

# Hard Choices

LA Unified Advisory Task Force  
June 2018

## LA Unified School District Advisory Task Force

The LA Unified Advisory Task Force was created to help the Superintendent and leadership team implement change. While it is the role of the LA Unified Board to set strategy and establish policy, there is much work to be done at the operating level to accelerate the pace of change.

The Task Force published a report on Student Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism in December 2017 and reports on the District's Real Estate and Transparency and Accountability in March 2018. These are available on [lausdtaskforce.com](http://lausdtaskforce.com).

This report, the fourth from the Task Force, examines a select set of issues involving student learning, workforce, and equity in school funding, and connects them to LA Unified's budget.

<b>Laphonza Butler, co-chair</b>	President, SEIU Local 2015
<b>Wendy Greuel, co-chair</b>	Executive in Residence, David Nazarian College of Business and Economics, CSUN
<b>Elise Buik</b>	President & CEO, United Way of Greater Los Angeles
<b>Sherry Lansing</b>	Founder and CEO, The Sherry Lansing Foundation
<b>Dr. Pedro Noguera</b>	Distinguished Professor of Education, UCLA, and Director, Center for the Study of School Transformation
<b>Renata Simril</b>	President and CEO, LA84 Foundation
<b>Miguel Santana</b>	President and CEO, Los Angeles County Fair Association
<b>Chris Silbermann</b>	Partner, ICM
<b>Dr. Michael Spagna</b>	Provost and VP for Academic Affairs, CSUDH, and formerly Dean, Michael D. Eisner College of Education, CSUN
<b>Helen Torres</b>	Executive Director, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE)
<b>Jake Winebaum</b>	CEO & Founder, Brighter, Inc.
<b>Janelle Erickson</b>	Executive Director, LA Unified Advisory Task Force

**Page 4      Summary**

**Page 9      Introduction**

**Page 12     Budget**

**Page 19     Workforce**

**Page 28     Equity and School Funding**

**Page 31     Hard Choices**

**Page 32     References**

# Summary

Every child in LA Unified deserves the best possible education—one that allows every student to reach his or her potential. While LA Unified recognizes and embraces this mission, the District must address a number of hard choices to allow it to accelerate the pace of student learning.

According to recent state tests, less than 40 percent of students in LA Unified are proficient in reading and less than one-third of District students are proficient in math.<sup>1</sup>

LA Unified also struggles to improve achievement for students most-in-need. State tests show less than six percent of English learner students are proficient in math. National tests show less than eighteen percent of African American and Latino students are proficient in English or math.<sup>2</sup> This is not acceptable.

Despite research showing that teaching and school leadership are the two most impactful school-related factors in student learning, the District can do more to support teachers and develop school leadership. LA Unified's principals are changing schools on average every two to three years and district teachers devote limited time to professional development with no time set aside for peer-to-peer collaboration and only 2.9 days per year devoted to professional learning.

## Investment is Needed

It is clear that investments critical to student learning are needed. Students, families and communities of LA Unified face many challenges that make it difficult to succeed in school. District teachers and principals often work without the support and tools they need to be at their best.

Additional investment is needed in many areas, for example early instruction and literacy.

Research shows that third-grade reading proficiency is crucial for continued academic success. Students who reach the fourth grade without learning to read proficiently are more likely to drop out of high school.<sup>3</sup>

This is just one example of the many opportunities the District needs to consider. Further opportunities for investment are outlined in Figure 1 below. These are not exhaustive, nor are they intended as recommendations, but rather as an illustration to show the relative investment levels needed to increase supports to students, teachers and school leadership.

Figure 1  
Possible Investments

Estimated Annual Cost in Millions,  
2017-18

Double the current investment in English and math for one elementary school grade	\$130 M
Increasing science instructional time in the early grades <sup>4</sup>	25
90 minutes each week for teacher collaborative time	90
4 days per year dedicated to professional development	60
After school enrichment and structure sports programs <sup>5</sup>	20
Counselor in each secondary school	40
Clean and Safe Schools	50

## The Challenge

As the District works to increase investments critical to student learning, it must also address a looming, large budget deficit. LA Unified is facing a structural budget deficit which threatens its long-term viability and its ability to deliver basic education programs. The District's own forecasts show it will have exhausted its reserve fund balance by 2020-21, will have a budget deficit of \$400 million in 2020-21, and therefore be insolvent.

Further, the District's current school funding practices vary across schools levels and within school levels making it difficult to determine the equity or efficacy of school funding decisions. LA Unified must change its school funding process to reduce the unintended variation, equitably fund schools based on student need, and better align resources with District goals.

With the passage of the Student Equity Need Index 2.0, the LA Unified Board of Education and its community partners took an important and critical step towards funding schools equitably. The District must continue this work to ensure the school funding process is intentional, making it easy to understand how, where and why resources are allocated.<sup>6</sup>

## This Moment

LA Unified has had a structural budget deficit for over six years and has balanced its annual budget through a combination of increased funding from the state, use of its reserve fund, and reductions in spending, including personnel cuts. However, this year-to-year, temporary approach cannot be sustained.

What is different about this moment?

- Revenue increases from the State of California's LCFF have almost all been realized.
- Both state leaders and economists warn that California's economic expansion is due for a downturn. Combined with declining District enrollment, total revenue from the state may decrease.
- The District's own forecasts show it will have exhausted its reserve fund balance by 2020-21.
- LA Unified's past contribution to the CalPERS and CalSTRS pension systems remained relatively stable. Now, state mandates have set the District's contribution to increase by more than 115 percent by 2024 and to remain at that level.
- District healthcare and pension costs are rising and projected to consume over 50 percent of LA Unified's budget by 2031-32.<sup>7</sup>
- Reductions in District spending have been made largely outside of the classroom. However, with an ongoing annual budget deficit scheduled to reach \$400 million in 2020-21, protecting the classroom from future cuts will become impossible.

## Hard Choices

The Task Force and the District recognize that the point has been reached where hard choices can no longer be avoided. Structural changes will need to be made to financially sustain LA Unified and investments in student learning must be increased to begin to show progress for all students.

LA Unified and all its stakeholders must act with both deliberate intent and a sense of urgency.

