

A LANDMARK PROPOSAL FOR REFORMING LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

“Fixing our schools is the fundamental civil rights issue of our time. We will not prosper unless we replace the culture of complacency with the culture of accountability at LAUSD.”

--Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa

California’s children deserve an excellent education, with safe schools, qualified teachers, and small classes. To make it happen, we must cut the bureaucracy, increase accountability, empower educators and parents, and provide a central role for our city leaders in improving our public schools. We can improve student achievement and reduce the dropout rate, but only if we recognize that the current structure of LAUSD is not working.

That’s why Mayor Villaraigosa, along with a coalition of teachers, education advocates, business leaders, and parents, has proposed a package of reforms for LAUSD. Introduced as AB 1381, the legislation is a historic opportunity to improve our schools by strengthening accountability and empowering parents and educators.

Creating Accountability at the Top

It's time to get the school board out of the business of micromanaging day-to-day operations and back to the hard work of improving education. AB 1381 promotes the Superintendent from a general manager to a CEO, allowing the Board of Education to concentrate on setting policy and serving parents and families.

- The Superintendent will have expanded authority over personnel, business operations, budgeting, and the facilities program, including contracting authority.
- By reducing bureaucracy, increasing efficiencies, and identifying savings, the Superintendent will redirect funds to the classroom.
- Each year, the Superintendent will present the budget and provide School Accountability Report Cards to the Council of Mayors.
- The Board of Education will continue to set policy for the District, approve the budget, ensure that instructional materials requirements meet state standards, and set graduation requirements.
- At the end of six years, the reforms will be independently evaluated and reauthorized by a vote of the Legislature.

Empowering Teachers, Principals, and Parents

No law by itself will change conditions for learning in the classroom. Only parents, teachers, principals and communities can do that. But this legislation empowers parents and teachers with the tools they need to improve local schools.

- Educators will be given a voice in the selection of state and District-approved instructional materials.
- The bill increases flexibility by streamlining the process for schools to receive waivers from the State Board of Education from burdensome codes and regulations.

Uniting Local Leaders for Our Kids

Local officials will collaborate with the school district through a new Council of Mayors. Mayors and county supervisors from the 27 cities and unincorporated areas that make up the District will have a vote on Council in proportion to the populations residing within LAUSD's boundaries.

- The Council of Mayors will be first in line to review and comment on the budget developed by Superintendent.
- A representative appointed by the Council will participate in the selection of the Superintendent, and the Council will ratify the hiring and retention of the Superintendent.
- The Council will be responsible for partnering with LAUSD to improve campus safety, site new schools, and expand after school and joint-use programs to make schools a central part of their communities.

Rescuing Our Lowest Performing Schools

Low performing schools need new ideas, new partnerships, and more resources. That's why the plan envisions that three of the District's lowest-performing high schools and their feeder middle and elementary schools in the city of Los Angeles will become part of the Mayor's Community Partnership for School Excellence, which will directly oversee reform.

- The Mayor and the Superintendent will choose schools jointly.
- Led by the Mayor, parents, teachers, and community groups will join together to implement best practices from other parts of the District and across the country.
- The Mayor will help raise additional funding from the business community and foundations to increase resources and turn these schools around.