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News Release

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Los Angeles Unified Tightens Procedures for Emergency Drills

In collaboration with Board Member Scott M. Schmerelson, Superintendent Austin Beutner today announced improvements in how Los Angeles Unified will prepare for natural disasters and emergency situations.

Beginning in 2020-21, schools will be required to hold at least one lockdown drill each semester so students and staff know how to respond when all doors are locked and no one is allowed to enter or exit the building. Each school will also develop a plan to rapidly move students to a designed off-campus location when staying on the campus is unsafe.

In addition, school employees will receive increased training in recognizing behavior that could escalate to campus violence. Los Angeles Unified will also increase efforts to inform parents about improved emergency response procedures.

“If a dangerous situation occurs, we want our students and employees to be familiar with how to respond,” Superintendent Austin Beutner said. “Preparing them to deal with emergency is an important part of our commitment to keeping our schools safe.”

“When a school needs to be locked down or evacuated because of a natural disaster, police activity in the neighborhood or threatened gun violence, our communities need to know that every student and adult knows what to do and has practiced what to do,” Board Member Schmerelson said. “Thanks to the Board District 3 activists who worked with me on this initiative to make sure that our schools continue to be the safest places for children in Los Angeles.”

“The issues of emergency preparedness and lockdown drills have become drastically vital in these last years,” Board Member Dr. George J. McKenna III said. “While none of us wants to live in a world of terror, we must dedicate the necessary time and effort to create a school environment in which the children and staff feel safe, secure and prepared. We must normalize the preparation as we have normalized fire drills.”

“We know well that preparation is the key to success,” Board Member Mónica García said. “Thank you to those in our community who are, day in and day out, prioritizing the safety of our children all year long, year after year.”

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“Every day, families entrust Los Angeles Unified with the great responsibility of educating their children and ensuring their safety in our schools,” Board Member Nick Melvoin said. “When Congress refuses to legislate on common-sense gun control, it is our duty to ensure that our school staff and students are prepared with the necessary training and drills in the case of the unthinkable.”

“Safety continues to be foundational to the work we do at Los Angeles Unified,” Board Member Kelly Gonez said. “Our schools must be safe and supportive places for all students, and today’s action shows our continued commitment.”

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