This report, *Hard Choices*, seeks to achieve two things:

First, to bring additional transparency to LA Unified's budget to help inform the community about the choices the District faces. Understanding where resources are needed and what factors are impacting the budget imbalance is critical to determining the best path forward. This report does not aim to judge the merits of current spending or programs, rather it attempts to establish a framework that clearly communicates equity, workforce, and budget realities and an approach which could be used to develop a long-term plan in collaboration with all stakeholders.

Second, to bring a different approach to the District's planning and budgeting process—an approach that views the budget through a lens of improving student learning. The focus must be on student achievement, supporting effective teaching and school leadership, and using resources as effectively as possible, not just on reducing costs.

The Task Force engaged Education Resource Strategies to conduct the analysis of LA Unified and the data for the analyses—the LAUSD 2016-17 Adjusted Budget and personnel files—were provided by the District.

# Introduction

For this report, the Task Force examined a select set of issues and organized its work around the District's budget. LA Unified's budget is not just a tool to ensure the financial sustainability of the District rather it is a means to invest in student learning and the path toward more equitable funding of schools.

District programs, practices and spending were analyzed to determine whether resources were supporting District goals. The Task Force considered which investments were supporting student achievement, effective teaching and school leadership.

Hard choices lay ahead, but these choices must always be made with the focus on improving student learning and school performance and using limited public resources as effectively as possible, not just on reducing costs.

These Hard Choices are the subject of this report. The answers to the questions, and others, posed in this report can form the basis of a long-term plan for the District.

Hard Choices involve such fundamental issues as "How can the District provide resources to students most in need," "How to best align the human resources in the District to the needs of students" and "How can the District address its ongoing structural deficit?" These issues of Equity, Workforce and Budget are all tied to each other and a choice in one will impact the others.

The many resource choices LA Unified must face should not be looked at in isolation. Investing in schools to improve student learning while reducing costs to address the budget imbalance are inextricably linked.

District cuts to bring the budget into balance will do little to improve math instruction or school safety, or to support teaching and professional learning. Likewise, increasing investment in English Language programs, nursing, or school leadership development cannot be sustained without a long-term plan to stabilize district funding.

## Education Resource Strategies

The Task Force engaged Education Resource Strategies (ERS), a non-profit organization dedicated to helping urban school systems use resources most equitably and effectively, analyzed how people, time and money are currently allocated across LA Unified.

The data for the analyses—the LAUSD 2016-17 Adjusted Budget and personnel files—were provided by the District.

The characterization of the decisions LA Unified needs to make and the questions asked in *Hard Choices* are informed by ERS's work but solely represent the perspective of the Task Force.

Their summary report, *ERS Resource Map for LAUSD: Opportunities to Improve Resource Allocation to Accelerate Student Learning*, summarizes the analysis and presents a series of options to mitigate the budget deficit and reallocate funding towards investments targeted to improve teaching and learning. Their recommendations are rooted in over ten years of working with school systems and a deep understanding of best practices.

## Peer District Comparisons

An important component of ERS' analysis was to compare LA Unified's budget and workforce with several peer districts with similar demographics including poverty, English Learner and special education student populations. Additional data on peer school districts were provided from ERS' benchmark database. While the size of the Districts vary, all are relatively large, urban districts and there should not be meaningful diseconomies of scale which preclude LA Unified from adopting any of the strategies.

ERS adjusted the data to show comparable figures for the cost of living across the various districts. ERS adjusted dollars using the National Center for Education Statistics 2012-14 School District Comparative Wage Index and also adjusted dollars to 2016-17 (inflation adjusted) using the Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI calculator.

# Budget

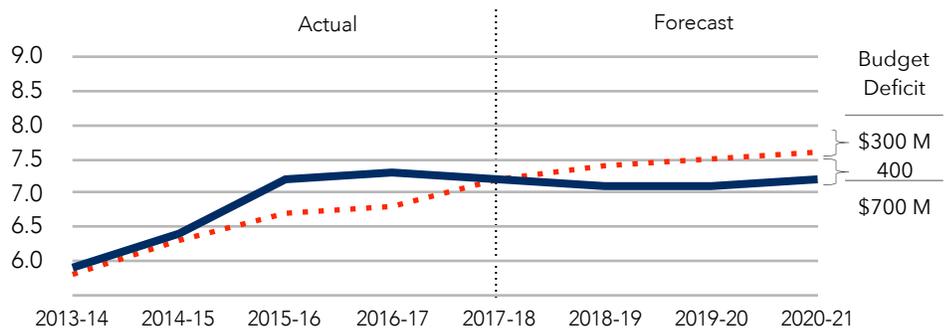
LA Unified is facing a structural budget deficit which threatens its long-term viability and its ability to deliver basic education programs. The District's own forecasts show it will have exhausted its reserve fund balance by 2020-21, will have a budget deficit of \$400 million in 2020-21, and will therefore be insolvent. (Figures 2, 3)

It should be noted that certain assumptions in the LA Unified forecast are conservative. For example, the forecast assumes no wage increases for employees of the District. Each 1 percent annual wage increase adds about \$50 million of costs so if wages were increased 2 percent per year in the forecast, the budget deficit would be approximately \$300 million cumulatively higher by 2020-21 making the forecast \$700 million in total.

