



# RAISING UP PARENT VOICES FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



## A MESSAGE FROM THE SPEAK UP FOUNDER AND CEO

Dear Friends of Speak UP,

**In 2016, twelve parents sat around a kitchen table** and mapped out a strategy to give power to parent voices in LAUSD. The problem was clear: Kids don't have unions, and kids don't have lobbyists. Kids have parents. And parents are the only stakeholders in the system whose sole concern is the success of their kids.

During those initial discussions, we discovered two important facts: 1) parents knew their voices were not heard by the decision-makers in the school district, and 2) parents were not participating in the elections that determined who made those decisions.

We knew we had to find a way to give power to parent voices both as advocates and as voters.

**We have learned a lot in four years.**

**In 2017**, we learned that with powerful parent activism and a strong candidate, we could change the status quo through the ballot box.

**In 2018**, moving into new neighborhoods with different demographics, we learned how to meet parents where they are, by listening, responding and adapting our approach to parent engagement.

**In 2019**, responding to parent input, we created a Speak UP model for parent engagement and sustainable leadership development. Seeking to recruit strong school board candidates who represent their communities, we also learned that parents and community members need better resources to prepare them to run successful campaigns.

With every new idea, modification, success and failure, we learned the most important lesson of all: **when Speak UP listens, parent voices rise.**

Today, our parent leaders represent the demographic and socio-economic diversity of all of LAUSD. They are Latino, African American, Asian and white. They are affluent, middle class and low-income. Above all, they share a common passion to raise a collective voice to demand an excellent, equitable public education for the future of their children and our state. In this 2019 Annual Report we take the opportunity to share their stories, their accomplishments and what they have taught us about raising parent power. In telling the Speak UP story, we hope you will see why we continue to believe passionately in our work to support parents across the LAUSD to advocate and vote for the success of all children in their public schools.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Katie Braude', is positioned above a row of colorful hand silhouettes. The hands are in various colors (light blue, yellow, light green, light blue, orange) and are raised, symbolizing diversity and community.

Katie Braude, Speak UP Founder and CEO



## MISSION

Our mission at Speak UP is to engage, educate and activate parents and community members to advocate for excellent, equitable public education at their children's schools, in their communities, with elected representatives and at the ballot box.

## VISION

At Speak UP we foresee the day when:

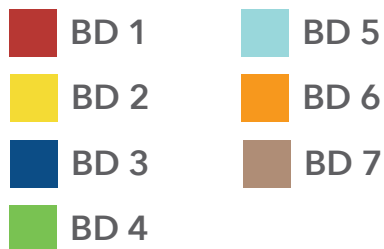
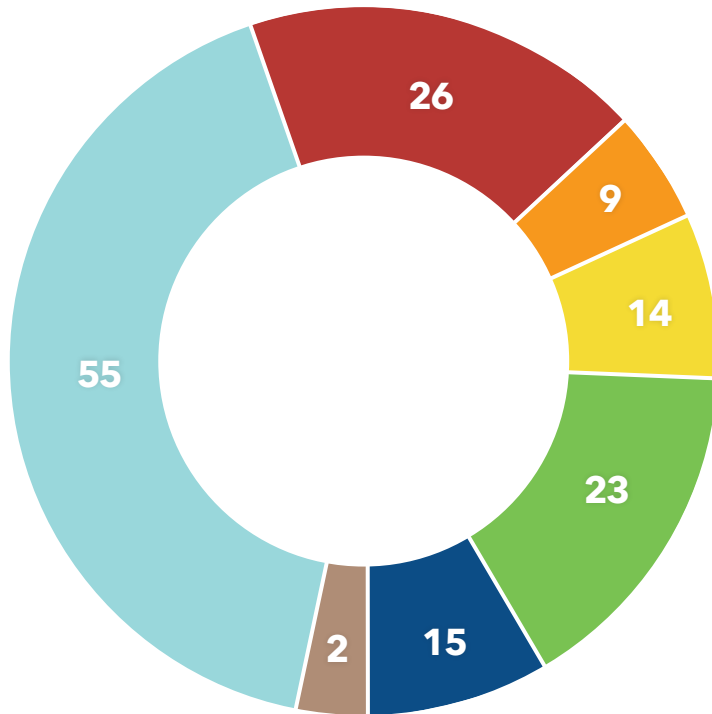
- ▶ All children in LAUSD will have equitable access to a great public school, where every classroom has high quality instruction, resources and school leadership; and parents, teachers and administrators have an equal and appropriate role in decision-making.
- ▶ Public opinion will favor kids-first education policies that support excellent school leadership and instruction, and equitable distribution of resources.
- ▶ Policy makers will promote education policies that support excellent school leadership and instruction, and equitable distribution of resources.

