

# CLOSING THE EQUITY GAP

IN SCHOOL STAFFING

HOW LA UNIFIED CAN ADDRESS TEACHER SHORTAGES  
FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR AND HIGH-NEED SCHOOLS



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Two years into the pandemic, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LA Unified), like many large school systems, is grappling with tremendous challenges: ongoing COVID spikes, deeply impacted students, declining enrollment, exhausted educators and ongoing uncertainty about what comes next. LA Unified has received an unprecedented infusion of state and federal funding intended to help it respond to these challenges



I'VE NOTICED THAT WHEN THERE'S SO MANY SUBS, MY CLASSMATES DON'T WANT TO DO AS MUCH WORK SINCE THEY DON'T HAVE THE SAME ENERGY. OUR REGULAR TEACHERS ARE OVERWORKED, HAVING TO COVER OTHER CLASSES IN THEIR FREE PERIODS.

— LA Unified student



WE WERE SUPPOSED TO GET AN ATTENDANCE COUNSELOR AND A PSYCHIATRIC SOCIAL WORKER. WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO FILL THESE POSITIONS BECAUSE PEOPLE HAVE NOT APPLIED FOR THEM. EVERYONE IS STRETCHED REALLY THIN.

— LA Unified school leader

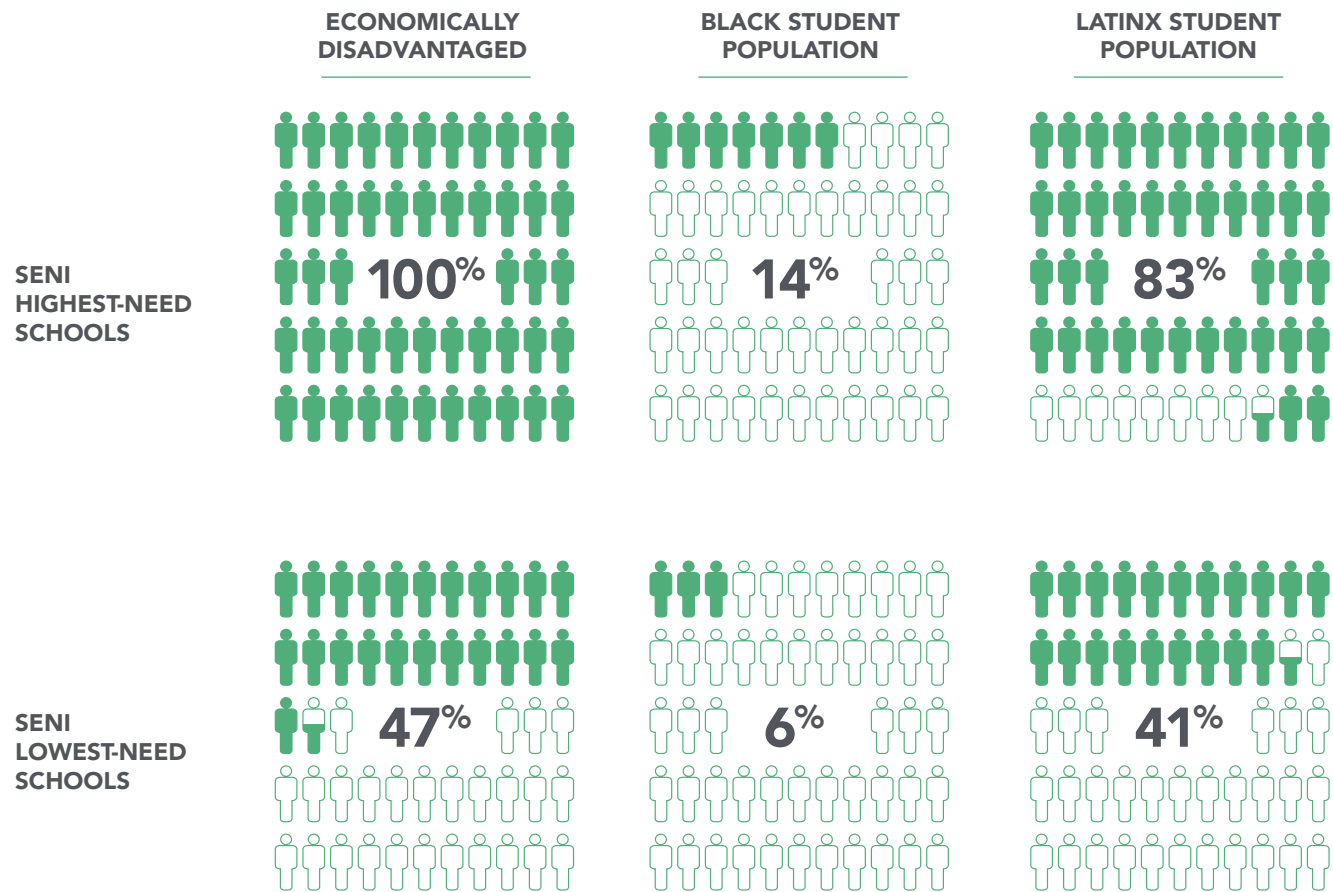
-- more than \$6 billion, with additional allocations likely again this year. But with teacher shortages across the state,<sup>1</sup> staffing vacancies have skyrocketed, particularly in schools where the need is greatest. Three months into the 2021-22 school year, LA Unified had more than 10,000 unfilled vacancies (6,700 certificated and 4,197 classified), with the average school experiencing 12 vacancies.<sup>2</sup> This means that in the midst of one of the most challenging school years in recent memory, students are not benefiting from the extra supports the new funds were designed to bring. In addition, an unprecedented portion of students are being taught by substitutes or other school staff filling in.

