

YPI CHARTER SCHOOLS *EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT*

February 11, 2019

The mission of YPI Charter Schools (YPICS) is to:

- *Prepare students for academic success in high school, as well as post-secondary education.*
- *Prepare students to be responsible and active participants in their community.*
- *Enable students to become life-long learners.*

Students at YPICS will become active citizens who characterize the ideals of a diverse and democratic society. Students will provide service to their community, take responsibility for their own learning, and develop the habits of mind and body that will empower them to be successful in high school and beyond.

CCSA:

-A farewell message from Jed Wallace, CCSA CEO

Friends,

Happy New Year!

As many of you are aware, last fall I decided to end my service as CEO at CCSA. Today is my last day with CCSA and the torch now passes to Myrna Castrejón who starts on January 9. Myrna is an incredible leader who spent years in numerous leadership roles at CCSA and most recently served as CEO of Great Public Schools Now. She has been embraced by CCSA's Board, Member Council and the broader membership. As Myrna steps into the role of CEO next week, she brings with her new ideas and energy to lead the organization into the next era of great progress and impact on behalf of students and families across California.

Serving as CCSA's CEO over the past 10 years has been the highlight of my professional life, and I feel immense gratitude for all of you who have helped to advance the work of the organization and the charter school movement more broadly. Our collective efforts resulted in hundreds of thousands of students and families having access to better educational opportunities at charter schools, and stimulated improvements in the broader public education system.

The charter school movement faces new challenges and opportunities in 2019. But if the past is any predictor of the future, the movement will successfully navigate any periods of uncertainty and emerge stronger than before by coming together in ever greater unity and activism in support of students. CCSA, a membership organization where over 80 percent of autonomous charter schools are members, has played a key role in helping maintain our unity and build our collective strength and sophistication on advocacy matters. Under Myrna's leadership, that story will continue to unfold. With that being the case, I make this professional transition with an even greater sense of confidence that the charter school movement has a very bright future and will have even greater positive impact on public education in California in the decades to come.

As for me personally, you can count on me continuing to push for progress on the issues that have brought us all together over the years. Most immediately my work will focus on building advocacy strength in other states similar to what we have grown here in California, but I will always be available to lend a hand here in my home

state whenever I may be of assistance. For the time being, you can reach me at jedwallace@gmail.com. I look forward to remaining in touch.

Kindest regards to you all,
Jed.

State:

From Ed Source

“Gov. Newsom asks to review impact of California charter schools on district finances”

Report expected by July 1

In one fallout from the recently settled strike of teachers in Los Angeles, Gov. Gavin Newsom has called on State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond to establish a panel of experts to examine the impact of charter school growth on district finances.

The panel will have four months to look at the issue, and to report back to Newsom by July 1. Thurmond has not yet announced who will be on the panel, but its formation raises the likelihood that California’s charter school laws may undergo revision over the coming year. This would be the first time there has been an in-depth look at the financial impact of charter schools since passage of California’s first charter law in 1992.

The issue was a concern of Newsom’s even before the L.A. teachers strike, said Newsom spokesperson Brian Ferguson.

“As Governor Newsom stated in his first budget proposal, rising charter school enrollments in some urban districts are having real impacts on those districts’ ability to provide essential support and services for their students,” he said.

Under a [1998 state law](#), districts are not allowed to take into account the financial impact of a charter school on a district in deciding whether or not to grant them a charter. Charter advocates fear that removing this prohibition could have a dramatic impact on slowing charter school school expansion in the state. Newsom’s creation of a panel to look into the issue appears a response [to a resolution approved by the Los Angeles Unified school board](#) last month as part of the agreement it reached with the United Teachers of Los Angeles and its striking teachers last month. The resolution called for a “comprehensive study” of various aspects of charter schools in the district, including their “financial implications.”

The resolution also called for an 8-to-10 month moratorium on new charter schools while the study was being conducted. So far, however, Newsom has been silent on these latest calls for a moratorium.

In a statement, United Teachers of Los Angeles President Alex Caputo-Pearl, representing 33,000 teachers and other staff in the district, “applauded” Newsom for recognizing what it said was obvious: that L.A. Unified and other districts across the state are being “financially strangled” by what it called the “unmitigated growth” of charter schools.

But it questioned the need for a panel, saying that an “immediate cap on charter schools is urgently necessary.” Large urban districts, it said, were “well past the saturation point for charter school growth.”