Parents have only one interest in the existing power structure: to achieve the best education for their children. When parents have the knowledge and tools to advocate, mobilize and vote on behalf of their children, their collective voice will compel policy makers to grasp the urgency and the need to do what's right for kids.

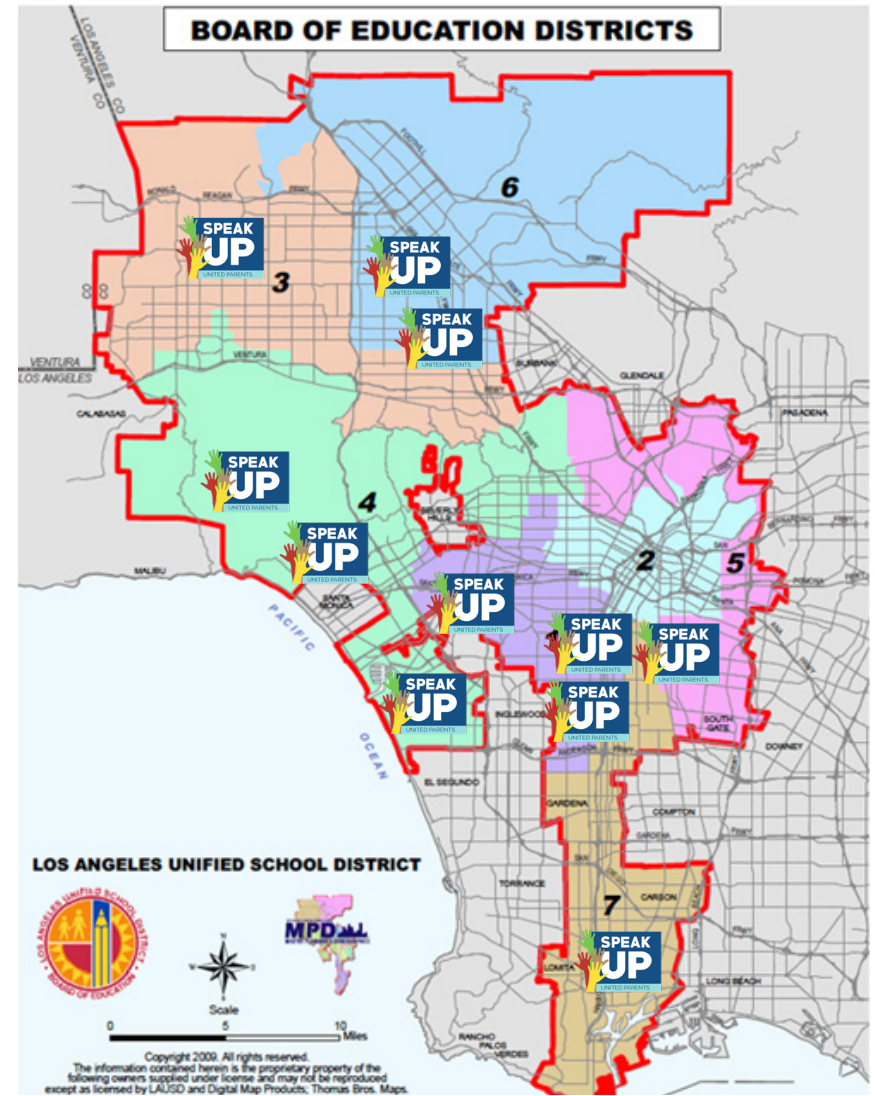


# PARENTS RAISE THEIR COLLECTIVE VOICES ACROSS ALL 7 LAUSD SCHOOL BOARD DISTRICTS

## PARENT LEADERS BY LAUSD BOARD DISTRICT



## WHERE WE WORK





# SPEAK UP PARENT VOICES HAD A POWERFUL IMPACT IN 2019



**3,100+**

Members

**146**

Active Parent Leaders

**56**

Workshops

**10,000+**

Doors Knocked On  
In Election Campaigns

**2,090**

Hours Advocating For Kids

**100+**

Public Testimonies

# POWERFUL PARENTS LEARN TO ASSERT THEIR RIGHTS

Our parent leadership model brings parent leaders together in increasingly larger arenas to develop policy goals and actions.

*"Speak UP listens to parents' concerns when no one else does. Speak UP works together with parents by educating them and empowering us to find the answers we need." - Rosa Andersen, BD5 Speak UP Parent*



## LOCAL

Parents meet 1-3 times a month to work on specific issues and develop campaigns.



## REGIONAL

Parents meet at regional policy meetings to stay informed about current and upcoming policy changes and elections at LAUSD, share campaign plans and strategies, and collaborate on how to make their voices heard with their school board members.



## DISTRICT

Four times a year, representatives from each region come together at the district-wide Parent Leadership Advisory Network (PLAN) meeting to share input from their regions, develop a Speak UP policy agenda and develop action plans to implement the agenda.