The vast majority of schools in LA Unified have vacant positions, but the vacancies aren't distributed equally. Instead, vacancies are unacceptably concentrated in schools that serve a larger number of students who were already suffering from long-standing disinvestment in the educational system. LA Unified's highest-need schools have twice as many teacher vacancies as the District's lowest-need schools.<sup>3</sup> Two-thirds of the schools with the highest vacancy rates are schools identified for the District's Black Student Achievement Plan, which means that schools serving the largest proportion of Black students are disproportionately impacted.<sup>4</sup>

### ABOUT SENI

The **Student Equity Needs Index (SENI)** is an equity-based student need index adopted by LA Unified in 2018 to inform the allocation of resources by ranking schools according to their level of need. SENI identifies and uplifts schools with a high concentration of Black, Brown, and Indigenous students as well as communities grappling with poverty. The index leverages multiple variables (including student, school-based and community indicators) to divide schools into even quintiles of highest, high, moderate, low, and lowest need schools. When we refer to highest-need schools in this brief, we are referring to the highest-need quintile of schools in the District, as measured by SENI.

FIGURE 1: LA UNIFIED DEMOGRAPHICS IN HIGHEST- AND LOWEST-NEED SCHOOLS



Unfortunately, the current challenges are part of a long-standing pattern of inequitable staffing outcomes for highest-need schools. While many schools face challenges with hiring, supporting and retaining great staff, the most difficult challenges are concentrated in highest-need schools where the impact of poverty, historic underinvestment and systemic racism are deepest. For instance, in 2010, in the wake of the financial crisis, teacher layoffs were concentrated in the highest-need schools.<sup>5</sup> In the years that followed, teacher turnover was concentrated in these same schools. And as principals of highest-need schools worked to hire and rebuild stable teaching teams, they experienced the least choice when it came to selecting candidates.<sup>6</sup> The result is that even in normal years, Black and Latinx students are taught by less experienced teachers and are subject to more teacher

turnover.<sup>7</sup> This dynamic has huge consequences, because one of the best predictors of student achievement is the preparedness of teachers.<sup>8</sup>

The historical pattern is clear: without proactive policies to level the playing field for highest-need schools, the distribution of teachers and other critical staff members is deeply unjust. In order for LA Unified to break this pattern and transform staffing to support students at highest-need schools, the District must fundamentally reconsider how it staffs its schools. Instead of creating a system in which all schools compete for talent, it must make a clear moral commitment to prioritize Black and Latinx students in our city's highest-need schools. This policy brief outlines concrete steps in five key areas to illustrate what this could look like in practice.

### FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EQUITABLE STAFFING:



**LIMIT HIRING  
AT LOW-NEED  
SCHOOLS UNTIL  
HIGHEST-NEED  
SCHOOLS ARE  
STAFFED**



**DOUBLE THE  
STAFFING  
SUPPORTS  
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HIRING AT THE  
HIGHEST-NEED  
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**GIVE "RED  
CARPET"  
TREATMENT TO  
TEACHERS GOING  
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**FOCUS  
INVESTMENTS  
IN THE PIPELINE  
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**TRANSFORM  
WORKING  
CONDITIONS FOR  
STAFF AT HIGHEST-  
NEED SCHOOLS**

Our recommendations identify both immediate and multi-year actions the District can take. We have specifically identified steps that build on work underway and can be immediately implemented within this year's hiring cycle, as well as more fundamental changes to make teaching at highest-need schools more attractive, sustainable and effective in the long-run. These actions are relevant to the current vacancy challenges the District is facing, but also the broader staffing challenges highest-need schools have faced for decades. As such, it is critical that LA Unified respond with both urgency and sustained focus.

The troubling staffing pattern we describe here is not unique to LA Unified. Indeed, this pattern is depressingly pervasive. However, this is also a moment of hope and opportunity. LA Unified has made many efforts to recognize systemic racial and socioeconomic inequities, and begun to take action to address them, allocating

**SCHOLARS ARE MISSING OUT ON CRUCIAL INSTRUCTION. IF THERE IS A SUB, THE SUB JUST SERVES AS A BABYSITTER. NO REAL INSTRUCTION IS HAPPENING.**