Similar calls for a cap or a moratorium are coming from other districts with a large proportion of students in charter schools. In Oakland, where teachers appear to be [on the verge of a](#) strike, the school board also has set as one of its priorities convincing lawmakers in Sacramento to impose a moratorium on charter expansion. And in

the nearby West Contra Costa Unified District, which includes Richmond, the board will consider a resolution this week calling for [a statewide charter moratorium](#).

L.A. Unified has the most charter schools in the nation, and the schools' impact on the district's overall budget remains a major cause of discontent among teachers. An estimated 112,000 students are enrolled in 225 nonprofit charter schools in the district. They comprise 18.7 percent of the district's total enrollment.

Claudia Briggs, a spokesperson for the California Teachers Association, which represents over 300,000 teachers across the state, said that the CTA would be happy to participate in the panel Newsom has called for, and that Thurmond would be a "good person" to head it. She said that the proposed panel was a signal that Newsom "is doing exactly what he said he would do when running for governor — always put kids before profits."

[Kids Not Profits](#) is the title of a campaign the CTA has been running for the past several years calling for more transparency in the operation of charter schools, and focusing on the role of multibillionaires, such as LA philanthropists Eli Broad, and others in promoting them.

The California Charter Schools Association, representing most of the 1275 charter schools in the state, declined to comment on the proposed panel.

Even as Newsom awaits the recommendations of the yet-to-be-formed panel by July 1, the Legislature could take action requiring greater transparency in charter school operations and financial reporting.

During his gubernatorial campaign and as recently as last month, Newsom indicated that [he would sign legislation](#) along those lines — legislation former Gov. Jerry Brown vetoed several times during his governorship.

"The Governor is working closely with the Legislature to improve charter school transparency," said Newsom spokesperson Ferguson, "because tax dollars spent on education should only support schools that are accountable to the public."

NATIONAL:

January 29, 2019

Share National Alliance Statement on Moratorium Vote Against Public Charter Schools in Los Angeles to Twitter Share National Alliance Statement on Moratorium Vote Against Public Charter Schools in Los Angeles

Washington DC - Today the L.A. Unified school board will vote on a resolution to pursue a moratorium on public charter schools in Los Angeles, despite the almost 120,000 students whose families elect to enroll their children in high-quality Los Angeles charter schools every day and the 19,000 students on Los Angeles charter school waitlists.

The vote for the moratorium fails to acknowledge that charter schools provide high-quality public-school options to the most vulnerable students in Los Angeles. More than 80 percent of students enrolled in Los Angeles charter schools are low income and students of color, and 12 percent are students with disabilities. Furthermore, a 2014 Stanford CREDO [report](#) shows that in their first year, Los Angeles charter school students gain 50 additional days of learning in reading; in math, the gain is 101 more days of learning.

A moratorium on charter schools limits the number of students that can attend high-quality public schools. A vote that places a moratorium on charter schools sets an awful precedent for other school districts to place the education bureaucracy before the needs of students.

In response to the pending vote today, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools president and CEO Nina Rees released the following statement:

"It is not a progressive value to cut off high-quality public-school options to students, especially the large number of low-income students of color that charter schools serve in Los Angeles. We strongly oppose placing a moratorium on charter schools because it does not put students first. A vote for a moratorium on charter schools is a vote against students and a vote against families."

LOCAL:

From: Daily News

UPDATED: February 4, 2019 at 1:30 pm

Some folks call Dr. Yvonne Chan the 'charter matriarch.' At age 73, 26 years after she founded the first charter school in Los Angeles, her reign along a six-block stretch of the East San Fernando Valley neighborhood of Pacoima is palpable.

Chan is the founding principal of an empire of schools teaching 3,187 students from pre-K through 12th grade, the first independent charter school in the city. These days, she goes by the title "Chief Visionary Officer," but she's rarely without a jangling lanyard of keys around her neck to unlock each of the five campuses at Vaughn Next Century Learning Center.

Like other schools at the movement's beginning, Vaughn was a charter forged by teachers and administrators hoping to better serve low-income students of color through managerial autonomy from the L.A. Unified School District behemoth and without representation from a teachers union.

Vaughn's success, a story of "the little school that could," marks the beginning of an industry no one imagined would become so large and such a fault line in the national debate about education reform.

