



Los Angeles Unified School District

## *Beyond the Bell Branch*

*Extended Learning and Enrichment Programs*

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*Superintendent of Schools*

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*Chief of Intensive Support  
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**Alvaro A. Cortés**  
*Executive Director*

January 6, 2014

Honorable Council Member Mitch O'Farrel  
Los Angeles City Council District 13  
Chair of the Arts, Parks, Health, Aging and River Committee  
200 North Spring Street #450  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Adoption of E-Cigarette Ordinance

Dear Council Member O'Farrel and Members of the City Council,

The Los Angeles Unified School Districts Beyond the Bell Program works in partnership with the Los Angeles City Attorney's Tobacco Enforcement Program to reduce youth access and use of tobacco products. We value our partnership with the City in developing a strong future for our students, the children of this city. Three months ago we wrote a letter in support of the E-cigarette amendments to the City's Tobacco Retail Permit and Self-Service Display ordinances.

The statistics are well known. The use of E-cigarettes has mushroomed. Usage of E-cigarettes is up more than doubled from year to year. One in 10 High School students said they had tried an e-cigarette in the last twelve months. The big three tobacco companies are buying the business, and in the absence of any form of regulation, quality control, or licensing, vendors are marketing directly to young people. Claims of safety are being made which are completely unverified. This is a totally unregulated product being sold for consumption to the public in the millions. That alone should cause alarm.

Big tobacco is not investing money for the sake of public health. E-cigarettes are not subject to safe manufacturing standards, nor any health control. Cough drops get more scrutiny. Moreover, the primary effect of E-cigarettes is to introduce nicotine into the systems of users. History can be our guide, and we remember that those big three companies once deliberately increased the nicotine dosage of their product to addict their users. Since that is how they acted before we do not trust their assurances now.

We believe that E-cigarettes model behavior that is dangerous and undermines smoke-free laws. We believe that E-cigarettes promote addiction. We believe that the use of E-cigarettes in public places normalizes the act of smoking. We also believe that the flood of marketing of E-cigarettes aimed at young people is sinister, intending to addict youthful users under the cover of a false declaration of good intentions and specious pronouncements about what is good for the public health.

**Mission Statement:** *In collaboration with community partners, Beyond the Bell ensures that all children and youth in the LAUSD have access to high quality, safe, and supervised education, enrichment, and recreation programs that engage and inspire learning and achievement beyond the regular school day.*

The sale of these products to minors must be banned, and their manufacture, distribution and use should to be closely regulated. That is the bare minimum.

The city of Los Angeles and the State of California have been leaders in combating tobacco use, and fighting addiction in all its forms. This is a new challenge which requires our leadership once again. We support the proposed ordinance to prohibit the use of E-cigarettes in all areas where the smoking of tobacco products is currently prohibited. The proposed ordinance can play an important role in protecting the health of our youth by reducing the potential for re-normalizing smoking where tobacco use is prohibited and protecting our youth from observing behavior that could encourage them to smoke.

Sincerely,



Alvaro Cortés  
Executive Director  
Beyond the Bell Branch

CC: Honorable Eric Garcetti, Mayor  
Honorable Gilbert Cedillo, 1st District Council Member  
Honorable Paul Krekorian, 2nd District Council Member  
Honorable Bob Blumenfield, 3rd District Council Member  
Honorable Tom LaBonge, 4th District Council Member  
Honorable Paul Koretz, 5th District Council Member  
Honorable Nury Martinez, 6th District Council Member  
Honorable Felipe Fuentes, 7th District Council Member  
Honorable Bernard Parks, 8th District Council Member  
Honorable Curren D. Price Jr., 9<sup>th</sup> District Council Member  
Honorable Herb J. Wesson, 10th District Council Member  
Honorable Mike Bonin, 11th District Council Member  
Honorable Mitchell Englander, 12th District Council Member  
Honorable Mitch O'Farrell, 13th District Council Member  
Honorable Jose Huizar, 14th District Council Member  
Honorable Joe Buscaino, 15<sup>th</sup> District Council Member