

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
AND SHEILA KUEHL**

**September 27, 2016**

**SUPPORT FOR THE 2016-17 GIRLS BUILD LOS ANGELES INITIATIVE**

In the United States, women remain greatly underrepresented in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields. Nationally, Latinas and African-American women comprise only one percent and three percent, respectively, of all STEM occupations. In Los Angeles County (County), the most populous county in the nation, only 23 percent of professionals in the computer, engineering, and science fields are women. This gender inequity has a particular impact on young women of color, given that they comprise an overwhelming 85 percent of the County’s K-12 female student population. Exposing girls at an early age to STEM content and opportunities to develop critical analysis and project management skills can contribute to closing the gender and ethnic gaps in these fields and boost economic recovery, growth and sustainability overall.

Last year, the LA Fund for Public Education (now the LA Promise Fund for Public Schools) launched “Girls Build LA” (GBLA), a grant-funded empowerment program which encourages middle and high school girls to identify barriers to their success and engages them to work in teams to implement solutions to overcome those barriers.

GBLA’s inaugural event last October was the west coast premiere of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai’s biopic “He Named Me Malala” which was attended by more than 6,000 female students from throughout the County. Additional

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events were held throughout the academic year that provided students with increased access to educational and employment opportunities in partnership with community-based organizations and local businesses.

The GBLA challenge culminated in a showcase of the teams' solutions which ranged from supercharged voter registration to measuring mindfulness for stress reduction to the creation of a Women of Color in STEM starter kit for young people. In all, 44 teams (each consisting of six to eight girls and a faculty advisor) participated, with each team receiving a grant worth up to \$2,000 to design and implement solutions within their respective communities. These 44 teams conducted 138 workshops for their fellow students on topics such as sexual harassment, healthy body image, and careers for women in technology. In total, their projects engaged, activated, or served nearly 20,000 of their peers and community members across the County.

For the 2016-17 academic year, GBLA will expand its outreach and increase the number of teams from 44 to 50. This year's theme will be "Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math (STEAM) Solutions." The second year will launch with a special screening for students of "Hidden Figures," which follows the story of a group of African-American women mathematicians who were instrumental in NASA's first successful space launch. The film stars Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer, Janelle Monet and Kevin Costner.

Last year, the County supported GBLA by proclaiming October 2015 "Girls' Empowerment Month," encouraging County departments, community-based organizations, businesses, and academic institutions to partner with GBLA, and providing student transportation to and from GBLA events.

Given the significant impact GBLA has had on the students who participated, as well as on their peers, families, schools, and communities, the County should once again provide its support.

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**WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

1. Proclaim the month of October 2016 as “Girls’ Empowerment Month” throughout the County of Los Angeles;
2. Encourage all County employees and residents to learn more about Girls Build LA by visiting <https://www.lafund.org/girlsbuildla>;
3. Find that financing of special event transportation for Girls Build LA events is statutorily exempt from the California Quality Act pursuant to Section 21080(b)(10) of the Public Resources Code; and
4. Instruct the Director of Public Works to disburse up to \$65,000 from the Top of Pot allocation of the County’s Proposition A Local Return Transit Program to the LA Promise Fund for Public Schools in order to reimburse the participating school districts for the transportation costs associated with Girls Build LA events that will take place over the 2016-17 academic year. Funding is included in the Transit Enterprise Fund Fiscal Year 2016-17 Budget.

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