Their proliferation became a focal point of the recent six-day walkout by more than 30,000 UTLA-represented teachers, as union leaders called public school "privatization" and "unregulated charter school growth" an existential crisis for traditional public schools.

"Not all charters are bad," UTLA Alex Caputo-Pearl often said from a press conference podium, but many charters do deplete resources from neighborhood public schools and tend to select the students easiest to teach.

Charter advocates call these claims outright lies. Experts on charter schools **warn** that while such narratives contain grains of truth, they ring superficial. Mostly missing from discourse of late are stories about what spurred the burgeoning of charter schools like Vaughn Next Century Learning Center in the first place.

'The little school that could'

An immigrant to the U.S. from Hong Kong at 17, Chan learned Spanish picking oranges and grapes and put herself through school while working under the table as a dishwasher. She got her start in education teaching highly disabled, non-verbal students, and went on to quickly work her way up the ranks at LAUSD.

When Chan first became principal of year-round Vaughn Street Elementary in 1992, the school reflected a struggling and impoverished population around it.

Racial tensions between longtime African-American residents and a rapidly growing Latino population fed gang violence. To duck for cover during drive-by shootings, parents built a concrete shelter in front of the school.

One student was raped on campus. Another was killed. A sixth-grader unexpectedly gave birth. Fueled by

overcrowding and a floundering track system, academic achievement was hitting rock bottom.

One teacher at Vaughn, part of a group Chan calls the “militant newbies,” heard of a new movement to give local schools more independence. So Chan, an energetic leader who tends to tell her story in World War II and D-Day metaphors, went to a conference with 15 other teachers in Sacramento to learn about the shiny new charter law authored by then state Sen. Gary K. Hart of Santa Barbara.

They were warned by district lawyers of the liability risks and feared being left to find their own funding and facilities. But they also desperately wanted flexibility in decision-making, primarily the ability to alter class sizes and focus on addressing needs of English learners.

After unsuccessfully applying for more autonomy via a status called “school-based management,” Chan and her teachers made the leap.

“We understood there’s a risk, but we said what the heck,” said Chan about their move to go charter. “We couldn’t do worse. We were so bad.”

With just a handful of charters popping up around the country, Chan thinks LAUSD underestimated her school and other early charters. “They took us like ‘oh its only one, its only poor Vaughn,” said Chan, “and Yvonne probably won’t stay because she’s a rising star for the district.”

Yet Chan stayed, coming to see her own immigrant story in the success of Pacoima’s overwhelmingly Mexican and Central American immigrant community. She pushed-and-pulled to get full per-pupil funding from the district, leveraged grant money to match it for more funding, acquired millions in real estate, garnered sympathetic media coverage and a visit from Hillary Clinton.

Looking back it’s difficult to deny that a radical transformation took place at the school on Vaughn Street that still serves a 97 percent Latino and predominately low income student population from Pacoima, Sylmar and San Fernando.

Glimmers of the old school remain — boxy bungalows, an old cafeteria and an office — but the rest is stylish modern architecture, airy classrooms made of shipping containers, iPads and glistening hallways where students practice violin and cello.

On the five school campuses, titles sound more akin non-profit organization, with principals called “directors” and classroom referred to as “pods” taught by teacher teams. Chan laments a recent drop in test scores, but two years ago they were on par with coveted Granada Hills Charter High.

Vaughn also prides itself in being a community-based charter, with wraparound services like a food pantry, adult education and job training at its family center.

A turning point

Pushing her way through the leadership strata of a public education system dominated by white men, Chan said she “became a bah bah black sheep” accused of disloyalty to the institution where she built her career.

“They said I’m trying to take down the district, that I’m playing David and Goliath but I’m no David ... they told me ‘Why are you making such a big fuss?’”

As charter schools in LA rapidly proliferated, some on loans from Vaughn, Chan wasn’t alone in feeling sidelined by the district.

“In the space of a decade,” writes a UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education and Access report, “charter schools in Los Angeles morphed from a highly popular innovation to a political wedge issue.”

Charter school teachers said they were made to feel like pariahs as LAUSD lost around 50,000 students – along with the state funding that follows them – to charters. That’s on top of around 50,000 lost due to demographic changes like low birth rate and immigration.

Vaughn was LAUSD’s only independent charter school in 1993. There were six “affiliated charters” at the time, schools granted operating autonomy while remaining in the district.