# POWERFUL PARENTS LEARN TO ASSERT THEIR RIGHTS

Parents have only one interest in the existing power structure: to achieve the best education for their children. Speak UP workshops help parents understand how the public education system works, their rights within it and how to advocate for all kids to get a better education.

## **PARENT POWER WORKSHOPS**

At Speak UP we believe that parents should have a more powerful voice in education policy. Kids don't have lobbyists, and kids don't have a union. Kids have parents, and parents are the only people whose sole interest is the success of kids. In this series, we take a closer look at power relationships at the LAUSD and provide resources for parents to be leaders in their communities. Change happens when people come together, know their rights and are ready to act.

## **ENGLISH LEARNERS WORKSHOPS**

Do you know if your child is an English Learner and the process of getting your child reclassified as English proficient? In this workshop we explore how to identify students as English Language Learners, the supports that should be provided by parents, teachers and administrators, and the process for students to become fluent in English.

## **SCHOOL CHOICE: MAKING THE BEST CHOICE FOR YOUR CHILD**

This workshop is designed to give parents an overview of the different types of school options within LAUSD while also providing them with the necessary supports to make a choice regarding which school would be the best fit for their child. This workshop runs for three sessions and will culminate with parents selecting a school for their child after a rigorous research process.

## **IEP PROCESS AND HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILD**

Have you asked for an evaluation for your child with special needs and been turned away? Is your child's school not providing an adequate Individualized Education Program or failing to follow through with the IEP? This workshop explains to parents and children with disabilities their basic rights and how to access them. This workshop also helps you create an IEP that truly supports your child's needs, so that you can focus on strengthening your child's abilities.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION IN LAUSD AND ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE**

Many families in LAUSD are struggling with the same problems educating their kids with special needs. Their kids are routinely denied needed services, enough hours of services or correct placement in schools. There are many systems in LAUSD that create these problems, and it requires an organized effort on behalf of parents to change this. This workshop describes the structure and various systems at play in LAUSD, and how to come together to demand change for all kids with special needs. .



## ENGAGED PARENTS SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER

By offering partnership and support in many communities previously unrepresented in the political arena, Speak UP parents are bringing their collective voice to the table and making a difference.

Our parents and community members organize, knock on doors, hold house meetings, strategize and advocate for all kids. They find the power is within themselves to raise their voices.

**In 2019 Speak UP parents spoke truth to power. Policy makers listened.**

Parents of Special Needs students spoke up at LAUSD Board meetings and scored meetings with district leaders and board members, shining a light on the chronic failure of the district to serve SPED students in inclusion settings, especially those with moderate to severe needs. Speak UP parents are continuing to drive a campaign to mandate Special Education training for all classroom teachers.

“ It wasn’t until they tried to take my son out of the school where he was developing well and learning, that I started taking the Speak UP workshops and I realized what an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) was, how to read it, how to approach the school staff. I learned how to make my voice heard and the power of my presence.”

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**Perla Esparza, Linda Marquez High School Parent.**  
Speaking in support of Special Needs equity for all children.



*Perla with her son Joshua and Anthony Aguilar, LAUSD Chief of Special Education, Equity and Access.*



# ENGAGED PARENTS SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER



REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 24, 2019

Speak UP parents' testimonies in support of a resolution calling for funding to improve facilities at LAUSD campuses sharing space with charter schools prompted the Board to more than double the money allocated for the proposed pilot program to \$5.5 million.

“ This money comes entirely from charter schools but would be used to help both schools. Sometimes I wonder if perhaps there are people who don't want to see this issue resolved because it's a convenient political wedge. But our children should never be used as political pawns. These are all our kids. They all deserve a safe, welcoming space to learn.”

Haan-Fawn Chau, WISH Parent. Testifying in support of co-location resolution.

Speak UP parents joined other advocates in a major victory that forced the LAUSD Board to release Student Growth Data that shows how much progress L.A. schools are helping kids make each year. The data are important for parents to get a clearer picture of how well the schools in their neighborhoods are serving their children.

“ It's unfortunate that we have to ask, even beg, for this data to be released when every single state in the country –except for California and Kansas– make this data accessible. This is not Kansas.”

Roxann Nazario, GALS Parent and Speak UP Parent Engagement Coordinator. Testifying in support of releasing Student Growth Data.



ITEM 4  
PUBLIC COMMENT

## SPEAK UP PARENTS CONNECT, COLLABORATE & COMMUNICATE

Digital and social media are essential components of Speak UP's advocacy strategies. Parent stories about their own experiences in the school system provide the most vivid illustrations of where and why we need change. By sharing their stories through blogs and videos on our English and Spanish language social media sites, we compel policymakers to see the real-life impact of their decisions. Our media program also provides platforms for deepening our collaboration with our advocacy partners, and increasing the power of the collective voice.

