

Dr. Rivas, Mr. Schmerelson - Community-Centered Greening Initiatives: Strengthening Greening Initiatives through Community Equity Through Parent Engagement and External Partnerships (2024) (Res-038-24/25) (Noticed December 10, 2024 and Postponed from January 14, 2025)

~~Whereas, In alignment with the Los Angeles Unified School District (District) 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, Pillar 3: Engagement and Collaboration, the District is committed to fostering strong relationships and honoring diverse perspectives by engaging students, parents, and community partners in greening initiatives that center equity and inclusion;~~

~~Whereas, Consistent with Pillar 2: Joy and Wellness, the District recognizes that creating welcoming, green learning environments promotes whole-child well-being, strengthens social-emotional skills, and enhances students' ability to thrive academically and personally;~~

~~Whereas, The District is committed to increasing green space on campuses to 30% by 2035, prioritizing low-income communities and communities of color, through converting asphalt to green space, addressing soil contamination, and ensuring ADA compliance (Res-002-22/23);~~

~~Whereas, The District recognizes that strong external partnerships are critical to mitigating the financial costs of greening initiatives while amplifying their impact;~~

~~Whereas, The District acknowledges that meaningful engagement with Black and brown communities is essential to ensuring equity in greening initiatives and recognizes the need for robust, ongoing parent and community participation;~~

~~Whereas, The emerging green economy presents significant opportunities to create pathways for Black and brown students and families into sustainable, high-wage jobs that address climate challenges;~~

~~Whereas, Strong partnerships with labor organizations are essential to ensuring these pathways are accessible, lead to high-quality careers, and support family-sustaining wages; and~~

~~Whereas, Research demonstrates that community involvement in the design and implementation of green infrastructure projects is a key factor in their long-term success and sustainability; now, therefore, be it~~

Whereas, The Los Angeles Unified School District (District) is committed to community-centered greening initiatives that advance sustainability, climate resilience, and equity as demonstrated by previous resolutions, including: Transitioning LAUSD to 100% Clean, Renewable, Energy Resulting in Healthier Students and More Sustainable, Equitable, Communities (Res 018-19/20); Equitable Funding and Expansion of Green Spaces across District Campuses (Res 002-22/23); and Climate Literacy (Res-016-21/22);

Whereas, In alignment with the District 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, Pillar 2: Joy and Wellness and Pillar 3: Engagement and Collaboration, the District prioritizes strong partnerships and inclusive engagement with community organizations, parents and students in greening efforts;

Whereas, The Eco-Sustainability Office (ESO) is committed to supporting the District Strategic Plan by developing and implementing programs and policies that raise awareness of environmental stewardship and provide healthy, sustainable learning environments for all LAUSD students. Among its many responsibilities, this office plays a substantial role in developing and maintaining partnerships with non-profit organizations, labor unions, businesses, government agencies, and school communities;

Whereas, Historically underserved communities of color have been disproportionately impacted by climate change and environmental hazards, and, despite being frontline communities that face compounded impacts from urban heat islands, poor air quality, and limited access to green spaces, have often been excluded from environmental justice movements and decision-making processes;

Whereas, Non-profit organizations have partnered with LAUSD for decades to promote school greening, sustainability and climate resilience. The 2024 Green Schoolyards for All Plan outlines greening projects funded by state grants including 10 projects in planning/design, 2 projects under construction, and 10 projects under feasibility studies. Over the last five years, non-profit organizations have secured over \$57 million to plant trees and transform 52 schoolyards throughout the District. Also, through the California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention (CAL FIRE) non-profit organizations will partner with the District to implement 41 greening projects, expanding tree coverage, shade and learning opportunities;

Whereas, Despite their contributions, non-profit organizations leading grant-funded greening projects must cover various internal fees and services such as Owner's Authorized Representative fees, testing requirements, design reviews, and inspections. These expenses can constitute 10-20% of the total planning and construction costs of a project. For instance, seven non-profits that have secured \$34 million in grant awards for the District are being charged \$3 million in fees by the District;

Whereas, The ESO is exploring funding solutions to address financial gaps arising after grants are awarded and is developing an updated "how-to" guide to streamline third-party greening project processes; and

