



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 29, 2021

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Parent Advocacy Group Bids Farewell to Outgoing LAUSD Superintendent Austin Beutner

Parents Supporting Teachers (PST), the largest public education advocacy group supporting Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) teachers and families joins the Los Angeles community in saying goodbye and thank you to Austin Beutner on June 30, 2021. Despite initial rocky stewardship, beginning with his controversial hiring with little input from stakeholders, the measure of any person is how much they learn and rebound from their mistakes.

His tenure started with a 2019 teacher strike where he approached negotiations from a strict business-only perspective, ignoring stakeholder pleas for good-faith bargaining. “When he chose to play hardball during the strike, thousands of public school families responded by standing beside educators in the pouring rain, proving that public schools are the heart and soul of our neighborhoods and parents have an equal amount at stake as educators,” said Parents Supporting Teachers co-founder and LAUSD teacher Nicolle Fefferman.

With a change in strategy, Beutner responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with both greater compassion and decisiveness. When schools closed in March 2020, he took swift action to secure technology for remote learning and provided meals for students and community members in need. LAUSD offered summer school and enrichment opportunities and teachers received training to be better prepared in the fall.

The 2020/2021 school year was challenging in many ways, but despite immense political pressure to reopen the schools amid soaring Covid cases, Beutner stood by most district families who voiced concerns about returning to school without vaccinated teachers and staff. Superintendent Beutner received unfair criticism from the handful of vocal families demanding for a swift reopening of schools at all costs. “In a district with over 80% of families living in poverty, Austin Beutner had a moral imperative to follow the lead of the majority of BIPOC parents in the district who wanted to wait to reopen schools until it was safe to do so.” said Parents Supporting Teachers co-founder and LAUSD parent Jenna Schwartz.

“In his three years at the helm, Austin Beutner never really had an opportunity to be a Superintendent in the traditional sense; he mainly served as a crisis manager. And we appreciate the dedicated work he did for many families throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. He also secured an unprecedented amount of funding and began prioritizing an equitable allocation to those most in need. We are hopeful that the

new Superintendent will use this funding towards maintaining the highest level of safety standards expected in school buildings and lowering class sizes permanently,” said Schwartz. “Our group will be working to ensure the new Superintendent is hired through a fair and transparent process that gives voice to the BIPOC community, engages all stakeholders, and honors the value of public education and the neighborhood schools LAUSD represents.”

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About Parents Supporting Teachers: Parents Supporting Teachers is a parent education advocacy group in Los Angeles with over 25,000 followers and is the only organically created group of this size exclusively dedicated to parent communication and education support in the entire LAUSD.