San Leandro Unified School District Board of Education

Resolution 20-28

Federal Education Funding in Light of Impacts Associated with COVID-19 Pandemic

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced school districts and county offices of education to rapidly adapt under constantly changing and challenging circumstances to continue to deliver high-quality education to all students while safeguarding public health; and

WHEREAS, the challenges caused by an abrupt shift to distance learning have forced local educational agencies already faced with budget deficits to provide significant support and tailor resources to students to ensure learning continues; and

WHEREAS, public schools will need substantial funding in order to overhaul operations to accommodate distance learning for all students, as well as provide the support services and healthy meals they need to thrive in school; and

WHEREAS, state and local budgets are quickly being drained of reserves through extreme upticks in unemployment rates and other impacts caused by COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, California Assembly Budget Chair Phil Ting (D-San Francisco), said in an April 8 memo echoing a Department of Finance advisory that the state's 2020–21 budget would need to be revisited and drastically scaled back from Gov. Gavin Newsom's January proposal in response to the economic impacts of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the latest UCLA Anderson Forecast for the nation, which represents only a preliminary estimate of the impact of the coronavirus on the economy, concludes that the 1.5 percent forecast for real GDP growth on a fourth-quarter to fourth-quarter basis "should be viewed as a midpoint between a minimal effect and a full-blown recession;" and

WHEREAS, the UCLA Anderson School of Management said the unemployment rate in California is expected to increase to 6.3 percent by the end of this year and is expected to continue to increase into 2021 with an average next year of 6.6 percent;

WHEREAS, LEAs are working to continue to provide critical services to students and families, such as distance learning, meal pick-ups, access to technology, and mental and behavioral health services while grappling with an impending economic recession that includes a decline in revenues; and

WHEREAS, at the same time, LEAs including San Leandro Unified School District are incurring new costs to effectively respond to COVID-19, which adds to the severity of the economic recession; and

WHEREAS, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provides $13.5 billion for public school budgets to directly stabilize public school funding nationwide, as well as additional aid for child care, child nutrition and grants to provide mental health support to students; and

WHEREAS, the $31 billion in dedicated emergency funding for K-12 and higher education provided by the CARES Act falls far short of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Great Recession-era stimulus, which provided $100 billion for education with investments in both state fiscal stabilization funds as well as public school categorical programs including Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and

WHEREAS, the Association of California School Administrators and the California School Boards Association in an April 15 letter to congressional leaders requested the next federal stimulus package include an additional $175 billion under the Education Stabilization Fund for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund; specific targeted funding support for students with disabilities and low-income students; and for mental health and trauma services for students, as well as waivers targeting a narrow set of requirements under IDEA that schools cannot safely meet under statewide shelter-in-place orders; and

WHEREAS, 35 U.S. senators, including California's Diane Feinstein and Kamala Harris, strongly urged Congress in an April 2 letter that the next coronavirus relief package include at least $2 billion in E-Rate funds for schools and libraries to provide WiFi hotspots or other devices with WiFi capability to students without adequate connectivity at their home, noting the "homework gap" experienced by 12 million students in this country who do not have internet access at home and are unable to complete their homework; and

WHEREAS, the Public Policy Institute of California found in 2019 that nearly 16 percent (roughly 945,000) of California's school-aged children had no internet connection at home in 2017, while 27 percent (about 1.7 million) did not have broadband access; and

WHEREAS, the issue is even more prevalent for low-income households and students in rural areas; and

WHEREAS, research shows that students without home internet access have lower reading, math and science scores, which is likely to be exacerbated as schools nationwide transition from in-person instruction to distance learning; and

WHEREAS, Gov. Gavin Newsom sent a letter to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy on March 19 requesting additional federal assistance to supplement California's efforts to prepare for a COVID-19 surge; and

WHEREAS, national education organizations including the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, The School Superintendents Association, the Council of Great City Schools, the National Parent Teachers Association and the National School Boards Association have called upon Congress to provide $200 billion to begin providing relief to public schools throughout the country.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the San Leandro Unified School District calls on our Congressional delegation, inclusive of our United States Senators and House of Representatives, and the Governor of California to advocate for additional federal funding to prioritize stable public school funding.Teachers shall continue to provide instruction, assignments and assessments using distance learning tools and resources.

Adopted this 12th day of the month of May in 2020.

Motion made by: _____

Second made by: _____

List members voting "aye:" _____

_____

List members voting "no:" _____

List members abstaining: _____

List members not present: _____