— LA Unified parent

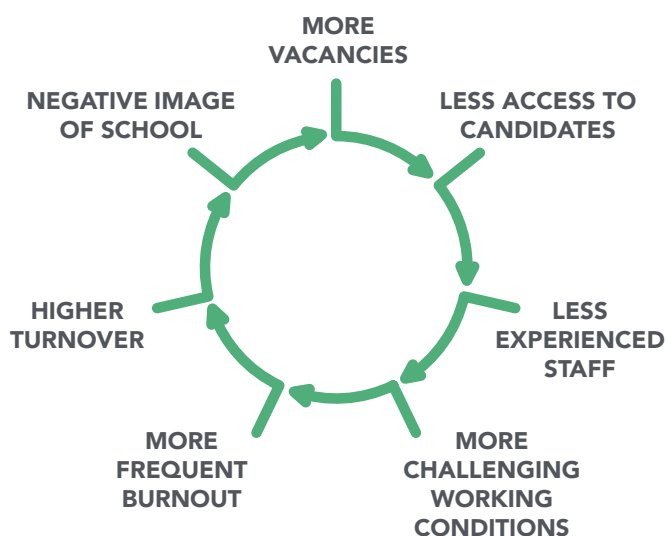
hundreds of millions of dollars through a student need index ("SENI"), launching the Black Student Achievement Plan, and leading the way on addressing inequities with policing in schools. We believe that LA Unified can also be a national leader in breaking this pattern of inequitable staffing outcomes, giving our most vulnerable students a fair chance to succeed.

# WHY HIGHEST-NEED SCHOOLS STRUGGLE WITH TEACHER STAFFING

LA Unified is currently grappling with a major vacancy crisis, and the underlying challenges are not new.

All of the District's roughly 650 traditional neighborhood schools, however different their circumstances, must compete each year under the same general hiring system. Schools in more affluent neighborhoods, with working conditions perceived as more supportive, tend to fill their vacancies very quickly, whereas historically under-resourced schools serving the District's Black and Latinx students struggle to compete.

