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March 8, 2019

Hon. Mayor Terry Tornek, City Councilmembers, and Pasadena Unified Board Members,
City of Pasadena
100 N. Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91109

RE: City of Pasadena Measure J Memorandum of Understanding

Dear Mayor Tornek,

The California Charter Schools Association (“CCSA”) is a membership and professional organization serving more than 1,200 charter public schools. Our association works on behalf of these charter schools which serve more than 600,000 K-12 public school students in the state of California. We write to follow up on the letters we sent on July 16, 2018 and December 10, 2018 to encourage the council to equitably fund charter public schools located within the boundaries of Pasadena Unified School District.

Item 11 on the Pasadena City Council meeting agenda for Monday, March 11 includes a draft memorandum of understanding on sharing Measure J funding with the Pasadena Unified School District. *We respectfully ask the Council to include in this MOU a requirement that the students who reside within the attendance boundaries of Pasadena Unified and who are enrolled in charter public schools within the same boundaries receive a proportional and equitable allocation of revenues that could enhance their educational experience.*

In such an agreement, Pasadena Unified would distribute Measure J revenues to qualifying charter schools. This approach would be consistent with other revenue-sharing voter-approved measures throughout the state. For instance, the West Contra Costa Unified School District shares parcel tax revenue with public charter schools by similar per-pupil criteria. Additionally, the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education voted in February to place a parcel tax on the June ballot with language that recognized that students attending public charter schools within the boundaries of LAUSD should receive reasonably equivalent funding through the new tax measure.

Pasadena charter school students are surely deserving of an equitable share of the new revenues approved by voters for, as stated in language of Measure J, “Pasadena public schools.” The charter schools in Pasadena and the areas encompassed by the Pasadena Unified School District currently serve over 1,800 public school students, and they provide the students and families who choose these schools with an array of high-quality, tuition-fee, public school options.

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We are available to discuss CCSA's position on this matter in greater detail. Please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Best Regards,

Chris Copolillo
Director, Regional Advocacy

California Charter Schools Association

cc: Pasadena City Council and Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education
Councilmember Tyron Hampton, District 1
Councilmember Margaret McAustin, District 2
Councilmember & Vice Mayor John J. Kennedy, District 3
Councilmember Gene Masuda, District 4
Councilmember Victor M. Gordo, District 5
Councilmember Steve Madison, District 6
Councilmember Andy Wilson, District 7
Board Member Kimberly Kenne, District 1
Board Member Roy Boulghourjian, District 2
Board Member Michelle Richardson Bailey, District 3
Board Vice President Patrick Cahalan, District 4
Board Member Elizabeth Pomeroy, District 5
Board President Lawrence Torres, District 6
Board Member Scott Phelps, District 7

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Good evening Mayor Tornek and City Councilmembers

My name is Chris Copolillo and I am a Director of Regional Advocacy for the CA Charter Schools Association. CCSA is a membership organization – we serve the more than 1200 schools and 600,000 students enrolled in charter public schools across the state of California. Accordingly, we support the leaders, families, and students of the charter public schools within the boundaries of the Pasadena Unified School District. These students number around 1800 – making up roughly 10% of total public school enrollment within the boundaries of PUSD. I will start by noting that charters are tuition-free public schools that are open to all students.

I am here to ask that in your deliberative process to decide on the allocation of Measure J funding, you include a representative of the Pasadena charter public school community on the proposed ad hoc committee. I ask for inclusion tonight for the second time on this topic – the first came earlier this year, when I sent a letter to the mayor and city councilmembers on CCSA letterhead asking this council to include charter public schools explicitly in the measure J language. I have brought a copy of that letter, and of the one we sent you earlier today, for your reference.

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I'd like to make two brief points on the staff recommendation issued to the council before my time is up:

First, the voter-approved measure J language stipulates that revenue ought to flow to "Pasadena public schools." Charter schools fit firmly into this category and ought not to be excluded based on their governance model. To include charter schools in the decision-making process is to **follow the direction of Pasadena voters by granting equitable funding to all Pasadena public school students.**

Second, the report points to the physical location of schools as a reason to exclude them from measure J funding. But charters located within PUSD, as schools of choice, draw much of their enrollment from families who live in Pasadena and who pay taxes here. In addition, several of these schools are so located because they receive facilities space under Proposition 39, a voter approved ballot measure that requires school districts to allocate space to charter schools, with district discretion over location. Quite simply, these charters have been assigned space outside the city limits of Pasadena by the district. That does not prohibit them from enrolling students who live in Pasadena.

I am happy to discuss this matter at length with interested

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councilmembers – I ask that today you include a representative from the charter public school community on this committee to continue the conversation and ensure that all students are represented in the decision-making process. Thank you.

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