

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President

Lisa Walters-Valera

Co-Treasurers

Ali Hirsa
Patrick Regan
Chantal Smith

Secretary

Kyle Clayton

VP Fundraising

Carolina Graham
Patricia Frisbie
Michelle Ruiz

VPs of COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Jodie Abbatangelo-Gray
Emmaia Gelman
Tyesha Tuck

VPs of TITLE 1

Anne-Marie Burrowes
Yadira Sanchez
Shaquira Thomas

VPs of Parent Involvement

Aledra Floyd
Stella Reed
Gerson Romero

VPs of Communications

Johnny Gutierrez
Jennifer Matthews
Chris Parkman
Nancy Possenti
Patrick Rwamasirabo

VPs of Spanish Communications

Manuel Casanova
Karla Diaz

December 16, 2015

Dear CEC3 representatives,

The PS75 PTA writes to ask that the CEC form a working committee on Community-Controlled Choice. We have three main reasons for making this request:

First, District 3 is an incredibly diverse school district, but segregation and school inequality in District 3 is a crisis – UCLA’s Civil Rights Project has called about half of our schools “apartheid schools” or “intensely segregated” – which is likely to worsen as income inequality and luxury housing development advance in our neighborhoods. Our schools are also working with vastly unequal resources: the District 3 Task Force for Equity in Education report presented to the CEC last year shows 2013 PTA receipts varying between \$167,000 and \$1.67 million.¹ (That table included reporting from only some District 3 PTAs. We know that some PTAs raise much less, and others raise nothing.) Resource disparities are part and parcel of segregation that concentrates high-income families in some schools and low-income families in others. District 3 families and schools need to work together, with urgency, to undo this disparity.

Second, we need a district-wide resolution to segregation. For the past year, the CEC has focused its attention on the southern end of the district, addressing issues of segregation and inequality among a few schools. But seeking a solution limited to one neighborhood reinforces the concentration of high-income families in just a few schools, instead of undoing it. We need a solution that unites all the schools and families in District 3 in equal, well-integrated schools.

Finally, PS75 is an exception to District 3 segregation, and we need support to stay integrated. In our view, PS75’s breadth of race, income, language, and life experience is essential to success in turning out responsible, critical thinkers with knowledge and curiosity about their world. We are historically a Title I school, with just over 61% of students eligible for free/reduced-cost lunch. Preserving Title I status is critical for retaining the diversity of our student body, and for preserving the high-quality

¹ The report is posted online at www.D3equity.org.

programming we achieve by mixing moderate PTA fundraising with Title I funds. We are acutely aware that gentrification and three massive planned luxury construction projects may soon change the economic balance of our immediate neighborhood, even as the larger district remains highly diverse. We will need systemic help to preserve the diversity of our school – and all its benefits – as housing demographics become more segregated.

Community-Controlled Choice is a complex plan with many variations that might possibly address all of these needs. We need help understanding how it has worked in other places, and the options for implementation here. We would like to have substantive, specific conversations about how Community-Controlled Choice could work in District 3; and where parents from every part of the district can bring needs and concerns to the table. Such a community-wide conversation cannot be organized by individual PTAs or interested parents; it really needs the CEC to undertake it, as in Districts 1 and 13. We hope that CEC3 will take it up as a possible way to address the crisis in District 3 schools, and to support schools like ours.

Sincerely,
The PS75 PTA