



## YPI CHARTER SCHOOLS, INC

May 23, 2016

**TO:** YPI Charter School, Inc.  
Board of Directors

**FROM:** Yvette King-Berg  
Executive Director

**SUBJECT: Recommendation to approve Resolution #2016-3: Resolution to submit letter of intent to withdraw from LAUSD Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)**

### BACKGROUND

Historically, charter schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) had two options for delivering special education services (as defined by the CA Education Code):

- 1) Operate as a “school of the district” for special education purposes. In this case the district assumes full responsibility for providing services to students in the charter schools in exchange for retaining the full amount/portion of special education funding and collecting a “fair share contribution” fee from the charter in order to support district-wide special education costs.
- 2) Become an LEA (Local Education Agency) for special education purposes. In this case school assumes full responsibility for providing special education services in exchange for access to full amount of special education funding, less administrative costs.

Neither option was ideal. For a charter school, remaining a “school of the district” meant relinquishing special education funding and control over special education staff and programs. Becoming an LEA for special education meant joining a SELPA outside of District boundaries and losing access to local supports and services as well as the advantage of the economies of scale for special education service provision.

In January of 2011, the LAUSD Board of Education voted unanimously to restructure the existing SELPA in order to provide charter schools a new option with full responsibility, flexibility and autonomy in funding, staffing, and programs for serving students with disabilities. The result was a reorganization of the SELPA that revolutionized special education for charter schools within a single district SELPA and set an example for state and national special education reform.

The reorganization of LAUSD SELPA, in effect, created a continuum of options for charters schools to choose from, ranging from least autonomous (Option 1) to most autonomous (Option 3). This third option is also sometimes referred to as “LEA-like.” While continuing to operate as “schools of the

district,” charter schools selecting Option 3 bear full responsibility for providing special education services to their students and receive most of their special education funding. These schools still contribute a portion to LAUSD for administrative costs, however, they retain majority (80%) of their special education funding to provide special education services, develop their own programs (specifically targeted for students with moderate to severe disabilities) or to pool resources between schools, share services, manage risk, and take advantage of the economies of scale not possible with LEA status alone.

## **ANALYSIS**

The new SELPA structure, and the creation of the Charter Operated Programs Unit (COP) was approved over five (5) years ago under Superintendent Ramon Cortines, who was highly supportive of the innovative option for District charter schools. At the time of creation, the District stated that the Charter Operated Programs would be reviewed at the end of five years and that the continuation of the structure was not guaranteed.

With the upcoming retirement of LAUSD SELPA Director Sharon Howell, declining District enrollment, and the District’s questionable fiscal position, Option 3 charter school members are concerned about the future of Option 3. As of July 1, 2016, there will be 139 member schools in Option 3, the size of a medium-sized SELPA in California. If Option 3 should be dismantled by the District (we are assured it will continue through the 2016-2017 school year), the Fenton schools, and all Option 3 schools, must be ready to leave the LAUSD SELPA and seek membership in another SELPA or even create its own SELPA.

California law requires that a SELPA must be given one year’s notice prior to a school’s or district’s withdrawal from a SELPA. The Executive Director requests Board approval for the submission of a letter of intent to withdraw from the LAUSD SELPA no later than June 30, 2016.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board of Directors approve Resolution #2016-3, which approves a letter of intent to withdraw from the LAUSD SELPA to be delivered to the Superintendent of LAUSD no later than June 30, 2016.