

**REPORT OF THE  
CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST**

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DATE: February 6, 2020

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections & Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso   
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No: 20-0002-S4  
Assignment No: 20-01-0077

SUBJECT: Resolution (Buscaino – Martinez – Ryu) to Support legislation or administrative action to provide additional funding for a pilot program to provide services to aid Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) students and families experiencing homelessness.

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached Resolution (Buscaino – Martinez – Ryu) to include in the City's 2019-2020 State Legislative Program, SUPPORT for additional funding for a pilot program to provide counseling and coordinated delivery of services to aid students and families experiencing homelessness.

SUMMARY

Resolution (Buscaino – Martinez – Ryu), introduced January 17, 2020, advises that according to First 5 Association, families and young children account for one third of the State of California's homeless population, which also includes people of color, the disabled, and seniors. LAUSD serves 700,000 students and their families, of which approximately 25,000 are students experiencing homelessness. LAUSD schools provide mental health counseling, medical services, free meals, and, in partnership with the City of Los Angeles, housing support through Section 8 vouchers to 500 families experiencing homelessness. Although funding has been made available by the City, County, and State to address the housing and homelessness crisis, the City has not capitalized on the opportunity to provide supportive services for students experiencing homelessness at schools. The difficulties associated with homelessness can compound the disproportionate disadvantages faced by students and compromise their path to success.

The Resolution further advises that in a letter dated January 9, 2020 addressed to Governor Newsom, Daniel Steinberg (Co-Chair of the Governor's Commission on Homelessness & Supportive Housing) and Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, and LAUSD Superintendent Austin Beutner requested funding for and proposed a pilot program with LAUSD which would provide counseling and coordinated delivery of services to aid students and families experiencing homelessness. The requested funding would allow LAUSD to hire counseling staff for homeless students, enhance the collection of information already being undertaken, and would allow that information to be used to coordinate the provision of services through schools with the City and County. Partnering with LAUSD and other agencies to ensure that service providers can maximize opportunities to deliver services will help address homelessness and lead students to improved academic performance.

The Resolution recommends that the City support funding for a pilot program to provide counseling and coordinated delivery of services to aid students and families experiencing homelessness.

BACKGROUND

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is the second largest school district in the nation, serving approximately 700,000 students and their families. According to an official count performed by the

LAUSD in 2019, approximately 17,000 LAUSD students are experiencing homelessness. In a December 24, 2019 opinion piece in the Los Angeles Times, LAUSD Superintendent Andrew Beutner asserted that the actual number of homeless students is likely closer to 25,000 and was lowered by misreporting as result of the negative stigma of homelessness. In comparison, according to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's (LAHSA) annual point in time count in 2019, there are more than 36,000 homeless individuals in the City of Los Angeles.


In order to address the homelessness crisis within the LAUSD, the City partnered with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and LAUSD to create a pilot program which provided Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV), formerly known as Section 8, to 50 families in the Northeast San Fernando Valley for rental subsidies. The program was expanded late in 2019 with a commitment to provide HCV vouchers to 500 homeless families within LAUSD. The City also partnered with LAUSD through the Family Source Centers (FSCs) to create the FamilySource Partnership Program to provide LAUSD Pupil Services and Attendance (PSA) counselors at thirteen of the sixteen FSCs. The program has provided services to over 5,280 students and 2,450 families, providing workshops for subjects including high school attendance, high school graduation requirements, mental health, drug awareness, and school resources. The Arrest Diversion program also connects students who commit minor law violations to Pupil Services and Attendance Counselors instead of being sent to juvenile court and prevention. Approximately 400 youth have been diverted away from the juvenile justice system.

On January 9, 2020, Superintendent Beutner sent a letter addressed to Governor Newsom, Darrel Steinberg, and Supervisor Ridley-Thomas (Co-Chairs of the Governor's Commission on Homelessness & Supportive Housing), requesting the State create a pilot program to provide additional funding to help expand information collection and provide counseling services, through which students experiencing homelessness can be connected to additional services. The LA Times op-ed written by the Superintendent provides an overview of the services already provided by the LAUSD and the potential for expansion of those services. According to Superintendent Beutner, LAUSD provides mental health counseling to approximately 30,000 students and medical services to more than 15,000, and serves more than 115 million free meal to students experiencing poverty. The potential for cooperation through information sharing with local governmental agencies, as well as cooperation with the federal government, are presented as next steps that can be taken to address the homelessness issue.

