

Santa Monica Democratic Club Resolution Regarding Clean Indoor Air in SMMUSD Schools

WHEREAS, in furtherance of the California Democratic Party's support of a safe, healthy and excellent public school education for all children, AB 2232 was introduced by CA Assemblymember Kevin McCarty (D) and signed into law by Governor Newsom on September 29, 2022, and provides, among other things, that (1) "it is the policy of this state that school facilities be designed and operated using available measures to provide a healthy indoor environment for students, teachers, and other occupants including, but not limited to, healthy indoor air quality and adequate ventilation with outdoor air" and (2) schools install filtration that achieves MERV levels of 13 or higher when feasible; and

WHEREAS, AB 841 was authored by Assemblymember Phil Ting (D) and signed into law by Governor Newsom on September 30, 2020, and established School Energy Efficiency Stimulus Program, which is comprised of 2 grant programs, one of which (referred to as the California Schools Healthy Air, Plumbing, and Efficiency Program or CalSHAPE) authorized funding to school districts for assessing, maintaining, and repairing or upgrading school ventilation systems, including replacing filters (using MERV-13 filtration when feasible); and

WHEREAS, after more than 2 years of using MERV-13 filtration to keep our schools healthy and safe, prior to the start of the 2023-24 school year, Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) (1) removed all MERV-13 filters from its schools and replaced them with inferior MERV-8 or at best MERV-11 filters, and (2) failed to apply for available funding under CalSHAPE, despite the fact that it meets the general eligibility requirements; and

WHEREAS, SMMUSD's compliance with the MERV-13 filtration requirements of AB 2232 is feasible because (1) SMMUSD is a "basic aid" district, which puts it in the top 10% of CA districts in terms of state funding, (2) between 2006 and 2018, Santa Monica and Malibu have passed over \$1.36 billion in bonds (principal only) for SMMUSD facility improvements (with another large bond likely to be sought by SMMUSD in 2024) and bonds can be used for replacing HVAC, and (3) SMMUSD receives approximately \$40 million annually (which can vary from year to year) from the City of Santa Monica from parcel and use taxes, and the joint use agreements; and

WHEREAS, (1) MERV-13 or higher filtration is highly recommended by the CA Department of Public Health (CDPH), Department of Education, CDC, EPA, ASHRAE, and National Air Filtration Association, among others, with ASHRAE recommending MERV-14 or higher, (2) the CDPH recommends ventilation with a clean air change rate per hour (eACH) of 6 to 12, (3) studies have shown that high quality indoor air in schools decreases absenteeism, increases student, teacher and staff productivity, improves the health of students, teachers and staff, and improves student performance and outcomes, (4) in order to minimize learning loss, upgraded filtration and proper ventilation in schools are necessary to address existing and future viruses and environmentally-caused respiratory illnesses, and (5) high quality indoor air is an essential component of equity and inclusion in our public schools.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Santa Monica Democratic Club requests that SMMUSD (1) immediately reinstate MERV-13 or higher filtration in all of its schools, (2) ensure ventilation rates in schools achieve 6 to 12 air changes per hour (ACH), (3) add portable air purifiers to classrooms and other areas where students, teachers and staff gather, when needed, and (4) install HVAC units designed for, and capable of properly functioning with, MERV-14 or higher filtration when any HVAC unit is replaced or newly installed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that (1) to maximize the effectiveness of this campaign and to ensure high quality indoor air for all SMMUSD students, teachers and staff, the Santa Monica Democratic Club will reach out to key educational organizations to build a wide coalition in furtherance of its support for this resolution, and (2) this resolution shall be sent immediately to the SMMUSD School Board (brd@smmusd.org) and SMMUSD Superintendent Antonio Shelton (ashelton@smmusd.org).

Cc: California State Senator Ben Allen, California Assemblymember Rick Chavez Zbur, California Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond

Submitted by: Santa Monica Democratic Club

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