Figure 2  
LAUSD Actual and Forecasted Revenue and Expenditure

Source: ERS Resource Map for LAUSD, page 11. LAUSD 2018-19 District Budget Preparations (Feb 2018)

(Dollars in Billions)



## Forecast Assumptions

### Revenue:

- 2.5% Annual COLA increase
- 3% Annual decline in ADA enrollment

### Expenditures:

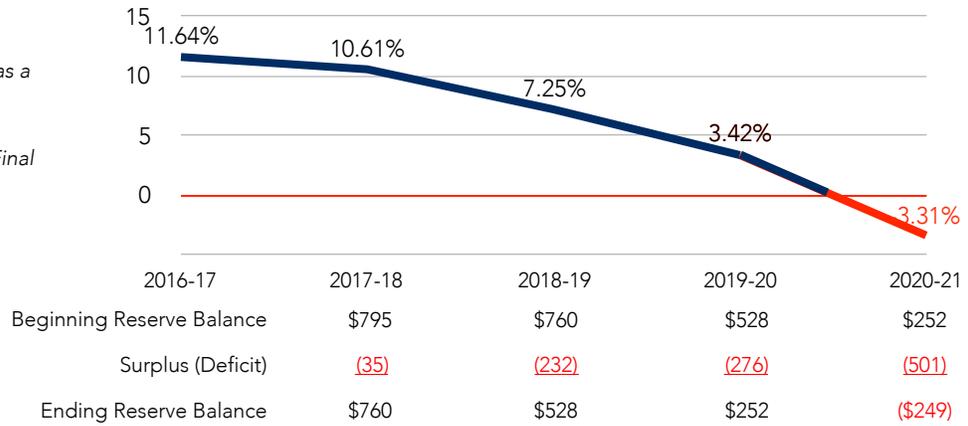
- Step/column per pattern (~1% per annum)
- No wage adjustment
- Headcount reduced in proportion to enrollment decline

**QUESTION 1** The District's own forecast shows a significant deficit. What changes can be made to reverse the trend? How does LA Unified intend to close the budget gap?

Figure 3  
LAUSD Reserve Balance as a  
Percent of General Fund

Source: LAUSD 2016-17 Final  
Budget, Appendix E

(Dollars in Millions)



**QUESTION 2** The District must make different resource choices to avoid insolvency, which will lead to cuts without consideration of student learning. What is the District's plan to avoid insolvency?

## Structural Deficit

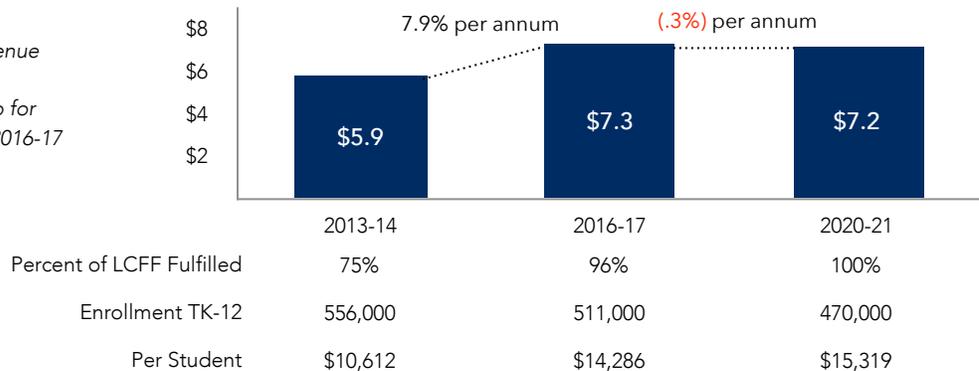
Understanding what is causing the deficit is critical to determining the best path forward. This analysis merely presents data provided by the District and is not intended to judge the merit of the spending patterns.

**Revenue.** California increased funding from 2013-18 for K-12 public schools through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). However, LCFF increases have almost all been realized. With the District's own forecast showing enrollment declining 2-3 percent each year, total revenue may decline. (Figure 4)

Figure 4  
LAUSD General Fund Revenue

Source: ERS Resource Map for  
LAUSD, page 12. LAUSD 2016-17  
Final Budget, Appendix E

(Dollars in Billions)



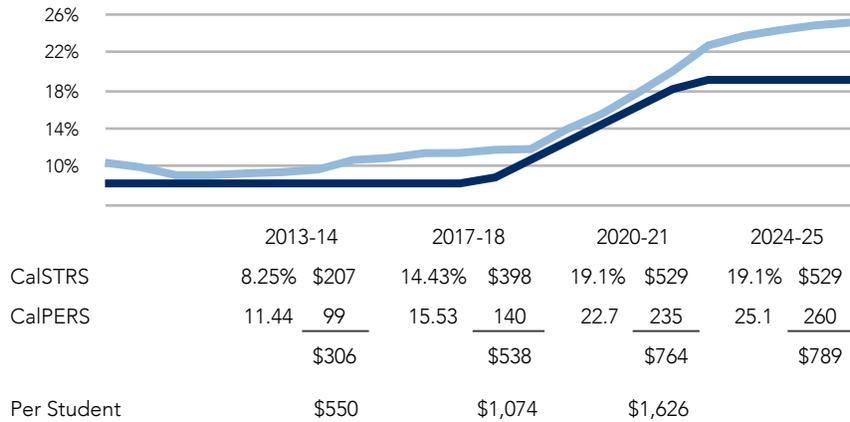
**QUESTION 3** Forecasts show total revenue decreasing slightly. What plan does the District have to increase current funding levels and funding over time? How much impact will it make?

**Retirement Costs.** The State of California has mandated substantial increases in the District’s contribution to the CalPERS and CalSTRS pension systems to address significant underfunding in the plans. (Figure 5)

Figure 5  
Percent of Salary Contribution to Pension Funds

Source: Office of the Chief Financial Officer, LAUSD

— CalSTRS  
— CalPERS



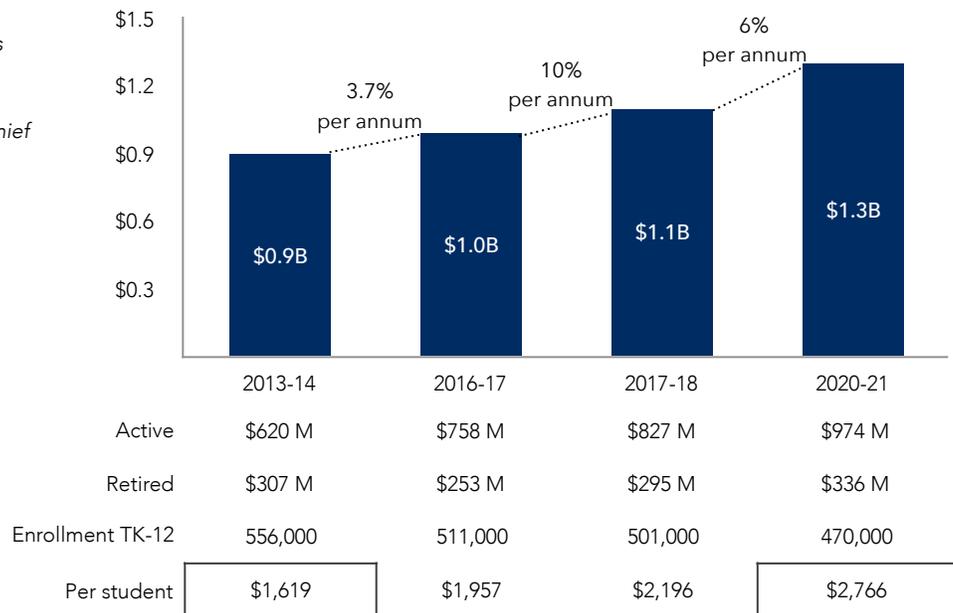
**QUESTION 4** In 1999, the State of California increased the retirement benefit for employees from approximately 1.9 percent per year of service to 2.4 percent, yet additional funding was not provided for this. If the benefit is to be sustained, how is it to be funded?