In 2019 Speak UP parents connected with their peers and communicated their stories, dreams and visions for improved public schools.



*In 2019, Speak UP parents organized and held a Peace Walk in Southeast LA, uniting district and charter parents to put Kids First.*



Speak UP Facebook followers have increased by **33%** to over **3,500**.



Speak UP kept parents informed with **64** blogs sharing parents' personal stories, information about the LAUSD Board's actions, and election updates.



Speak UP shared **39** videos showing how our parents advocate for their children's rights and work with their peers to become well informed advocates.



## SPEAK UP PARENTS CONNECT, COLLABORATE & COMMUNICATE

“ In the Down Syndrome community, there is a hashtag #shouttheirworth. This is my intention with writing this blog – to shout their worth. I am shouting the worth of every child with a disability and every single child in the zip codes that are too often overlooked. Every child has the right to an equitable education, regardless of the barriers they face. If we shout loud enough, maybe LAUSD will hear us. Maybe they will be forced to do better. LAUSD, you must do better!”

**Noel Scott, Speak UP Parent**

Excerpt from Noel's Speak UP blog. August 2019.

Read Noel's full blog at: [bit.ly/noel-scott-blog](https://bit.ly/noel-scott-blog)



## RAISING UP OUR EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF ALL LAUSD KIDS



Speak UP is poised to take our parent leadership model to more communities, and continue to build the all-critical mass of parent leaders who have the knowledge and tools needed to drive policy change through advocacy and elections.

Speak UP is working with our partners to develop a training program for parents and community members who want to go to the next level: those who want to run for office, manage political campaigns, or want to become more politically active in their communities.

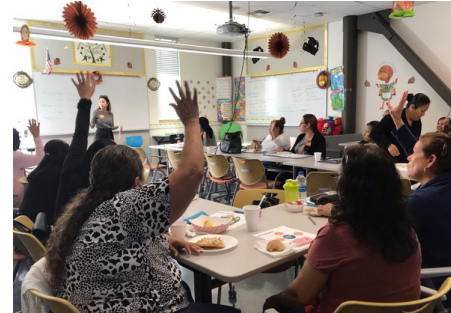
### **Speak UP parents will drive policy changes to advance:**

- ▶ Special Education Student Performance and Teacher Support
- ▶ African American Student Achievement
- ▶ Equitable Increased Funding
- ▶ Recruitment and Retention of Quality Educators





**1,000**  
New Speak UP Members



**54**  
Workshops, Trainings,  
House Meetings



**100**  
New Parent Leaders



**24**  
Regional  
Policy Meetings



**4,000+**  
Facebook Followers



**4**  
District-wide Parent  
Leadership Advisory  
Network (PLAN) Meetings

# FINANCIALS

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

January - December 2019

	Total	
	Jan-Dec 2019	Jan-Dec 2018 (PP)
<b>Income</b>		
Direct Contributions	\$ 1,324,925	\$ 951,901
Non-Government Grants	\$ 100,000	
Program Sales & Fees	\$ 100	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 1,425,025</b>	<b>\$ 951,901</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Grants & Direct Assistance	\$ 800	
Salaries & Related Expenses	\$ 957,857	\$ 529,339
Contract Service Expenses	\$ 308,875	\$ 230,702
Nonpersonnel Expenses	\$ 26,839	\$ 26,678
Facility Expenses	\$ 43,061	\$ 23,623
Travel & Conference Expenses	\$ 15,531	\$ 7,563
Other Client Specific Expenses	\$ 21,823	\$ 25,777
Other Expenses	\$ 15,291	\$ 9,120
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,390,076</b>	<b>\$ 852,801</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ 34,949</b>	<b>\$ 99,100</b>

## DONATE

SPEAK UP is a 501 (c)4 nonprofit, grassroots organization that depends on our members and supporters to help us achieve our mission. The vast majority of our donors are individual parent members making small donations. Your support will help ensure that we can continue to inform, connect and mobilize parents to speak up for positive change in California's schools.

1 Make a donation on our website:  
[www.speakupparents.org/donate](http://www.speakupparents.org/donate)

2 Mail a check to:  
**Speak UP**  
**11845 W Olympic Blvd, Suite 1100W Los Angeles, CA 90064**

3 Become a member and stay up to date with Board Watch, elections and advocacy campaigns. Join on our website:  
[www.speakupparents.org/join/](http://www.speakupparents.org/join/)



Donations are not tax-deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. For information about how to make a tax-deductible donation to the Speak UP Foundation, please visit the Speak UP Foundation website:  
[www.speakupparentsfoundation.org](http://www.speakupparentsfoundation.org)

For information about how to wire a donation, please contact [dora@speakupparents.org](mailto:dora@speakupparents.org)





Katie Braude  
*CEO*

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