

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS

October 8, 2024

AND LINDSEY P. HORVATH

Supporting Funding for Public Schools and Community College Facilities

Climate change continues to impact Los Angeles County, with increased frequency of temperature extremes and hotter, longer heat waves are threatening the health and wellbeing of County residents. Children are especially vulnerable to the effects of heat stress and other heat-related illnesses, as they lack the ability to regulate temperature as effectively as adults. Because of their design, many schools are unfortunately susceptible to hotter temperature, especially with the use of asphalt and the lack of trees on many campuses.

That is why in September of 2023, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the motion *Protecting Vulnerable Students from Extreme Heat on School Campuses*, requesting that the Los Angeles County Office of Education, the Department of Public Health, the Chief Sustainability Officer, the Internal Services Department, and the Office of Emergency Management collaborate with school districts and work on efforts to support climate resilience and cooling at schools, prioritizing

MOTION

SOLIS _____

MITCHELL _____

HAHN _____

BARGER _____

HORVATH _____

those in heat-vulnerable areas. Though there was significant interest from the school districts, one of the most significant barriers to these efforts was a lack of funding.

Proposition 2 would begin to address these challenges. With thousands of schools in California, including the County, in poor shape, significant funding is needed to address the challenge. Many schools are susceptible to extreme heat, with broken air conditioning, open or leaking roofs, and other health and safety hazards including peeling paint and potential lead exposure. Poorly maintained schools are more susceptible to disruption during extreme weather, including significant heat events. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, 38% of students attend schools that do not meet the State's minimum safety standards. This results in students with lower attendance rates, lower morale, and lower achievement. Unfortunately, in California there is no dedicated stream of funding to support the upkeep of these school campuses, with bonds often needed for necessary repairs, renovations, and new construction.

Proposition 2 would create a State general obligation bond act that would provide \$8.5 billion for K-12 schools and \$1.5 billion to community colleges to renovate, fix, and construct facilities. It would make a significant impact in providing necessary updates to school and community college facilities across the County and could play a pivotal role in closing achievements gaps for students whose learning is impacted by substandard facilities.

However, it is important to note that school facilities funding is already not distributed equally. Existing funding systems tend to favor larger, more affluent school districts. Districts with higher value property are able to collect more money and may be

better positioned to leverage this funding from the State. Furthermore, if approved, Proposition 2 funds will be awarded to schools on a first-come, first-served basis, thus providing a significant advantage to districts that are able to move quickly. This also tends to be the districts that already have more funding and capacity to move these projects through. Thus, although it is important for all schools that Proposition 2 funds are made available, the County must be prepared to do its part so that all districts are prepared to leverage these opportunities.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors take an official position to support Proposition 2, which would provide \$8.5 billion to K-12 schools and \$1.5 billion to community colleges to renovate, fix, and construct facilities.

WE, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors request that the Los Angeles County Office of Education work with school districts across the County to raise awareness of funding opportunities that may be made available with the passage of Proposition 2, and to proactively provide technical assistance to interested school districts to ensure they are prepared for the first-come, first-served basis of funding opportunities available under Proposition 2. An emphasis should be placed on school districts that have fewer resources or lack the capacity when compared to more affluent districts.

#

HLS:ac