

SEIU Local 99 School Service Workers Overwhelmingly Ratify Contract Agreement with LAUSD

Landmark \$15 per hour minimum wage lifts 20,000 families out of poverty

Los Angeles – After three days of voting, the cafeteria workers, custodians, special education assistants, campus safety monitors and other school service workers represented by SEIU Local 99 have ratified their contract agreement with the Los Angeles Unified School District that includes a landmark minimum wage increase to \$15 an hour by July 1, 2016, that will lift nearly 20,000 LAUSD school workers and their families out of poverty.

Of the SEIU Local 99 members who voted, 82% voted yes to this agreement that significantly raises salary standards at LAUSD. Voter turnout for this ratification vote was 665% higher than the last time Local 99 members ratified their full contract. Members' increased involvement began last fall when, from October 2013 to April 2014, thousands came together to hold Listening Sessions. They discussed and prioritized their goals for this next contract with the District at more than 550 schools and work sites throughout Los Angeles.

This historic agreement sets a new standard for ending poverty in our schools. This will be felt in school districts across Los Angeles and across the country. By raising the salary floor, this is a giant first step in making sure that school jobs are good jobs. Nearly half of the school workers represented by Local 99 are parents of children attending LAUSD schools. And most of them are women of color, said SEIU Local 99 Executive Director Courtni Pugh. This establishes a living wage that will mean mom and dad can help with their children's homework instead of clocking in for their second job.

In addition to the minimum wage increase for workers earning below \$15 an hour, the agreement includes increases totaling 6.64% for all other workers and other improvements that will have a direct impact on the quality of student services:

- Increased staffing hours to ensure all students can learn in a safe, clean, and supportive environment;

- A process for expanding OASIS, a program spearheaded by SEIU Local 99 that offers services such as health care, counseling, and tutoring to students and their parents directly on LAUSD campuses.

This is a great day for Los Angeles, added Pugh. A \$15 minimum wage at the county's second largest employer lifts everyone up. This contract demonstrates the community perspective our Bargaining Team brings to the table and how the District worked together with us for the good of L.A. The impact of this agreement will be felt for years to come.

A \$15/hour increase will mean I don't have to work all the time to make ends meet, said Raul Meza, who works 8 hours per day cleaning and stocking the restrooms at Van Nuys High School. In addition to my job at LAUSD, I work as a ballroom supervisor on the weekends. I take on other jobs like catering, washing carpets, and selling trinkets just to put food on the table. \$15 will mean more time with my family. It means I can take my son to the park on weekends.

I already earn more than \$15 an hour. I see this establishing an improved salary schedule for years to come that will really help all the employees, families and students of LAUSD, said Esteban Torres High School Custodian Edna Logan. I feel honored by the School Board members who spoke about this wage increase as a social justice issue for the lowest paid workers in our schools.

The Los Angeles Unified School Board unanimously ratified the tentative agreement at their July 1, 2014 Board Meeting, as recommended by Superintendent John Deasy. This ratification by SEIU Local 99 members ensures that wage increases are effective in July and makes this agreement the official contract for SEIU Local 99 members through June 30, 2017.

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SEIU Local 99 represents 45,000 education workers throughout Southern California, including more than 35,000 cafeteria workers, custodians, special education assistants, bus drivers and other workers who provide essential student services and supports in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Nearly half of SEIU Local 99 members are parents or guardians of school-aged children.