**Benefit Costs.** Healthcare costs are forecasted to continue to grow faster than revenues. (Figure 6)

Figure 6  
LAUSD Health and Welfare Costs

Source: ERS Resource Map for LAUSD, page 13. Office of the Chief Financial Officer, LAUSD

(Dollars in Billions)



**QUESTION 5** LA Unified forecasts healthcare costs to grow at 6 percent per year from 2017-18 to 2020-21. What can be done to bring the growth of costs more in line with forecasted revenue growth?

Benefit costs (both pension and healthcare) are forecasted to take an increasing share of the District’s budget. (Figure 7)

Figure 7  
LAUSD Benefit Costs as a Portion of  
General Fund Budget

Source: Office of the Chief Financial  
Officer, LAUSD

(Dollars in Millions)

	2013-14	2017-18	2020-21	CAGR 2017-21
Healthcare	\$927	\$1,122	\$1,310	5.3%
Pension	306	538	764	12.39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,233</b>	<b>\$1,660</b>	<b>\$2,074</b>	
General Fund Revenue	\$5,900	\$7,300	\$7,200	
Retirement Costs as a Portion of Budget	20.9%	22.7%	28.8%	

**QUESTION 6** Benefit costs are growing much faster than revenues and may crowd out other needed investment. Can the growth of this spending be limited?

## General Fund Spending

LA Unified’s General Fund budget for 2016-17 was \$7.5 billion of which \$7.2 billion was available to fund TK-12 education. Per pupil spending is approximately \$14,700 on average. (Figure 8 on following page)

**QUESTION 7** The investment in math and English instruction is approximately \$2,600 per pupil or 18% of the total of \$14,700 per pupil spending. Does the District need to invest more in these two critical areas?

\*Figure 8  
LAUSD 2016-17 Budget

Source: ERS Resource Map for LAUSD,  
page 64. LAUSD 2016-17 Adjusted  
Budget

(Dollars in Billions)



\*Both LA Unified and the Advisory Task Force included pension costs as a part of TK-12 operating expenses as reflected in Figure 8, which brings per pupil spending to \$14,700. ERS excluded pensions from its analysis of TK-12 operating expenses to ensure an accurate comparison with peer districts, which brings per pupil to \$13,600. This accounts for the variation found in Figures 4 and 9.

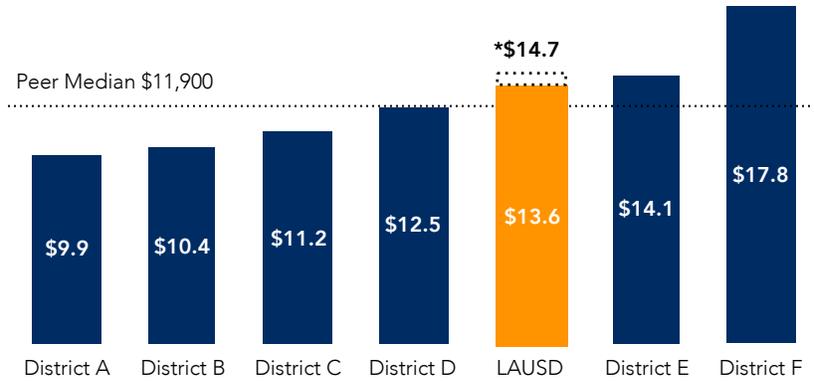
Figure 9  
 LAUSD Operating Budget Per Pupil  
 Compared to Peer Districts

Adjusted for Geography and Inflation

ERS Resource Map for LAUSD,  
 pages 18, 62

(Dollars in Thousands)

**Per Pupil Funding.** LA Unified spends about 14 percent above the peer district median after adjusting for geography and inflation. (Figure 9)



**QUESTION 8** LCFF has provided a meaningful increase in per pupil funding since 2013. Does LA Unified expect the level of funding to change in the next few years or should it develop a plan based on current levels?

\*Both LA Unified and the Advisory Task Force included pension costs as a part of TK-12 operating expenses as reflected in Figure 8, which brings per pupil spending to \$14,700.

ERS excluded pensions from its analysis of TK-12 operating expenses to ensure an accurate comparison with peer districts, which brings per pupil to \$13,600. This also accounts for the variation found in Figures 4 and 9.

# Workforce

Great teachers and school leaders make great schools. Research shows that teachers and classroom instruction have the greatest influence on student learning.<sup>8</sup> While school leadership is second only to teaching among school-related factors in its impact on student learning.<sup>9</sup>

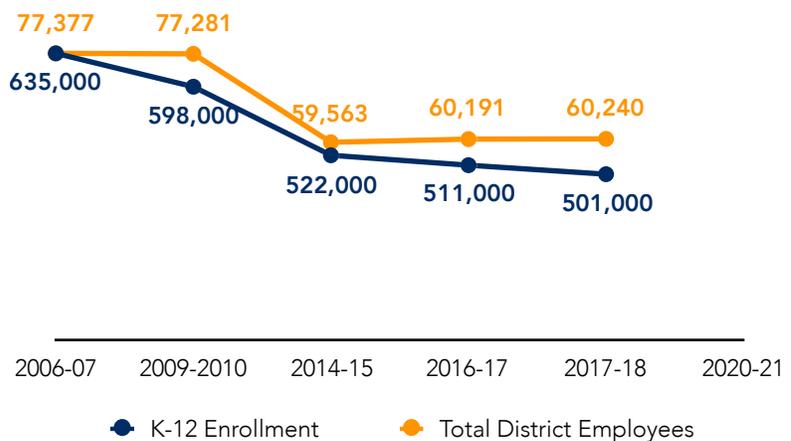
Research also finds that what teachers do together outside of the classroom can greatly affect student learning and their own professional development.<sup>10</sup> Further, the impact of effective school leadership tends to be greatest in schools where the learning needs of students are most acute.<sup>11</sup>

More can and must be done at LA Unified to develop and support teachers and school leadership.

