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January 28, 2021

The Honorable Hilda L. Solis  
Board Supervisor, First District  
856 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Honorable Hilda L. Solis,

I am writing to communicate The Children's Partnership's full support and request for the Los Angeles County and State Departments of Public Health to immediately authorize schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (Los Angeles Unified) to serve as COVID-19 vaccine sites for school staff and the community at large. We are asking for your leadership to help expedite approvals of Los Angeles Unified Schools and other school districts serving communities of color that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 as vaccine sites.

The Children's Partnership is a Los Angeles, California-based children's advocacy organization committed to improving the lives of marginalized children with breakthrough solutions at the intersection of research, policy, and community engagement. We acknowledge the leadership and safety net that our neighborhood schools have provided since the pandemic began. Schools are trusted community partners, are accessible to and can accommodate large groups of individuals with safe social distancing, and have trained and qualified staff on site.

Considering equity as a primary factor for vaccine distribution provides us with an opportunity to begin to undo the generations of injustice that have led to the social conditions that result in people of color being more likely to both contract and die from COVID-19. The Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine developed as guidance by the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine recommends partnering with schools to ensure equitable allocation, distribution, and administration of COVID-19 vaccine.<sup>1</sup> When supported by public health dollars, schools are uniquely situated and qualified to increase equitable distribution of the vaccine to communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and who are prioritized for vaccine distribution in Phase 1B Tier 1. This includes individuals 65 and older, and education and child care, emergency services and food and agriculture workers – many of these individuals are either employed by school districts or are the parents, guardians, and caregivers of children in schools.

We must strengthen the current vaccine delivery system to ensure equitable access to all who are recommended for vaccination. We urge you to adopt and implement this recommendation and provide schools with public health dollars as soon as possible in order to increase equity in California's vaccine distribution plan for the following reasons:

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<sup>1</sup> "Administering and Implementing an Effective and Equitable National COVID-19 Vaccination Program." National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2020. *Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. doi: 10.17226/25917

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### ***Remove Barriers to Access by Bringing the Vaccine to Familiar and Trusted Community Spaces.***

Removing cost sharing for the vaccine and its administration does not eliminate all barriers for people who have been prioritized for vaccine access. For examples, individuals may be faced with other barriers related to time, child care, and transportation. Therefore, making the vaccine easy to access by offering vaccination clinics at schools, child care settings and centers, churches, workplaces, and other locations in the community that are familiar and trusted can mitigate these inequities.

Further, access to health care services is a real barrier for many people in low-income communities. More than 80% of the families served by Los Angeles Unified live in poverty and 83% are Black and Latino residents, which have been the demographics most impacted by the virus. It is critical that the vaccine be made available to these families. In a typical community served by LAUSD, there are about three drug stores, two fire stations and 25 schools. No organization has the infrastructure to provide easier access to vaccinations than schools

### ***Schools Are Trusted Community Partners.***

Los Angeles Unified schools are conveniently located in the middle of neighborhoods where people live, which will help make vaccines accessible to people in all communities, in particular those who may lack access to health care services and reliable transportation. Families trust schools to keep their children safe and that trust extends to all aspects of a child's life. Providing the vaccination at a trusted location will increase the chances of a successful and more speedy vaccination effort.

Since this crisis began, Los Angeles Unified has proven its ability to meet the needs of the community on a dramatic scale. The 63 food distribution centers at schools have provided our families and community members over 96 million meals along with 18 million items of much-needed supplies. They have distributed computers and internet access to 500,000 students, and operate 42 COVID testing centers at schools that have administered more than 350,000 tests to staff members, students and their families – the largest school-based program in the nation.

### ***Schools Keep Visitors, Staff, and Families Safe.***

Schools have the space needed to allow individuals to wait safely after their vaccine dose to make sure they aren't having an adverse reaction. Schools have all the necessary infrastructure already in place – security, electricity, restrooms and both covered and open areas – to support the vaccination process.

Los Angeles Unified has school-based health clinics in high-needs areas which are already licensed to provide vaccinations. These sites can immediately provide COVID-19 vaccinations while more locations at additional schools become qualified under state guidelines.

### ***Schools Have the Necessary Infrastructure.***

Los Angeles Unified has the staffing, both clinical and logistical, to begin administering vaccinations now. The District employs more than 450 registered nurses and 120 licensed vocational nurses, all of whom can administer the vaccine and can attend to those who may have an adverse reaction to the

vaccine. Moreover, these nurses have experience working with and caring for members of our neighborhood school and community.

Los Angeles Unified has a technology and data system which can register individuals, schedule vaccination appointments and share the data with appropriate authorities. Microsoft is connecting the District's existing COVID-19 technology capabilities with the vaccine platform Microsoft has deployed in other cities and states across the country. This platform includes registration and scheduling, reporting on complications/adverse effects, tracking of vaccines in stock, contactless appointment check-in and data capture at time of appointment, rules to sort high-risk individuals and offer waitlists to low-risk individuals and dashboards to view data, among other features.

***Other Communities Have Made Schools a Priority.***

New York has begun providing vaccinations to those who work in schools and Kansas City has committed to provide vaccinations to all school district staff in February. Locally, vaccinations are available in Riverside for all who work in education; in Ventura, teachers will start receiving vaccinations next week; and Long Beach will begin providing vaccinations to school employees later this month.

Finally, the importance of re-opening schools, especially for elementary-aged children, cannot be overstated. Reestablishing a sense of normalcy for students and their families through in-person education will help to achieve long-term health benefits for children and will facilitate important social development for them as well. We hope that state and local agencies will expedite the review process for applications coming from Los Angeles Unified and other school districts serving children and families disproportionately impacted by the pandemic to engage in vaccine distribution.

We need your voice and leadership to get these vaccines distributed effectively, efficiently, and through trusted school sites. If you have questions, please contact Gabriella Barbosa, Policy Director, at [gbarbosa@childrenspartnership.org](mailto:gbarbosa@childrenspartnership.org).

Sincerely,



Mayra E. Alvarez, MHA  
President