**FIGURE 2: INTERCONNECTED STAFFING CHALLENGES**

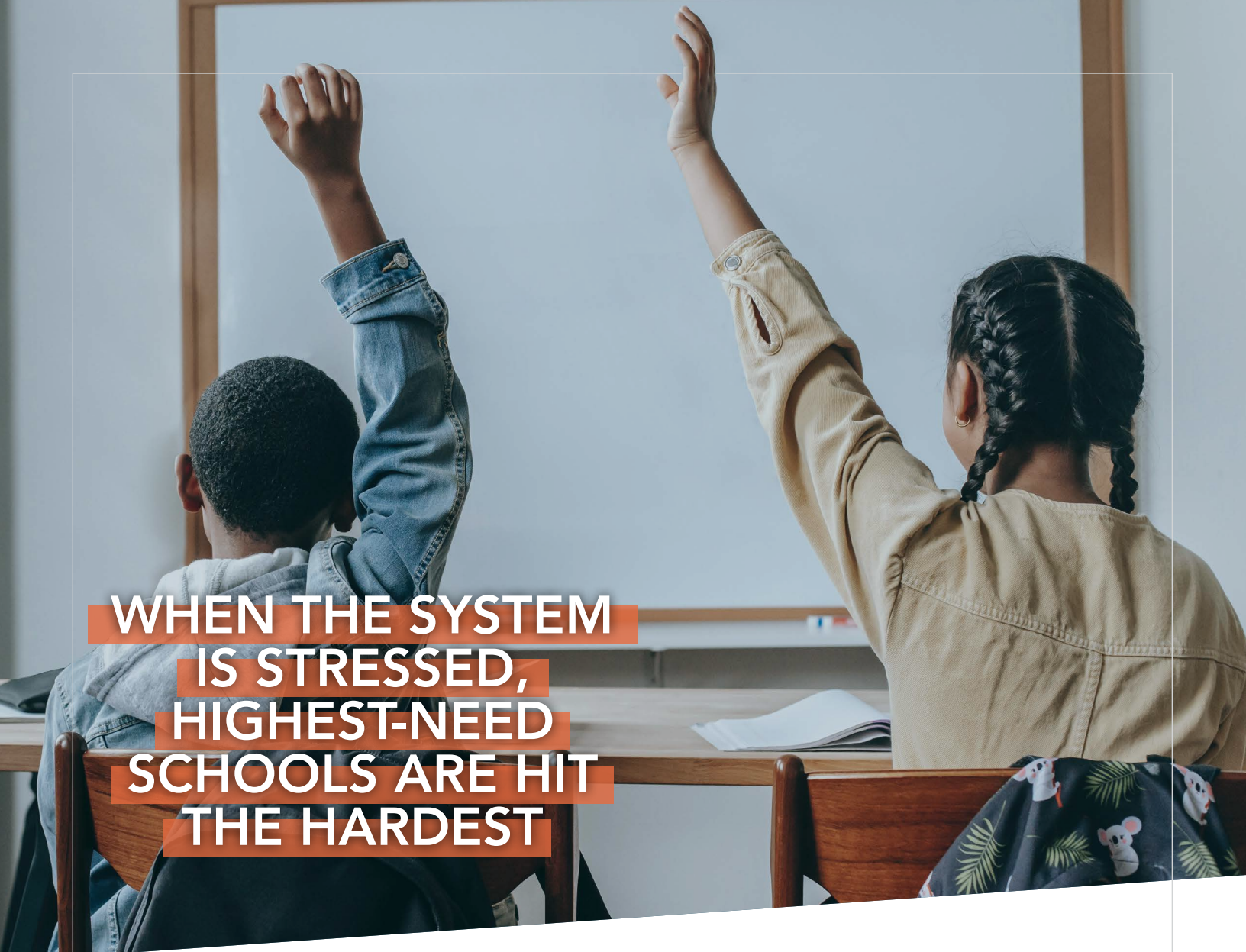


“EVERY YEAR WE EXPERIENCE HIGH TURNOVER. ONE YEAR WE HIRED EIGHT NEW TEACHERS. ONCE TEACHERS GET TO KNOW OUR STUDENTS AND OUR COMMUNITY, THEY REALIZE THAT THIS IS A GOOD SCHOOL THAT OFFERS LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION AND TRAINING. HOWEVER, IT IS VERY HARD TO FIND GOOD CANDIDATES. TYPICALLY, THE HIGHEST-NEED SCHOOLS GET THE NEWEST TEACHERS.”

— LA Unified school leader

As a result, although the hiring rules are equal, hiring outcomes are not. Highest-need schools have the least choice when filling a vacancy, and often have had no choice at all.<sup>9</sup> The outcome is that historically under-resourced schools are much less likely to hire and retain teachers who are a good fit for the school. This has a huge impact on the stability and quality of teaching, which is why highest-need schools experience the greatest turnover and have the least experienced staff, on average. These systemic factors are all interconnected and mutually reinforcing, making it difficult for highest-need schools to improve staffing outcomes.<sup>10</sup>

Decades of research confirm the impact that individual teachers have on students. Teacher preparedness (such as holding a credential in their content area rather than an emergency permit) and prior teaching experience have positive impacts on student achievement.<sup>11</sup> When teacher staffing practices result in a distribution of educators that disadvantage Black youth, Latinx youth, and children whose families are more likely to be facing poverty, the system perpetuates race and class inequities for the long term. These are core reasons why the teacher vacancies and staffing inequities of today should raise alarm bells for District and policy officials more broadly.

A photograph of two students in a classroom, seen from behind, sitting at a wooden desk and raising their hands. The student on the left is a young man with short dark hair wearing a blue denim jacket. The student on the right is a young woman with dark hair in two braids, wearing a tan long-sleeved shirt. The background is a plain light-colored wall.

## WHEN THE SYSTEM IS STRESSED, HIGHEST-NEED SCHOOLS ARE HIT THE HARDEST

Highest-need schools face staffing challenges in good years and bad, but the worst outcomes surface when the system is stressed by a financial crisis, teacher shortage or other disruption. Looking back over the past dozen years, we see a pattern of highest-need schools suffering the greatest impact from these types of crisis. Two examples illustrate this:

**2008-2010 – Layoffs hit highest-need schools hardest:** In the wake of the 2007-2008 financial crisis, seniority-based teacher layoffs were highly concentrated in the highest-need schools.<sup>12</sup> On a district-wide basis, LAUSD sent layoff notices to 18% of its teachers. However, at three high-need middle schools in LAUSD (which are frequently staffed with early-career teachers), between half to two-thirds of teachers received layoff notices.<sup>13</sup> When the 2009-2010 school year started, these schools were unable to fill many vacancies and did not finally find permanent teachers for some positions until December 2009, forcing these schools, and many similarly situated schools, to rely on a series of short-term substitutes to teach certain classes. In contrast, many lower-need schools within

LAUSD did not lose any teachers. The layoffs also led to major increases in teacher misassignment (when teachers are assigned to courses in which they do not have the requisite certification or training), which was also concentrated in the highest-need schools in the District.<sup>14</sup>

**2015-2017 - Must-place teacher assignments:** In 2016, amid concerns about District financial sustainability, high- and highest-need schools were assigned teachers who were unable to find a position anywhere else (must-place assignments), at six times the rate of low-need schools.<sup>15</sup> Teachers assigned in this way are less likely to be successful and stable at a school than candidates hired through the mutual consent of both the teacher and the school. In 2019, LA Unified committed to end must-place assignments and in the years since must-place assignments have become extremely rare. However, we know that must-place assignments were a symptom of a deeper challenge still facing the District's students: higher-need schools are systematically disadvantaged in the competition for teaching talent.