**Workforce Size.** The size of the District’s workforce has increased even as student enrollment has declined. (Figure 10)

Figure 10  
Size of LAUSD Workforce and Student Enrollment

Source: LAUSD Fingertip Facts and Office of Chief Financial Officer, LAUSD

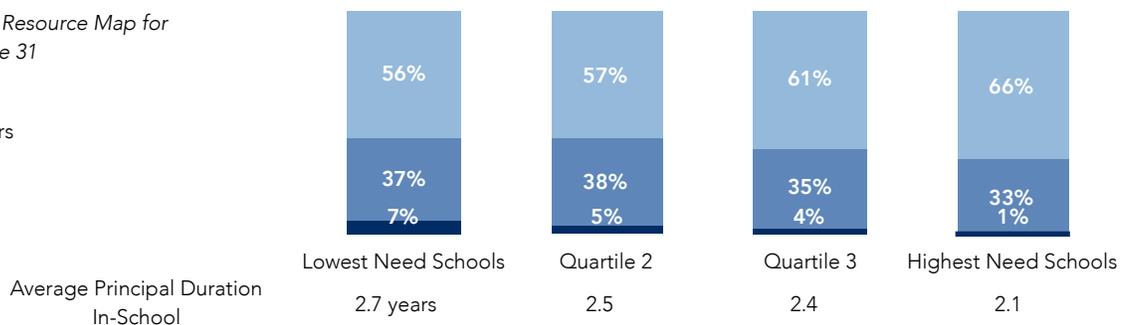


**QUESTION 9** What is the size of the workforce needed to serve the needs of current enrollment? How is this resource deployed across the administration, schools and classrooms?

**School Leadership.** LA Unified’s principals change schools on average every two to three years which can cause disruption in the schools and makes it difficult for principals to have a meaningful or lasting impact on the school’s performance. (Figure 11)

Figure 11  
LAUSD Principals In-School Duration  
Average by School Need

Source: ERS Resource Map for  
LAUSD, page 31



**QUESTION 10** What are the causes of principal movement across schools? What can be done to reduce turnover of school leadership, particularly at schools with the highest-need students?

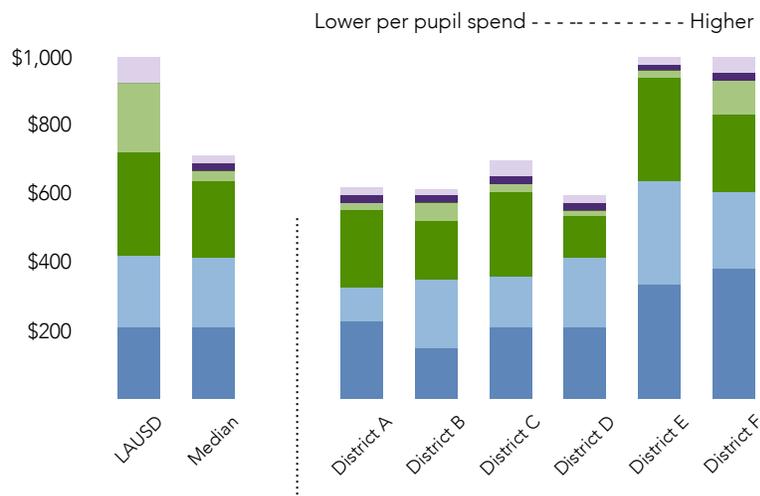
**Administration.** LA Unified spends 40 percent more per pupil on school administration than the median peer district, approximately \$150 million overall. (Figure 12)

The District is vulnerable to State penalties because it has an administrator to teacher ratio above 1.08. It received waivers in 2016-17 and 2017-18 saving \$48 million. It estimates a \$35 million penalty for both 2018-19 and 2019-20 if waivers are not granted.

Figure 12  
LAUSD School Administration Dollars Per Pupil by Position

Source: ERS Resource Map for LAUSD, page 29

- Supplies, Stipends
- Other
- Coordinator, Manager
- Clerk/Admin Asst
- Vice Principal
- Principal



**QUESTION 11** There are differences in approach between LA Unified and other districts. What is the appropriate level of investment in school administration?

**Instructional Support.** LA Unified’s current teacher to Instructional Coach ratio—68 teachers to 1 Instructional Coach—does not support effective teaching practices in classrooms throughout the District.

Given the relatively high investment in school-based administrators and support positions (Figure 22), LA Unified has the opportunity to bring the instructional support-person ratio to match best practices of 15 to 1.<sup>12</sup>

If all Instructional Coaches, Administrators (i.e. principals and assistant principals), and Coordinators were either trained to serve as instructional support or were repurposed to be instructional coaches, the ratio would be 5 teachers to 1 instructional support-person. (Figure 13)