In the 2016-2017 school year, the number of independent charters was a whopping 225 with 154,000 students, the largest charter school enrollment in the country. There are now 54 affiliated charters.

As the district lost money and UTLA lost members because most charters declined to unionize, venture philanthropists attached themselves to the entrepreneurial charter movement as its schools expanded and diversified.

Chan, who served two terms on the state school board, worked as the LA City Commissioner for Youth and Families and taught as an adjunct professor at UCLA and CSUN, wasn’t backed by billionaires in founding Vaughn, nor does she think that schools should be.

Yet it’s in Los Angeles where a \$490-million plan by the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation was disclosed as having sought to create a school system where the majority of students attend charters aiming “transform the century-old institution of public education.”

It was that publicly stated goal, the UCLA report says, turned charter schools into what it is now – big time politics.

In recent school board elections, favorability toward charters has become a political litmus test for million-dollar campaigns. The original charter law’s author Senator Hart said “Charter fights in places like L.A. Unified have become almost religious wars, where large amounts of money are spent,” in an August interview.

The long game

Today, the average independent charter school doesn’t look like Vaughn. Most are operated by charter management organizations, like the Alliance for Public Schools and Green Dot Public Schools, of which Chan disapproves. She’s a believer in a long-term community focused approach, not “start-ups” or Harvard-educated dreamers with business models.

But like many charter advocates, she’s against the resolution passed by the LAUSD school board Tuesday that calls on the state to study the effects of charter schools and place a months long moratorium on new charter schools in LA.

The side-deal in the agreement reached between UTLA and the district to end the six-day teacher walkout that disrupted instruction at more than 900 schools has become a point of outrage for charter advocates and families.

“I’m seeing crying parents ... Why are they using charter schools as a bargaining chip?” she asked.

Though not opposed to new regulation on charter approvals to-be-determined in Sacramento, the “charter matriarch” asks the district to engage in some real introspection in turn. After all, Vaughn said, charter schools were only born out of district misgivings.

“If the traditional public school is failing,” she said with an impassioned slam on a children-size table, “like Vaughn. Vaughn was failing for forty frickin’ years, draining district resources. There was absolutely no tomorrow here.”

“Why didn’t Vaughn shut down then? Why did the district send me here, just to sweep things under the carpet? Either we start improving or doing something about failing schools, and then we can start talking about not needing more options. But these parents have no other option.”

It’s a point many charter advocates are making in the wake of the strike. Suzanne Llamas, a Vaughn teacher during the 1993 conversion, maintains that Vaughn is a testament to the charter movement’s original idea – a school can be more successful independent of the district with the right amount of control, passion and effort.

“We’re not an experiment anymore. And I don’t think we would’ve come this far if it wasn’t for her,” Llamas said about Chan, who she hasn’t always agreed with. “People in power, the politicians, they know her because they’ve worked with her but everyday people don’t know her role in the movement.

“I think if we were still in the district, we would still be in the same place too many kids would be failing and we’d be in the same place. When she does something it’s all about the kids who can benefit ... so yeah she’s my hero.”

District:

LA School Report

Commentary: LAUSD may owe \$13.6 billion for health care & pensions—and the strike made things worse. Obamacare is a way out.

Chad Aldeman | February 3, 2019

When then-President Barack Obama signed the Affordable Care Act in 2010, the law immediately made some employee benefits offered by state and local governments redundant at best or regressive at worst. This issue is playing out in a painful way in Los Angeles. Teachers in the second-largest school district are now back at work after a six-day strike, but their new deal not only ignores but actually exacerbates the coming financial pressures caused by rising health care and pension costs.

There is a better way forward, but first we need to back up with some history. The Los Angeles Unified School District began offering health benefits to its employees starting in the 1940s, and it added coverage for qualifying retirees and their spouses beginning in 1966. Soon after, the district eliminated employee contributions toward those benefits, leaving LAUSD on the hook for any future rise in health care costs.

Rather than renegotiate that promise as health care costs skyrocketed, the district has decided to trim costs only by narrowing its definition of a qualifying retiree. In the 1970s, any retiree with five years of service qualified, but now there are six more tiers of membership, depending on when the employee began working for the district. Employees hired as of 2009 qualify only if the sum of their age and years of service equals 85 or more, plus they must serve at least 25 consecutive years immediately prior to retirement.