## THE CURRENT VACANCY CRISIS

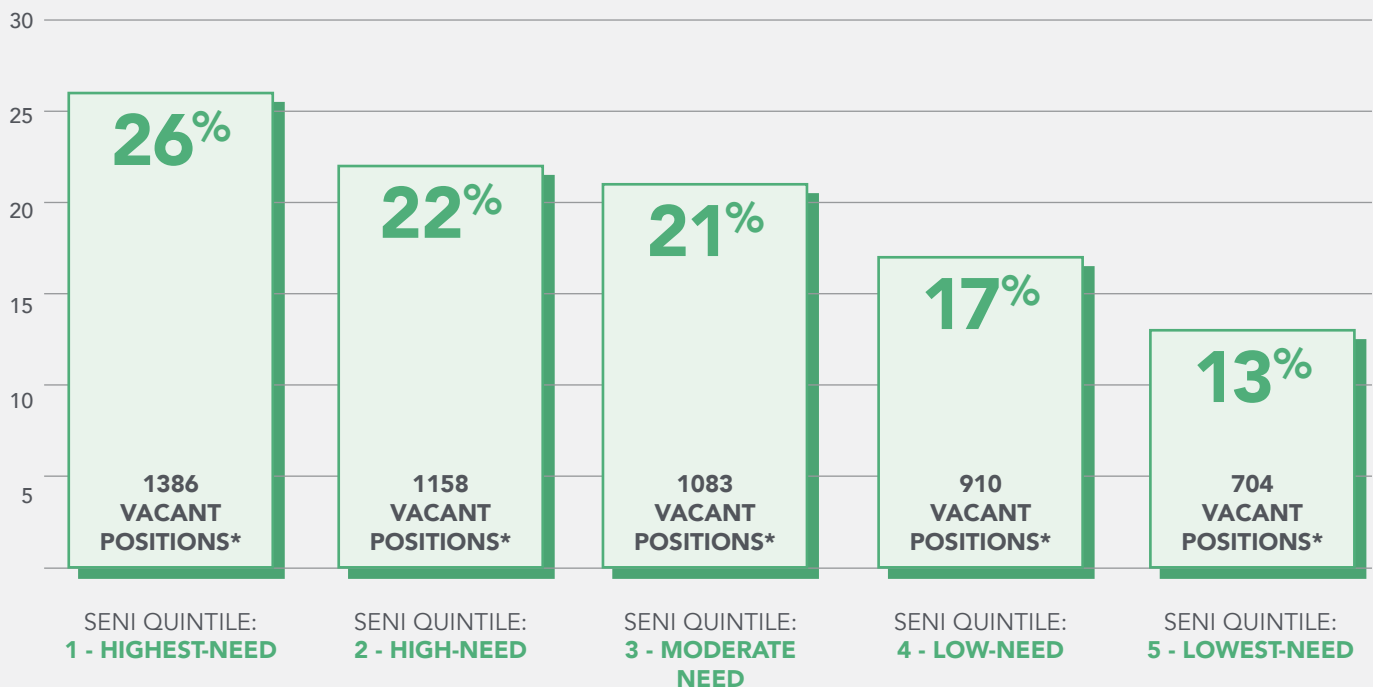
In the midst of the pandemic, LA Unified staffing is again in crisis. The District received and allocated more than \$6 billion in state and federal funds. With these funds, the District is implementing its “Path to Recovery” program and has created more than 7,000 new positions to address serious student needs, including psychiatric social workers, counselors, intervention teachers, and classroom teachers who would help reduce class sizes.

Unfortunately, nearly half of these positions remained vacant three months into the school year, as Figure 3 details. Furthermore, since many of the Path to Recovery positions have been filled by existing LA Unified staff, this has contributed to a more general vacancy issue across the District (16% of total positions).<sup>16</sup> This means that many schools lost some of their most experienced staff and then struggled to fill the resulting vacancies.

FIGURE 3: LA UNIFIED STAFF POSITIONS & VACANCIES - NOVEMBER 2021<sup>17</sup>

JOB TYPE	ALL FUNDING SOURCES		PATH TO RECOVERY	
	BUDGETED POSITIONS	VACANT POSITIONS	BUDGETED POSITIONS	VACANT POSITIONS
Certificated	41,424	6,700 (16%)	4,854	1,919 (40%)
Classified	27,381	4,197 (15%)	2,479	1,572 (63%)
Grand Total	68,805	10,897 (16%)	7,333	3,491 (48%)

FIGURE 4: LA UNIFIED CERTIFICATED\* STAFF VACANCIES BY STUDENT EQUITY NEEDS INDEX (SENI) - NOVEMBER 2021<sup>18</sup>



\* Certificated employees are typically required to have a credential from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Certificated positions include teachers, counselors, librarians, psychologists, instructional coaches, principals and assistant principals and other related positions.

Unfilled positions have created challenges District-wide, but the challenge has been felt most acutely in highest-need schools. Using LA Unified’s Student Equity Needs Index, which identifies schools into five even categories of need from lowest to highest, and focusing on certificated

positions (which include teachers, counselors, nurses and social workers), we see that Los Angeles’ highest-need schools account for twice as many certificated vacancies as lowest-need schools (Figure 4). Vacancies are particularly concentrated in schools that serve a large

number of Black students. Out of the 15 schools with the highest proportion of teacher vacancies, 2/3 are schools identified for the Black Student Achievement Plan.

To understand what this means at the school level, consider the examples of four schools (1 highest-need and 1 lowest-need elementary school, and 1 highest-need and 1 lowest-need secondary school):

FIGURE 5: EXAMPLES OF VACANCIES AT TWO LAUSD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS







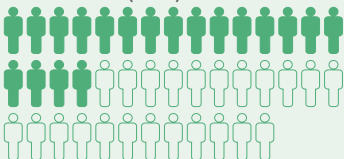

	42ND ST ELEMENTARY (BOARD DISTRICT 1)	LANE ELEMENTARY (BOARD DISTRICT 2)
Vacant Classroom Teacher Positions	3 out of 11 (27%) 	1 out of 15 (7%) 
Total Vacancies	20 out of 36 (56%) 	8 out of 27 (30%) 
SENI Quintile	Highest-need	Lowest-need
Economically Disadvantaged	100%	100%
Black Student Population	56%	0%
Latinx Student Population	35%	95%
English Learner Population	16%	15%
Students with Disability	20%	12%