Figure 13  
LAUSD Teacher to Potential  
Instructional Support-Person Ratio

Source: ERS Resource Map for  
LAUSD, page 30

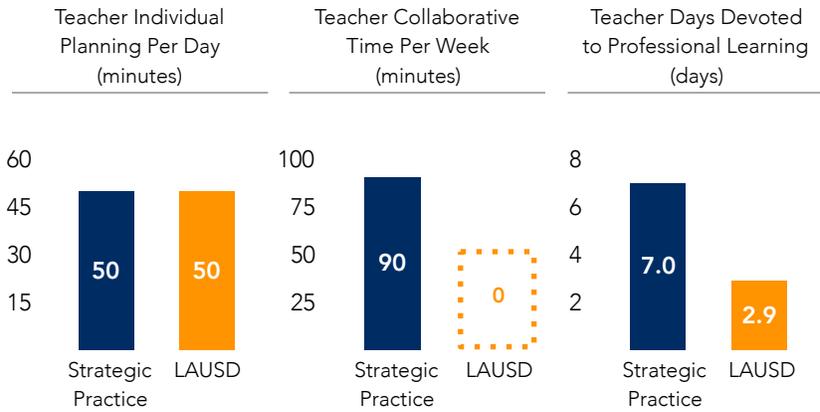
- **68 : 1** Current Ratio of Teachers to Instructional Coaches
- **15 : 1** Best Practice
- **5 : 1** LA Unified’s Potential Ratio of Teachers to Instructional Support-Persons

**QUESTION 12** How can LA Unified realign responsibilities and/or repurpose positions to increase coaching for teachers? How can we better support the instructional experience while reducing our high administration ratio?

**Teacher Professional Development.** LA Unified teachers devote limited time to professional development with no time set aside for peer-to-peer collaboration and only 2.9 days per year devoted to professional learning. (Figure 14)

Figure 14  
Teacher Time Devoted to Planning, Collaboration, and Professional Learning Days Compared to Strategic Practice<sup>10</sup>

Source: ERS Resource Map for LAUSD, page 27



**QUESTION 13** How much time should teachers devote to peer-to-peer collaboration or professional learning? How can LA Unified provide sufficient time for teachers for professional development?

**Student Learning Time.** LA Unified's school day (i.e. days when students are present) is shorter than peer districts. (Figure 15)

Figure 15  
Annual Elementary School Hours

Source: ERS Resource Map for  
LAUSD, page 25



**QUESTION 14** What impact does the shorter school day have on student achievement? What opportunity does a longer day present to support teacher peer-to-peer collaboration or professional learning?

**Teacher Educational Courses.** LA Unified teachers can advance more quickly through the salary schedule compared to peer districts due in part to the educational courses they take to further their own education. When teachers complete outside educational courses, they receive pay increases.

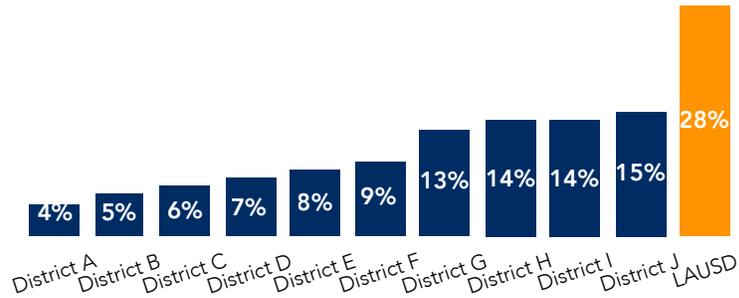
The District provides a higher proportional investment in teachers' educational-advancement compensation than do peer districts. (Figure 16)

LA Unified offers a wide range of courses, some unrelated to District priorities or individual teaching positions.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 16  
Education Pay as a Percent of Salary  
for Teachers with Ten Years  
Experience

LAUSD Compared to Peer Districts

Source: ERS Resource Map for  
LAUSD, page 24



**QUESTION 15** What impact are the educational courses having on effective teaching and student learning? How can LA Unified ensure investments in teacher educational course work is optimized to improve teaching and student learning?

**Teacher Compensation.** LA Unified provides a higher average teacher salary and higher average healthcare benefits than do peer districts. The District's average teacher salary is 17 percent above the median and average healthcare benefits are 44 percent above the median, both adjusted for the cost of living. (Figures 17, 18)

Figure 17  
Average Teacher Salary  
LAUSD Compared to Peer Districts

Source: ERS Resource Map for  
LAUSD, page 21

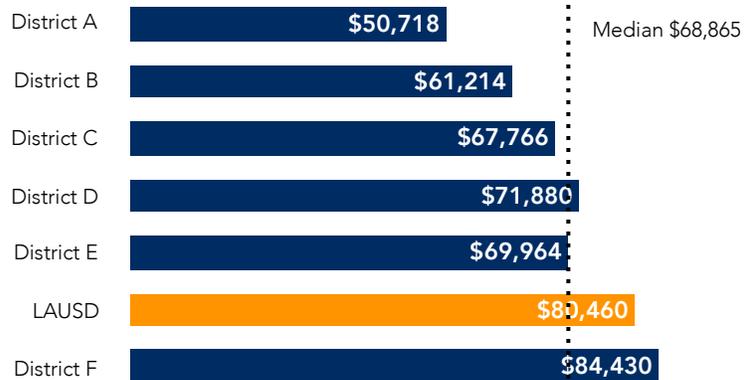
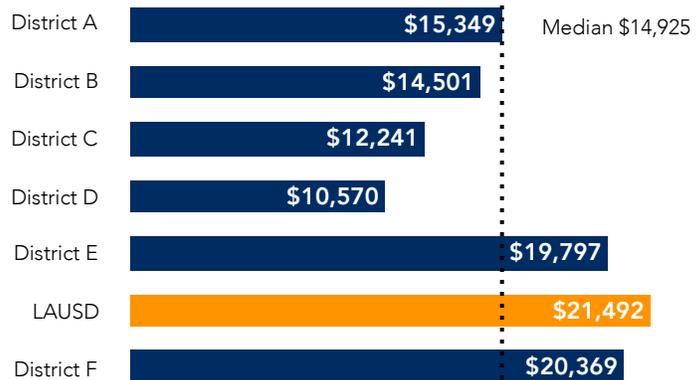


Figure 18  
Average Teacher Healthcare Benefits  
LAUSD Compared to Peer Districts

