December 1, 2015

Steve Zimmer, School Board President
Board of Education, District 4
Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)
333 South Beaudry Avenue, 24th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017

RE: Community Input Regarding Proposed Educational Facilities Plan presented at the LAUSD Community Meeting on November 16, 2015

Dear Board President Zimmer,

Thank you for your attention to the critical facilities issues that result from the changing demographics of the communities of Westchester, Playa del Rey, and Playa Vista. Our neighborhoods are undergoing a Renaissance of sorts, with a tremendous influx of families with school-aged children. This is most readily identifiable and urgent in Playa Vista, particularly Phase II, but significant school-aged growth trends are reflected in Westchester and Playa del Rey as well.

On behalf of the Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa, we would like to continue the dialogue regarding how the approved educational facilities plan that LAUSD presented on November 16th will be operationalized due to the impact on several of the schools and stakeholders located principally in Playa Vista and Westchester, but also in Playa del Rey. We appreciate that a facilities plan has been developed, but ask that it be used to help facilitate discussion with the inclusion of all of its impacted communities. Attached you will find summaries of the public comments made by fourteen of the approximately forty community members in attendance at last night’s Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa Education Committee meeting. We know you were planning to attend the meeting but had a conflict; we read the statement you provided and believe that our recommendations follow with the spirit of engagement you have established.

We appreciate that LAUSD – and your office and Ms. Hildreth’s office in particular – have earnestly communicated with the various schools and neighborhoods. Based on feedback from our community stakeholders – including school administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community members -- we suggest that a collaborative engagement LAUSD Playa Vista/Westchester/Playa del Rey Educational Facilities Project Advisory
A working group is formed. This would be a collaborative partnership between LAUSD and the stakeholders from each of the vested and potentially affected schools (i.e., administrators and parent representatives) to participate in discussions on next steps related to the operationalization of the facilities plan or any future decision-making process that may impact the aforementioned school and community stakeholders.

What we seek to mitigate is Balkanization of the individual school communities which pits one against the other. The facilities and student enrollment issues facing our communities are interrelated. They span from TK through adulthood. A collaborative project advisory working group that affords each school equal representation will, at the minimum, enhance understanding and reduce distress and animosity. At most, it will assist you in generating creative solutions that are embraced by the communities that maximally benefit our public education students across the developmental age span from all of our impacted neighborhoods.

Please let us know how we may work with you to achieve a collaborative planning process that engages the entire affected community equitably and simultaneously as you move forward.

Most appreciatively,

/s/ Cyndi Hench
Cyndi Hench
President

Cc: Ramon Cortines, Superintendent, LAUSD
   Michelle King, Chief Deputy Superintendent, LAUSD
   Cheryl Hildreth, Instructional Area Superintendent, LAUSD Educational Service Center – West
   Mike Bonin, LA City Councilmember, District 11