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JOHN E. DEASY, Ph.D.
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

December 6, 2013

Dear Parents/Guardians in the Los Angeles Unified School District,

This letter provides information about program requirements and the new accountability system that the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) will implement as a result of recently receiving a waiver from certain aspects of the Federal *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act. This letter outlines the ways that the waiver supports our students, defines key principles that the district will need to implement, explains how the waiver impacts programs such as free tutoring, and describes how this new system will impact your child's school.

LAUSD continues to focus on ensuring that all students graduate from our schools college- and career-ready. To support this work, LAUSD joined seven other California school districts (Fresno, Long Beach, Oakland, Sacramento City, San Francisco, Sanger, and Santa Ana) in a consortium known as the California Office to Reform Education (CORE). CORE districts joined a national reform movement by applying for and receiving a waiver from certain aspects of the federal accountability program, *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB). In addition to CORE, these waivers have been granted to nearly all states throughout the country in an effort to allow increased flexibility to support schools based on need, and recognize improvements.

The waiver supports LAUSD and its students in multiple ways. The waiver:

- is designed to measure school performance on the basis of more than standardized test scores
- allows the district autonomy in the use of some of our Title I funds to support our highest-need schools
- holds the district and its schools accountable to *all* students by highlighting achievement gaps, even when there are as few as 20 students at the school in a given sub-group (such as English Learners or Special Education students)
- directly supports the district's ongoing work to implement Common Core State Standards and ensure teacher and leader effectiveness at our schools
- allows LAUSD to advocate as a member of CORE and provide feedback that might influence the way the accountability system works and how the waiver is implemented.

LAUSD as a CORE district will be held accountable to the new School Quality Improvement System (SQIS) by focusing on three important principles to be addressed at all schools:

1. **Principle I: *College and Career Ready Expectations for All Students*** - accelerates the District's transition to the Common Core State Standards that changes teaching and learning to better prepare students for college and careers.

2. **Principle II: *Differentiated Recognition, Accountability and Support*** - measures school performance in a variety of ways (e.g. academics, social/emotional and school climate). While all schools will be measured in this system, only Title I schools will receive a classification to differentiate recognition, accountability and support. The new accountability tool is called the School Quality Improvement Index (SQII).
3. **Principle III: *Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership*** - continues to improve teaching, leading and learning by establishing a professional, collaborative culture among staff, parents and students.

Your child is currently attending a school that was identified by the new system as a “Priority” school. This means that your child’s school either received a School Improvement Grant (SIG) or performed in the lowest 10% of CORE district schools. Due to this challenge, the federal waiver gives the teachers and staff at your child’s school the opportunity to partner with staff from a school that has performed at higher levels. This partnership will help your child’s school identify solutions and strategies to ensure that all students will achieve at high-levels. Your child’s school will directly benefit from additional supports such as professional development, tutoring and summer school for eligible students.

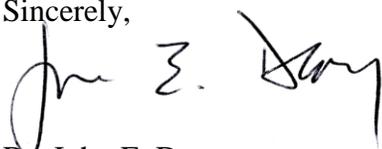
Additionally, under the previous accountability system of NCLB, Title I schools that did not make “adequate yearly progress” based on standardized test scores were labeled as Program Improvement (PI) schools. After two years of being identified as a PI school, NCLB mandated that eligible students were offered Supplemental Educational Services (SES), i.e., free tutoring from outside vendors. In the new accountability system, schools are no longer identified as PI, and so those services are no longer mandated and will not be offered. Although the free-tutoring services will no longer be provided, as a Priority School your child’s school will receive additional opportunities to provide appropriate intervention for at-risk students not meeting grade-level standards. The District is examining various options for the provision of this support, such as expanding summer school opportunities and offering after-school tutoring programs to address students’ academic needs. Furthermore, since your child’s school is Title I this year, it will receive an additional allocation and the School Site Council will determine how those funds will be used.

Research shows that strong parental involvement leads to student success at school. Parents interested in partnering with the school are encouraged to contact school staff for additional information regarding:

- Parental involvement policies
- School-Parent Compact
- Ongoing parent community meetings
- Advisory committees/School Site Council meetings
- Parent volunteer opportunities

As all schools continue to focus their work on the District’s Strategic Plan that is purposefully aligned with the three principles of the waiver, additional communication will be provided to update parents/guardians about the specific provisions of the CORE waiver. We look forward to partnering with you.

Sincerely,



Dr. John E. Deasy
Superintendent