Source: ERS Resource Map for  
LAUSD, page 21



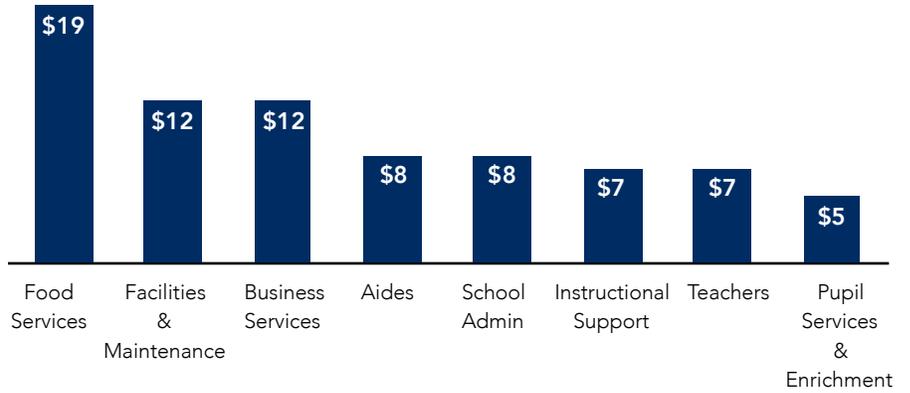
**QUESTION 16** Does the relative balance between salary and benefits create the right value proposition for our teaching force? If the compensation is to be sustained, how is it to be funded?

**Benefits.** LA Unified invests more in benefits than do peer districts. (Figure 19)

Figure 19  
Additional Benefits per FTE Beyond  
Peer Districts

Source: ERS Resource Map for  
LAUSD, page 19

(Dollars in Thousands)



Total Allocation Beyond  
Peer Districts

\$52 M	\$42	\$20	\$45	\$35	\$12	\$170	\$26
--------	------	------	------	------	------	-------	------

(Dollars in Millions)

**QUESTION 17** Is this investment sustainable? If so, how is it to be funded?

# Equity and School Funding

Students and families face many challenges that make it difficult to succeed in school. High-need students such as English learners, low-income students, foster youth and students with disabilities deserve a high-quality education just as their peers do. The schools and teachers who serve these students must also have the resources and support to provide that education.

Moving toward a more purposeful and equitable school and student funding process requires much more work. How LA Unified funds schools and students must be intentional to ensure resources align with District goals. LA Unified needs to make it easy for all District stakeholders to understand how, where and why resources are allocated.<sup>15</sup>

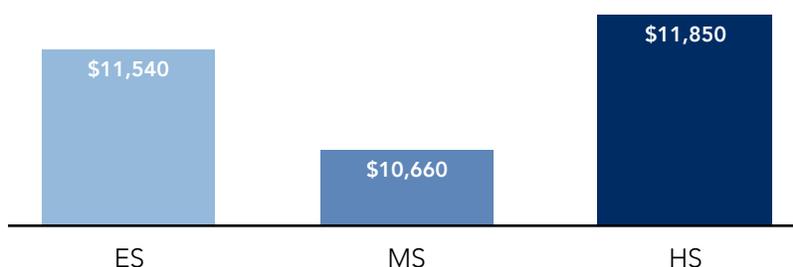
The collaboration around the development and adoption of the Student Equity Index 2.0 provides a foundation for LA Unified and communities to continue this vital work.<sup>16</sup> Index 2.0 is an important and critical step towards funding schools based on student need instead of allocating funds equally or based on enrollment. The findings presented below are intended to add to this collaboration and ongoing work and should not be considered exhaustive. Further research is needed.

The Task Force will continue to partner with LA Unified and communities to help see this work through.

**Funding Across School Levels.** LA Unified allocates fewer resources to middle schools, which differs from peer districts. This trend holds true in both real dollars as well as weighted for student needs at each school level.<sup>17</sup> (Figure 20)

Figure 20  
Weighted Per Pupil Funding by  
School Level

Source: ERS Resource Map for LAUSD



**QUESTION 18** What per pupil funding level is needed to support students and schools? Does this level of funding by school level support the experiences we want our student to have?

**Funding Within School Levels.** LA Unified also experiences a greater variation in per pupil funding than peer districts, even when taking student needs into account.<sup>18</sup>

**School Size.** While there are four variables associated with school funding variation (school size, student performance, teacher compensation, school designation), school size is the greatest cause of variation in elementary schools and a significant predictor of variation at the secondary level.<sup>19</sup>

Smaller schools receive more funding per weighted-pupil. This is due to fixed costs and overhead that leads to a larger per weighted-pupil amount. This trend holds true throughout the District in elementary, middle and high schools.<sup>20</sup>

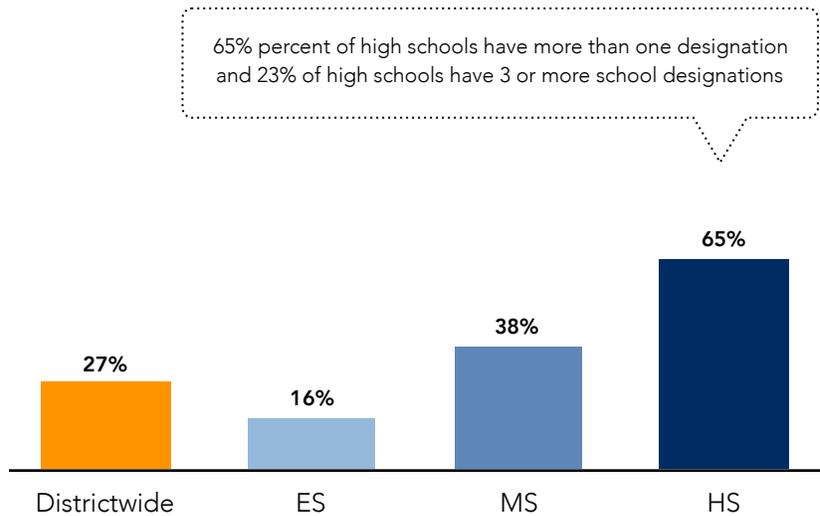
**School Designations.** The proliferation of school designations in LA Unified makes it challenging to determine the equity or efficacy of school funding decisions.<sup>21</sup>

The District has several designations—Inclusion Site, Magnet, Pilot, Innovation, Staff Stability, Dual Language, PHBAO and Charter—that each receive funding based on their individual designations.