These decisions have done nothing to reduce the underlying cost of the benefits, and they have effectively prioritized comparatively well-off retirees with stable work histories over more transient workers who might need the benefits more. In the meantime, the district has saved only \$145 million for promises that are valued at \$13.6 billion, and without further changes, current and future teachers will bear the burden of making up that difference. These trends are unavoidable, unless district leaders start thinking more creatively.

This is where the federal Affordable Care Act comes in. Obamacare provides subsidies on a sliding scale to individuals to purchase health insurance, regardless of age; in 2018, a two-member household earning less than \$65,840, or 400 percent of the federal poverty level, would qualify for assistance. If we assume that retirees have no income sources other than their pension (teachers in California do not have Social Security), publicly available data suggest that 87 percent of LAUSD retirees could qualify for Obamacare subsidies.

Even if we assume that many retirees are in dual-income households, more than half would be eligible for federal supports. Another way of saying this is that the district's retiree health benefits are largely redundant for at least half and up to five-sixths of all current recipients.

To be sure, the Obamacare subsidies and a "basic" health plan are not as generous as what the district currently provides, but that brings up a question of priorities: Should the district continue to bankrupt itself to provide Cadillac benefits to a smaller and smaller group of workers, or should it focus its investments on the workers and retirees who need it the most?

That question leads us into how the district's current benefits are regressive, which is a little more complex. Still, it's worth unpacking who exactly would lose out if LAUSD switched all future employees to the Obamacare exchanges. Remember, as of 2009, the only new workers who will qualify for benefits will be people who work for the district for at least 25 consecutive years immediately prior to retirement. That means they can't be short-term workers; they can't take a year off, say, to care for family, and they can't work for the district for the first part of their career and then pursue something else. And again, we're talking about households earning \$66,000 a year even as they're technically considered retired by the district. Across all Los Angeles households, 72 percent earn less than that, and most have to work for that income.

Of course, the district could also pursue a middle ground by recasting its benefits to work *with* Obamacare subsidies instead of providing a standalone benefit. There is precedent for this. When the district created its retiree health benefits in the 1960s, Medicare existed but wasn't available to state and local government employees like L.A. teachers. In the 1980s, Congress extended coverage to state and local government workers, and the district began requiring retirees over age 65 to apply for Medicare coverage. Today, the district still offers some benefits to retirees over age 65, but Medicare covers the basic costs and the district's benefits are more of a perk than a standalone offering.

The district should now do the same thing with Obamacare. Its leaders can no longer ignore the benefits of a federal, means-tested program that would be cheaper and more equitable than what it's currently providing.

YPICS:

PD

YPICS has held one additional Professional development day since the last YPICS Board Meeting. The TPD, Total Staff Professional Development Day focused on preparing all stakeholders to remain focused on increased academic achievement for All students. In December the schools concentrated on instruction and continues to monitor the ongoing progress of ELs and students with disabilities closely. The January session continued to focus on the same key areas of support. All YPICS TPD, current and past, training and resources are available here at tpd.ypics.org.

Suspensions

Bert Corona (BCCS) and Monsenor (MORCS) received either a letter of concern and or a letter of cure regarding the decreasing the number of student suspensions (both in-school and out of school) for this school year. The state in the past has only counted and reported on out of school suspensions. At the close of the 2017-2018 school year, the California Department of Education also began to track and monitor both in-school and out of school suspensions. The new practice pushed both schools over the bar of being added to the list of schools to receive the letters of concern and or cure. Responses to the

concerns were provided to the Charter Schools Division at the end of November. To date, both schools have drastically reduced this year's numbers over last year. The YPICS board of Directors will receive a monthly status report via the Executive Administrative monthly Board Reports. Additionally, since attendance and behavior impact academic outcomes, the Executive Administrators will also share the Suspension status report with the YPICS Academic Excellence Committee during academic discussions.

Teacher Observations

BCHS has completed the first set of two teacher video observation rounds. Teachers have committed to additional observations and instructional rounds. The teacher video observations have allowed the Executive Administrator the opportunity to view instruction and provide the opportunity for objective coaching and feedback. The instructional team is looking forward to additional observational rounds at BCCS and MORCS during the winter months.

LSC

The Learning and Support Center Team members provided support on the ground to school-based teams during the LAUSD Teacher strike. Executive Administrators communicated their appreciation of their support in the YPICS Slack channels.

YPICS is excited about pushing classroom management and rigor in a new way this semester!