



**Office of the Mayor
City of Los Angeles
ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA**

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**“A New Day for our Schoolchildren”
Remarks of Mayor Villaraigosa
Passage of AB 1381
August 30, 2006**

SOUTH LOS ANGELES – Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa delivered the following remarks today at a rally to celebrate the passage of AB 1381, legislation to fundamentally reform the Los Angeles Unified School District:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I cannot possibly convey the sense of hope that I am feeling for our city's future.

I don't know about you... but I feel like a kid again!

You see, four months ago I stood up before many of you at the Accelerated School on South Main Street.

And I asked the People of Los Angeles to come together as a community -- to face up to the monumental task of fundamentally reforming our public schools.

Today, I'm proud to stand before you once again.

But this time one thing is for sure:

I know I am not standing alone.

Today, I am proud to stand shoulder-to-shoulder - and in full partnership - with teachers.

With parents

And with business and community leaders.

We're here today standing united!

We're standing as one city!

We're here sharing a stage big enough and broad enough to accommodate both the LA Chamber of Commerce and the United Teachers of Los Angeles!

Together we've built a platform where representatives of LA's leading labor unions are working side-by-side with the founders of the Parents' Union.

We have leaders of industry and ministry.

We're joined by mayors of cities big and small.

Supported by a Los Angeles City Council unanimous in its endorsement of fundamental change.

Joined by Monica Garcia, a member of the Board of Education, who is confidently and courageously leading her colleagues by staking her future in the future of school reform.

And as if we needed any reminder of why we're here and what this effort is all about... we are positively surrounded here this morning by the brilliant and beautiful students of Green Dot public schools.

Believe me, these kids could have rewritten "Great Expectations."

They are defying the dropout statistics.

They are defining what is possible for all of LA's children.

They are teaching all of us... that it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from or where you go to school... that ANY child's opportunities GROW when their class sizes shrink.

With every academic year, the young men and women of Green Dot public schools are affirming a lesson that too many of us seem to have stopped believing in...

It is a basic lesson about human worth.

They're demonstrating that whether you live in South LA or in the East Valley...

Whether you get to school in a fancy car or on the bus...

Whether you grew up in Sherman Oaks or Jordan Downs ... that every student in Los Angeles has the talent and potential to make it to a four-year college!

Angelenos, we need to start believing again.

I don't care what statistics you cite. We are failing too many of our kids.

This is the fundamental moral and economic challenge of our time.

I am proud to say that just yesterday, on the eve of a new academic year, the California Legislature proclaimed a new day for the schoolchildren of LA.

And as the kids go back to school, it is time for the whole community of LA to go to work in partnership.

And just so that there is no confusion on the question, I want to be crystal clear about the vote that the legislature took.

It wasn't really a vote for mayoral control.

It was a vote for community control!

It was a vote for more control for parents!

It was a vote for more control for teachers and principals at the school site!

They sent a message to our business leaders. That unless we get control of the crisis in our schools, we will never be a great global city!

And yesterday, the California Legislature sent an equally powerful message to our kids.

They didn't just say to the students that they should raise their expectations.

They said to the larger community of LA that we need to raise our expectations as a community.

That we need to move the issue of education reform to the front and center of our civic agenda.

That we need to tap our extraordinary wealth and abundant talent.

That we need to form a Los Angeles partnership for school excellence.

And ladies and gentlemen, I have a message for Superintendent Romer and the Board of Education.

I'm asking you to join our Los Angeles Partnership.

I'm asking you to reconsider your opposition to change.

I'm asking you to come along with us on this historic journey.

Let's show - together - what's possible when an entire community unites on behalf of its kids.

Let's join together in the classroom instead of joining battle in the courtroom.

Let's respect the legislature's mandate and the will of the people.

Let's be role models for our kids: Let's the make the selection of the next Superintendent a model of partnership, not partisanship.

Let's come together and choose a Superintendent who has the courage and conviction to fight for real change.

Let's keep what works -- and I want to be clear to the Superintendent and all those who've worked so hard for improvements at the elementary level...

I would never advocate abandoning programs that are serving our kids -- but let's challenge ourselves to meet a higher standard.

Friends - with this Los Angeles Partnership coming together and coming to life before our eyes, I think we'd all concede... that it's hard NOT to feel like a kid today.

We should all feel that way.

We should all feel like that kid on the first day of school, who sees the future with the freshest and most hopeful of eyes.

The Legislature has given us the opportunity to do something new. To do something big. To do something truly meaningful for our kids.

It's time to roll up our sleeves. It's time to commit ourselves to the hard work that it's going to take to succeed. It's time to dedicate ourselves to study. To devote ourselves as parents and as first educators.

We need to measure our progress. We need to cherish the teachers who make it all possible. We need to tap our community's wealth and creative talent.

And like that kid on the first day of school who sees a future so pregnant with possibility, we should all believe in our capacity to succeed.

Let's join together, Los Angeles.

Let's make this a genuine partnership!

Lo que necesitamos es el deseo, el animo de mejorar... Animo... Animo_de darles a nuestros hijos una mejor educación, un futuro brillante y una mejor vida!

Angelenos - Let's get to work!

God bless you all.

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