FIGURE 6: EXAMPLES OF VACANCIES AT TWO LAUSD SECONDARY SCHOOLS

	DIEGO RIVERA LEARNING COMPLEX - COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY (BOARD DISTRICT 7)	CLEVELAND HIGH (BOARD DISTRICT 3)
Vacant Classroom Teacher Positions	8 out of 21 (38%) 	10 out of 109 (9%) 
Total Vacancies	19 out of 42 (45%) 	20 out of 169 (12%) 
SENI Quintile	Highest-need	Lowest-need
Economically Disadvantaged	100%	48%
Black Student Population	5%	3%
Latinx Student Population	92%	61%
English Learner Population	28%	11%
Students with Disability	14%	10%



# ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE CRISIS

LA Unified deserves credit for recognizing this crisis and taking steps to protect high-need schools. In October 2021, LA Unified issued a certificated staffing stabilization plan<sup>19</sup>, which detailed the following actions:

- Implement a freeze on filling positions that would create classroom vacancies;
- Offer hiring stipends for newly-hired credentialed teachers who commit to working at high-needs schools for three years;
- Assemble a team focused on targeted recruitment and hiring for historically underserved schools, including Humanizing Education for Equitable Transformation (HEET) schools, the Black Student Achievement Plan (BSAP) and Student Equity Needs Index (SENI) high- and highest-need schools, with particular focus in Local District South and Local District West;
- Streamline the interview and onboarding process to expedite hiring;
- Engage in regular communication and collaboration with Local District administrators on strategy on staffing decisions; and
- Centralize student teacher assignment data to provide strategic support to facilitate student teacher growth, development, and recruitment.

Significant progress has been made in implementing these actions over the past four months. Unfortunately, the late October timing of the start to these measures was too late to meaningfully address the majority of vacancies in the 2021-22 school year, as once the school year begins it is more challenging than ever to recruit staff to highest-need schools. In order to avoid the same outcomes in the 2022-23 school year and

beyond, the actions listed above must be sustained and strengthened, and also augmented with robust strategies to address the underlying causes of staffing inequities, including working conditions in highest-need schools, a shrinking teacher candidate population, and racism that impacts our students as well as our educators. Our recommendations acknowledge and build on the District's current steps and call for more urgent, sustained, and detailed actions centered on equity and racial justice.

## FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EQUITABLE STAFFING:

Unfettered competition for human capital in an unequal playing field does not serve students in highest-need schools. We need to design a system that proactively counteracts the unfair advantages that low-need schools have and invest where the need is greatest. In the spirit of partnership, we offer recommendations in five essential areas for equitable staffing:

1. Limit hiring at low-need schools until highest-need schools are staffed
2. Double the support provided to highest-need schools for staffing
3. Give "red carpet" treatment to teachers going to highest-need schools
4. Focus investments in the pipeline on educators of color and highest-need schools
5. Transform working conditions for staff at highest-need schools



## 1 LIMIT HIRING AT LOW-NEED SCHOOLS UNTIL HIGHEST-NEED SCHOOLS ARE STAFFED

For the spring 2022 hiring season, LA Unified should strategically limit hiring at low-need schools until staffing needs at highest-need schools have been addressed. Immediate action steps the District could take include:

- Freeze the creation of “above-norm”<sup>20</sup> positions in low-need schools until all “normed” positions are filled at highest-need schools.
- Close out-of-classroom positions at low-need schools that are still vacant, such as primary promise coaches, Restorative justice teachers, or intervention teachers.
- Limit hiring for positions where there is a clear general shortage (such as psychiatric social workers,

pupil services counselors, and nurses) to highest-need schools until the shortage subsides.

- Halt processing of “intent to hire” paperwork for candidates in lowest-need schools until May 15, 2022, to give priority to the processing on candidates at highest-need schools
- Limit mid-year hiring so that hiring for one position doesn’t create a new classroom vacancy in the middle of the year, which is the most difficult time to find qualified teacher candidates.
- Assess likely staffing shortages each year and embed equitable staffing into yearly hiring approaches.



## 2 DOUBLE THE SUPPORT PROVIDED TO HIGHEST-NEED SCHOOLS FOR STAFFING

Because of the challenges highest-need schools face, they need and deserve significantly more support from District Human Resources (HR) staff than low-need schools. Instead of treating all schools equally across the system, the District should invest in dramatically increasing the support available to highest-need schools. Actions could include:

- Increase the size of the HR team, with a particular focus on positions that directly serve highest-need schools.
- Align HR staff time and ratios of schools per staff member to provide support at twice the level available to low-need schools.
- Commit long term to the HR Partner model that is currently being piloted for equitable staffing support for high- and highest-need schools in Local Districts South and West.

- Establish standards of support for highest-need schools that include accelerated response times, customer service-oriented approaches and hands-on support (e.g. hiring fairs, interview days, candidate follow-ups).
- Facilitate opportunities for principals of highest-need schools to recruit and hire strong, experienced teachers from lower-need schools who are open to transferring, such as by hosting internal transfer hiring fairs and incentivizing the teachers who transfer.
- Hire staff to support principals to develop the skills of human capital leaders, including how to retain strong teachers, foster mentoring relationships between teachers, engage the whole school community in recruitment, and use data to make strategic staffing decisions.