Support for a pilot program to provide counseling and coordinated delivery of services to aid students and families experiencing homelessness is consistent with past City efforts to provide needed services to the homeless population, partner with other agencies to provide homeless services, and prioritize the welfare of families in Los Angeles

DEPARTMENTS NOTIFIED

None

  
Andy Galan  
Analyst

Attachments: 1. Resolution (Buscaino – Martinez – Ryu)  
2. Letter from Superintendent Beutner

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations, or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state, or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, according to First 5 Association, families and young children account for one third of the State of California's homeless population, which also includes populations such as persons of color, the disabled, and seniors; and

WHEREAS, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) serves 700,000 students and their families, of which approximately 25,000 are students experiencing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, LAUSD schools provide mental health counseling, medical services, free meals, and, in partnership with the City of Los Angeles, provides housing support through Section 8 vouchers to 500 families experiencing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, although funding has been made available by the City, County, and State to address the housing and homelessness crisis, we have not capitalized on the opportunity to provide supportive services for students experiencing homelessness at schools; and

WHEREAS, the difficulties associated with homelessness can compound the disproportionate disadvantages faced by students and compromise their path to success; and

WHEREAS, in a letter dated January 9, 2020 and addressed to Governor Newsom, Darrel Steinberg (Co-Chair of the Governor's Commission on Homelessness & Supportive Housing), and Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, LAUSD Superintendent Austin Beutner requests funding for and proposes a pilot program with LAUSD which would provide counseling and coordinated delivery of services to aid students and families experiencing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the requested funding would allow LAUSD to hire counseling staff for homeless students, enhance the collection of information already being undertaken, and would allow that information to be used to coordinate the provision of services through schools with the City and County; and

WHEREAS, partnering with LAUSD, the second largest school district in the nation, and other agencies to ensure service providers can maximize opportunities to deliver services will help address homelessness and lead students to improved academic performance; and

WHEREAS, youth and families embody the future of the City of Los Angeles, consequently their well-being, whether physical, mental, or economic, should be safeguarded and prioritized;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2019-2020 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for additional funding for a pilot program to provide counseling and coordinated delivery of services to aid students and families experiencing homelessness.

PRESENTED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
JOE BUSCAINO  
Councilman, 15<sup>th</sup> District

\_\_\_\_\_  
NURY MARTINEZ  
Councilwoman, 6<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

333 South Beaudry Avenue, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor

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**AUSTIN BEUTNER**

Superintendent

January 9, 2020

Governor Gavin Newsom  
California State Capitol  
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Darrell Steinberg  
Co-Chair, Governor's Commission on Homelessness & Supportive Housing  
915 I Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Co-Chair, Governor's Commission on Homelessness & Supportive Housing  
500 W. Temple St., Suite 866  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Gentlemen,

The challenge of homelessness in California is one of the defining issues of our time. All of us are grateful for the leadership role you are playing in helping the state develop new solutions to provide help to those in need.

Attached is a recent op-ed which offers a few concrete suggestions on how schools can be part of the solution. Building on those comments, I am writing to suggest the state implement a pilot program with the Los Angeles Unified School District to connect those in need with services.

Los Angeles Unified has information on about 17,000 students (and their families) who are experiencing homelessness. Our schools have a relationship of trust with these families as we help care for their children every day. The state should create a pilot program to provide funding to certain schools in Los Angeles Unified to hire counseling staff with the specific responsibility to connect these students and their families to services. The pilot should also include additional funding to augment the information on the 17,000 students and their families so it is most useful to the counselors.

To date, no funding has been provided to schools to do this work. All of the state and local funding has gone to the counties and cities and their efforts, however well-intentioned, have not been directed at these students and their families who we know are experiencing homelessness.

The challenge of helping those who are experiencing homelessness is not simple and the answer lies, in part, in better connecting all of the various governmental and non-governmental agencies who can play a role. At Los Angeles Unified, we want to be part of the solution and are eager to better serve the needs of these students in our schools who, together with their families, are experiencing homelessness.

We hope you will consider this proposal and let us know what we can do to help follow up.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Austin Beutner".

Austin Beutner  
Los Angeles Unified School District

Attachment