

Schools and Community First Resolution

Whereas, since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, school funding in California has experienced severe limitations in what was once the main source of funding for schools;

Whereas, while the intent of Proposition 13 is to help homeowners, a loophole in the system permits major commercial and industrial properties to avoid regular reassessment, providing a windfall to commercial property owners at the expense of vital school funding;

Whereas, the share of the property tax burden has shifted away from commercial property and toward residential property throughout the state and in virtually every county;

Whereas, per-pupil support, which relies on state funding, has declined from the top 10 in the nation to the bottom quarter;

Whereas, school funding in California is \$2,400 per pupil less than the national average and \$10,000 below the top-funded states, while California's cost of living is among the highest in the nation;

Whereas, inadequate education funding is making it increasingly challenging for California school districts to fund a wide range of instructional and extracurricular programs while recruiting and retaining high-quality staff;

Whereas, this level of funding is not in line with the diverse learning needs of students or what the students of California deserve;

Whereas, school districts are required to make use of limited resources, and they have an obligation to use these resources to support students' needs;

Whereas, Berkeley Unified expenditures outweigh revenues resulting in budget cuts that negatively impact teaching and learning;

Whereas, when unions demand more resources from the state, it does not absolve district responsibility for allocating resources in an ethical way that is focused on students;

Whereas, to truly transform education funding in California, it will require active participation of all our members at school sites, across regions, and across the state;

Whereas, the California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act is on the November 2020 ballot;

Whereas, the California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act would restore the taxable value of large commercial properties to their true market value, increasing funding for schools

and other community services in California by a total of \$12 billion per year, \$650 million to Alameda County and \$6.1 million to Berkeley Unified School District;

Whereas, large businesses are going to fight funding reform through spreading misinformation and spending millions of dollars to defeat the Schools and Local Communities Funding Act;

Whereas, a campaign supporting the Schools and Local Communities Funding Act is an opportunity to deepen rank-and-file member participation and deepen understanding about funding schools the way students deserve;

Therefore, be it Resolved, the Berkeley Federation of Teachers declares its support for the California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act;

Be it further Resolved, the Berkeley Federation of Teachers is committed to educating members on the importance of the California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act, increasing school funding, and implementation;

Be it further Resolved, Berkeley Federation of Teachers is committed to engaging rank-and-file members, families, and community members in the campaign to pass the California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act;

Be it further Resolved, the Berkeley Federation of Teachers is committed to working with community groups and other unions to support regional actions to pass the California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act;

Be it further Resolved, the Berkeley Federation of Teachers is committed to garnering support for the California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act by demanding district support, including the support of local and county school boards, as well as district leadership;

Be it further Resolved, Berkeley Federation of Teachers is committed to demand that district resources are used in a way that prioritizes the following:

- Closing our equity gaps
- Provide adequate resources for classrooms and school staff
- Lower student-to-staff ratio for counselors
- Fully fund and staff Special Education programs
- Increase availability of arts and vocational classes
- Fully staff schools with teachers and support professionals

Finally, be it Resolved, Berkeley Federation of Teachers will use this resolution to educate members, increase member participation, and build union power.