### 3 GIVE “RED CARPET” TREATMENT TO TEACHERS GOING TO HIGHEST-NEED SCHOOLS

Teachers should be encouraged to choose a highest-need school for their LA Unified teaching career at every step in their process. For example, the District can:

- Utilize an eye-catching advertising campaign to maximize the visibility of positions at highest-need schools and spotlight the abundant assets of students, families and communities.
- Provide and advertise financial incentives to encourage teachers to choose highest-need schools, such as more significant stipends to National Board Certified teachers, and continuing recruitment and retention stipends for all credentialed teachers.
- Expedite the entire candidate clearance (eligibility) process and onboarding steps so candidates at highest-need schools can be fully processed in two weeks. Clearly communicate all steps up front and provide flawless customer service with just one point-of-contact throughout.
- Proactively provide candidates their likely salary when they interview with the District, which will increase the competitiveness of school job offers.
- Provide candidates at highest-need schools with above-and-beyond onboarding supports, such as two full weeks of extra pay before the first day of school to plan, set up the classroom, and establish relationships with mentor teachers, school staff and students’ families.



TEACHERS SHOULD HAVE INCREASED PAY AND SMALLER CLASS SIZES. BEYOND THIS, TEACHERS, ESPECIALLY AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL, NEED DEDICATED PAID TIME TO PLAN, ASSESS, AND REFLECT ON TEACHING WITH COLLEAGUES. TOO MANY OF MY COLLEAGUES, ESPECIALLY EARLY CAREER TEACHERS, ARE LOOKING AT LEAVING THE PROFESSION BECAUSE THEY ARE OVERWHELMED AND UNDER-SUPPORTED.

— LA Unified teacher

### 4 FOCUS INVESTMENTS IN THE PIPELINE ON EDUCATORS OF COLOR AND HIGHEST-NEED SCHOOLS

Research has demonstrated that educators of color have a significantly positive impact on the in-school outcomes, and lifetime outcomes, for children of color.<sup>21</sup> Building an even stronger pipeline of educators of color who are committed to serving in highest-need schools is a direct mechanism for improving our students’ experiences as well as staffing outcomes. LA Unified should use the new state resources to dramatically increase investments in the pipeline that will pay dividends for years to come.<sup>22</sup> The LAUSD Board’s recent “Black Student Excellence through Educator Diversity, Preparation and Retention” resolution is an important step. Further actions could include:

- Do everything possible to make teaching in Los Angeles a financial possibility for candidates of color who are ready to commit to teaching in highest-need schools; this might include student loan reduction, housing vouchers, childcare vouchers, and gas cards.
- Guide and support local universities to develop partnerships with highest-need schools for placements of residents and student teachers.
- Fully fund residency programs dedicated to supporting educators of color to teach at highest-need schools, such that the participating residents have no tuition loans nor part-time jobs while earning their credential.
- Increase investments in “grow-your-own” programs, so that teaching assistants, substitutes, and school volunteers can get on the pathway to teaching if they so desire; this can include supporting staff and community members without a Bachelor’s degree to earn one, and those with a degree to earn a credential.
- Build partnerships with Black- and Latinx membership organizations.
- Evaluate how well current teacher pipeline programs are doing at preparing candidates of color; maximize the investment of effort and expense on those doing this well, and identify new teacher preparation partners who may be doing even better.



## 5 TRANSFORM WORKING CONDITIONS FOR STAFF AT HIGHEST-NEED SCHOOLS

Improved working conditions can have a direct impact on staff retention and recruitment of new staff. Working at a highest-need school should feel exceptional because of the superior support and working conditions provided to staff. For example, the District could:

- Reduce class sizes and course loads (for example, cap the number of different courses secondary teachers have to teach).
- Pay teachers for additional time as a consistent practice (such as providing two weeks of paid planning, collaboration and professional development time before the start of fall instruction, paid days in June for end of year data reflection and goal-setting, and paid time for coaching cycles beyond the school day).
- Acknowledge and recognize the impact of the pandemic by addressing key stressors that contribute to teacher attrition and invest in innovations (for example, fund mental health days).
- Differentiate pay for teachers at highest-need schools, such as raising all teacher salaries by \$10,000 per year.
- Change bell schedules and school calendars to create more planning time and pupil-free days.
- Provide full-time coaches to support teachers.
- Build the capacity of principals and schools leadership teams to support teachers (for example reducing workload, improving quality of professional learning opportunities, district support).
- Support “staff culture teams” to develop plans for teacher wellness supports with a flexible budget that could be spent on a menu of options (e.g. staff celebrations, wellness resources, improved teacher lounges, secondary trauma training & support).



TEACHERS ARE OVERWORKED. IF THE MONEY EXISTS WHY NOT OFFER MORE PAY?

— LA Unified parent and community representative

### METRICS TO MONITOR

Strong implementation of these actions will require ongoing progress monitoring at key points in the annual hiring cycle so LA Unified can know whether it is succeeding and where shifts in practice are needed. Below we suggest key metrics to monitor. Each should be disaggregated by SENI within each local district.