Further, many schools have more than one school designation. 65 percent of high schools have more than one designation and 23 percent of high schools have three or more. (Figure 21)

Figure 21  
Percent of Schools with Multiple  
School Designations by School Level

Source: ERS Resource Map for  
LAUSD, page 49



**QUESTION 19** Are school funding designations producing the desired outcome? Does the District have a plan to fund schools more consistently and transparently? Do current school funding practices advance the District's equity goals?

# Hard Choices

LA Unified faces the challenge of increasing investment in learning while addressing a large, structural budget deficit. Hard choices lay ahead but decisions must always be made with the focus on improving student learning and school performance and using limited public resources as effectively as possible, not just reducing costs.

The Task Force is recommending a different approach to the District's planning and budgeting process—one that brings additional transparency to the process, collaborates with District stakeholders, and that centers each decision on improving student achievement, supporting effective teaching and school leadership, and using resources as effectively as possible.

The Task Force has posed a series of questions that will need to be answered before a long-term plan for the District can be developed. These questions, and the answers to them, will establish a framework of equity, workforce and budget realities to guide the development of such a plan. This approach will not be easy, but it is necessary to put the District on a new course of financial stability and higher levels of student achievement.

LA Unified will need to make hard choices, but the success of its students is too vital not to seize this time as an opportunity to build the public school district the communities of greater Los Angeles deserve.

# References

- 1 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Smarter Balanced Assessment Tests (2017)
- 2 U.S. Department of Education's National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (2017)
- 3 Fiester, Leila and Ralph Smith. *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of the Third Grade Matters*. Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2010)
- 4 Feldman, Sarah and Verónica Flores Malagon. The Education Trust-West. *Unlocking Learning: Science as a Lever for English Learner Equity*. (January 2017)
- 5 Vile, J.D., Arcaira, E. & Reisner, E.R. (2009). Progress toward high school graduation: Citizen Schools' youth outcomes in Boston. Washington, D.C.: Policy Studies Associates, Inc. <https://citizen-schools.squarespace.com/s/PSA-Citizen-Schools-Youth-Outcomes-in-Boston.pdf>; Pearson, L.M., Vile, J.D. & Reisner, E.R. (2008). Establishing a foundation for progress toward high school graduation. Washington, D.C.: Policy Studies Associates, Inc.; Newhouse, C. (2008). Afterschool programs in the Central Valley benefit children and youth: Evaluation results from the 2006-2007 school year. Clovis, CA: Central Valley Afterschool Foundation. [http://centralvalleyafterschool.org.previewdns.com/pdf/CVAFFinalReport5-7-08\\_000.pdf](http://centralvalleyafterschool.org.previewdns.com/pdf/CVAFFinalReport5-7-08_000.pdf)
- 6 Education Resource Strategies. *ERS Resource Map for LAUSD: Opportunities to Improve Resource Allocation to Accelerate Student Learning*. Key Insights & Recommendations. Page 68 (June 2018)
- 7 Office of the Chief Financial Officer, LA Unified. *Health and Welfare Board Retreat*. Page 29 (August 2017)
- 8 Miles, Karen Hawley; David Rosenberg; and Genevieve Quist Green. *Igniting the Learning Engine: How school systems accelerate teacher effectiveness and student growth through Connected Professional Learning*. (April 2017)
- 9 Kenneth Leithwood, Karen Seachore Louis, Stephen Anderson and Kyla Wahlstrom, *Review of Research: How Leadership Influences Student Learning*. University of Minnesota and University of Toronto. (2004)
- 10 Miles, Karen Hawley; David Rosenberg; and Genevieve Quist Green. *Igniting the Learning Engine: How school systems accelerate teacher effectiveness and student growth through Connected Professional Learning*. (April 2017)
- 11 Kenneth Leithwood, Karen Seachore Louis, Stephen Anderson and Kyla Wahlstrom, *Review of Research: How Leadership Influences Student Learning*. University of Minnesota and University of Toronto. (2004)

- 12 Education Resource Strategies. *ERS Resource Map for LAUSD: Opportunities to Improve Resource Allocation to Accelerate Student Learning*. Key Insights & Recommendations. Page 30 (June 2018)  
  
Miles, Karen Hawley; David Rosenberg; and Genevieve Quist Green. *Igniting the Learning Engine: How school systems accelerate teacher effectiveness and student growth through Connected Professional Learning*. (April 2017)
- 13 Miles, Karen Hawley; David Rosenberg; and Genevieve Quist Green. *Igniting the Learning Engine: How school systems accelerate teacher effectiveness and student growth through Connected Professional Learning*. (April 2017)
- 14 Education Resource Strategies. *ERS Resource Map for LAUSD: Opportunities to Improve Resource Allocation to Accelerate Student Learning*. Key Insights & Recommendations. Page 24 (June 2018)
- 15 Education Resource Strategies. *ERS Resource Map for LAUSD: Opportunities to Improve Resource Allocation to Accelerate Student Learning*. Key Insights & Recommendations. Page 68 (June 2018)
- 16 The Advancement Project, Community Coalition, InnerCity Struggle, The United Way of Greater Los Angeles and the Communities for Los Angeles Student Success (CLASS). <http://advancementprojectca.org/what-we-do/educational-equity/k-12-education-policy/student-equity-need-index>
- 17 Education Resource Strategies. *ERS Resource Map for LAUSD: Opportunities to Improve Resource Allocation to Accelerate Student Learning*. Key Insights & Recommendations. Page 50 (June 2018)
- 18 Education Resource Strategies. *ERS Resource Map for LAUSD: Opportunities to Improve Resource Allocation to Accelerate Student Learning*. Key Insights & Recommendations. Page 44 (June 2018)
- 19 Education Resource Strategies. *ERS Resource Map for LAUSD: Opportunities to Improve Resource Allocation to Accelerate Student Learning*. Key Insights & Recommendations. Page 45 (June 2018)
- 20 Education Resource Strategies. *ERS Resource Map for LAUSD: Opportunities to Improve Resource Allocation to Accelerate Student Learning*. Key Insights & Recommendations. Page 72 (June 2018)
- 21 Education Resource Strategies. *ERS Resource Map for LAUSD: Opportunities to Improve Resource Allocation to Accelerate Student Learning*. Key Insights & Recommendations. Page 49 (June 2018)