Whereas, The ESO and Facilities Services Division (FSD) have collaborated to: (1) streamline project supervision requirements for greening projects and reduce oversight expenses; (2) develop recommendations for Design Guidelines that are tailored to school greening, and (3) consider modifications to Development Agreement language to reduce unnecessary burdens on greening partners; now, therefore, be it

~~Resolved, That the Governing Board of the Los Angeles Unified School District (Board) expresses its sincere gratitude to all community partners, parents, and students for their dedication to fostering equitable, sustainable, and thriving learning environments, and commits to accelerating efforts to strengthen these vital relationships;~~

~~Resolved further, That the Board directs the Superintendent, in collaboration with the Office of Eco-Sustainability, to invest in and strengthen external partnerships to advance greening initiatives by mitigating costs for partners through District resources, including but not limited to eligible bond funds. This includes costs associated with ADA retrofits, District staff time, project fees, and testing requirements, thereby incentivizing collaboration and maximizing the impact of greening projects. Furthermore, the Superintendent shall ensure that staffing time dedicated to these initiatives reflects the scale and complexity of each project, with a focus on streamlining processes and promoting equitable access to greening projects in underserved and marginalized communities;~~

~~Resolved further, That the District shall strengthen community engagement in greening initiatives prioritizing the leadership of Black and brown communities, by (1) expanding the Office of Eco-Sustainability to include culturally reflective and regional support systems, and (2) creating more opportunities for parent-led collaboration in school-based greening and climate resilience efforts;~~

~~Resolved further, That the Superintendent shall conduct a Green Jobs Pathways Study centered on Black and brown communities to augment partnerships with local businesses, trade unions, and educational institutions, mapping pathways into the green economy for students and families with an emphasis on creating and incentivizing opportunities that lead to high-paying careers. The study will identify emerging green sectors, such as renewable energy and sustainable construction, among others, and align existing District programs to enhance career readiness by expanding pilot initiatives and partnerships that provide internships, apprenticeships, and certifications; and, be it finally~~

~~Resolved, That the Superintendent shall present to the Board within 90 days a comprehensive plan outlining the steps, timelines, and responsible parties for implementing the directives in this resolution, including clear, measurable benchmarks and goals to assess progress.~~

Resolved, That the Governing Board of the Los Angeles Unified School District (Board) recognizes the vital role of non-profit organizations in creating sustainable and equitable learning environments for all students, and commits to strengthening and expanding partnerships within this sector; including organizations that have developed relationships with communities that have been historically underserved and negatively impacted by climate change and environmental hazards;

Resolved further, That the Board directs the Superintendent to remove internal fees for non-profit organizations that lead District school greening projects regardless of funding source. Where feasible, up to \$3 million in District resources, including eligible bond

funds, will be allocated to cover costs such as: Owner's Authorized Representative fees; project fees; ADA retrofits; District staff time; testing; design reviews; and inspections;

Resolved further, That the Board directs the Superintendent to develop an implementation plan defining eligibility criterion for non-profit organizations and projects. The plan will describe strategies to remove and/or mitigate fees, such as fee waivers, returning or reimbursing costs for fees that non-profit organizations have already paid, reclassifying internal fees as in-kind contributions, and precluding the upfront payment of fees; and, be it finally

Resolved further, That for grant-funded partner greening projects, the District will prioritize the review of these projects and ensure that they begin construction on time to meet grant deadlines. In order to accomplish this, the District will utilize an efficient review process for all submittals including a 10-day review time as outlined in department guidelines;

Resolved, That the Board directs the Superintendent to present to the Greening Schools and Climate Resilience Committee a comprehensive plan for fee removal and a progress report on potential funding options to support third-party greening projects, within 120 60 days. The District will also provide a progress report on (1) the District's "how-to" guide for greening projects requirements; (2) recommendations to streamline project supervision requirements and reduce oversight expenses; (3) development of school greening-specific Design Guidelines; and (4) potential modification to Development Agreements to reduce unnecessary burdens on greening partners; and, be it finally

Resolved, The Board directs the Superintendent to take all necessary steps to hire staff for the Eco-Sustainability Office up to the maximum number of positions allocated in the approved funding allocation. This measure ensures that the office has the necessary resources to effectively fulfill its mission and provide service to our District staff, school communities and greening partners. The Superintendent or designee shall provide biannual reports to the School Greening and Climate Resilience Committee on hiring progress, including any challenges or delays. If full staffing is not achieved, the District must state the reasons and any mitigating actions being taken.