METRIC	TIMING FOR REVIEW
Applications	Monthly (March - June)
Intents to hire	Monthly (March - August)
Vacancies	Monthly (June - September)
Hiring process time (from Intent to Hire submitted until final contract signed)	Monthly (April - August)
Credential status	Annually (October)
Years of teaching experience	Annually (October)
Diversity	Annually (October)
Retention	Annually (October)



## CALL TO ACTION

Taking urgent and sustained action to address staffing inequity is critical to ensuring Black and Latinx students in highest-need schools get the quality instruction they deserve. We must address the vacancy crisis impacting students in highest-need schools today. But even as vacancies decrease over time, we must have a sustained focus on equitable staffing to address the underlying causes. Transforming staffing outcomes for our highest-need schools will require coordinated actions from multiple LA Unified leaders and stakeholders over the coming years.

### OUR CALL TO ACTION FOR KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

#### **For LA Unified Superintendent Carvalho:**

- Embrace equitable staffing as a top priority
- Lead a multi-year initiative to transform staffing

#### **For LA Unified Board members:**

- Adopt policy to guide equitable staffing work
- Support Superintendent's multi-year initiative
- Monitor progress on key equity metrics

#### **For LA Unified Human Resources:**

- Lead implementation of equitable staffing supports both within HR processes and across District functions

#### **For Local District staff and leadership:**

- Work in concert with Human Resources to provide differentiated support to highest-need schools

#### **For Labor partners:**

- Negotiate for differentiated investments and supports for highest-need schools, particularly to support improved working conditions and the pipeline to highest-need schools

#### **For Community partners:**

- Advocate for strong implementation of equitable staffing policies

LA Unified can be a national leader in showing how intentional policy and practice can break the pattern of inequitable staffing outcomes. Just as LA Unified has taken critical steps forward to ensure that funding is allocated more equitably, the District can demonstrate how equitable policies can apply to one of the biggest contributors to student success: the people who serve students in classrooms every day. We welcome the opportunity to partner together on this critical issue.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Gecker, J, "Money isn't the problem. COVID-19 creates a dire U.S. shortage of teachers and school staff," Los Angeles Times, September 22, 2021. <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2021-09-22/covid-19-creates-shortage-of-teachers-school-staff>
- 2 LA Unified Human Resources communication to Board, November 2021.
- 3 See figure 1 for definition of "highest-need" and LA Unified's Student Equity Needs Index (SENI).
- 4 The [Black Student Achievement Plan \(BSAP\)](#) is an important LA Unified initiative to address long-standing disinvestment in Black students. BSAP schools are identified based on the number of Black students they serve along with indicators of Black student outcomes.
- 5 Blume, H. "L.A. Unified settles lawsuit over layoffs," Los Angeles Times, April 8, 2014. <https://www.latimes.com/local/la-xpm-2014-apr-08-la-me-lausd-teachers-lawsuit-20140409-story.html>
- 6 "Beneath the Surface," Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, 2019. <https://partnershipla.org/resources/policy-briefs/beneath-the-surface-ensuring-la-schools-have-equitable-access-to-educators/>
- 7 Other examples of inequitable staffing outcomes:
  - National Board teachers are assigned to schools with lower shares of racial minorities and greater shares of high achieving students. <http://laschoolboard.org/sites/default/files/LAUInformative-NBCTeachers20171106.pdf>
  - Teachers receiving a Below Standard Evaluation (BSE) are concentrated at highest-need schools at nearly twice the rate (1.7x) as they are at lowest-need schools. LAUSD Human Resources Evaluation Data, 2019-20.
  - California students of color and socioeconomically disadvantaged students are more likely to be taught by inexperienced teachers, unqualified teachers and out-of-field teachers, as defined by the California Department of Education. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/nclb/sr/tq/documents/caeeplanrevised.pdf>
  - Districts with higher teacher turnover also have greater proportions of students from low-income families. [https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Sharp\\_Divide\\_California\\_Teacher\\_Shortages\\_REPORT.pdf](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Sharp_Divide_California_Teacher_Shortages_REPORT.pdf)
- 8 Podolsky, A., Darling-Hammond, L., Doss, C., & Reardon, S. "California's positive outliers: Districts beating the odds." Learning Policy Institute, 2019.
- 9 Beneath the Surface. <https://partnershipla.org/resources/policy-briefs/beneath-the-surface-ensuring-la-schools-have-equitable-access-to-educators/>
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## ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP FOR LOS ANGELES SCHOOLS

Launched in 2007, the Partnership is a nonprofit organization that serves 13,200 students across 19 K-12 campuses in Watts, Boyle Heights and South Los Angeles, California. The Partnership is a non-profit, in-district partner to the Los Angeles Unified School District (LA Unified), not a charter network. The Partnership is one of the largest, in-district public school transformation organizations in the U.S., and its model combines the rigor and innovation of instructional leadership programs with authentic community partnerships and family engagement to transform district public schools and lead system-wide reforms. As an in-district partner, the Partnership works within the LA Unified context, which includes honoring all collective bargaining agreements for its teachers and school staff. The Partnership's mission is to transform schools to revolutionize school systems, empowering all students with a high-quality education.





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