration of teachers and parents. Teachers and parents need professional development on how to build a partnership, stay in regular touch, share effective strategies, and monitor student progress.

We ask for your support and commitment to adequately invest one percent of the total LAUSD budget – base, concentration, and supplemental grants – in authentic high impact parent engagement strategies. LAUSD parents expect this because parents are worth more than spare change!

Sincerely,