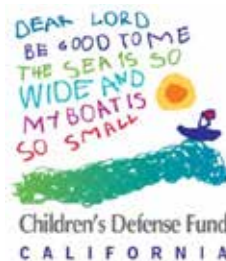




Press Release



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Innovative Partnership to Ensure Lynwood Children are Enrolled in Healthcare Coverage

Lynwood, Calif. – As students in Lynwood head back to school, an innovative partnership is working to ensure that students are healthy and ready to learn. The Lynwood Unified School District, along with three other schools in Compton, El Monte and Pico Rivera, is working in collaboration with the Children's Defense Fund and The School Superintendents Association (AASA) to identify and enroll uninsured children into health coverage.

"Ensuring every child is enrolled in the health coverage they need to survive and thrive will help level the playing field for children and close the opportunity gap. I applaud Lynwood Unified for recognizing that healthy children are going to be learning children and working to ensure enrollment of children in health coverage becomes an integral part of the school culture," said Marian Wright Edelman, President of The Children's Defense Fund.

While California has made tremendous progress in reducing the number of uninsured children over the past several years, hundreds of thousands of California children remain uninsured and many of those children are eligible for free or low-cost health insurance but are not yet covered.

"This project will bring us a step closer to ensuring that every child has the health care they need to do well in school," said Lorena Sanchez, Health Programs Coordinator at Children's Defense Fund-California.

A growing body of research demonstrates what teachers and parents know: healthy students are more likely to attend school, are better able to focus in class and are more ready to learn, ultimately earning better grades and achieving more in school.

“Our school district has been proactive about seeking out valuable partnerships like this one that does so much for our children in terms of their overall well-being and their ability to do well in school,” said Lynwood Unified Board of Education President Briseida Gonzalez. “We are dedicated to connecting our families to information and resources that will help them access the services they need.”

The school district is starting the upcoming school year with a new goal: identifying children who currently lack health insurance and linking them to health coverage. The district is taking steps to ensure that this is being done effectively and sustainably within its routine school practices. LUSD has modified its student enrollment and emergency cards to include a question about a student's current health coverage status. Those children who indicate they lack health insurance will be immediately connected to a local community health worker who will assist the family and child in obtaining health coverage. To get the word out about the importance of getting children covered, the school district is reaching out to parents, school personnel, and their local community through their Back-to-School Nights, health fairs, and other special activities.

"This partnership between school districts and supporting organizations is essential to our efforts to identify and enroll eligible children in Medi-Cal, Covered California and other programs," said Sharon-Adams Taylor, Associate Executive Director of the American Association of School Administrators. The project is made possible by a grant awarded by the Atlantic Philanthropies, a private foundation that is dedicated to bringing about lasting changes in the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people.

“We know that children with health insurance are more likely than their uninsured peers to perform well in school. We also know that uninsured children are more likely to miss additional days of school. This project offers our school district the opportunity to not only address the critical health needs of our students, but also improve their academic performance and school attendance,” said Superintendent Paul Gothold of the Lynwood Unified School District.



Additional schools working in partnership with CDF and AASA include, Compton Unified in Compton, CA; El Rancho Unified in Pico Rivera, CA; and the Mt. View School District in El Monte, CA.

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Children's Defense Fund-California is the California office of the Children's Defense Fund, a non-profit child advocacy organization that has worked relentlessly for nearly 40 years to ensure a level playing field for all children. www.cdfca.org

The School Superintendents Association founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders in the United States and throughout the world. AASA's mission is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children. www.aasa.org.

The Lynwood Unified School District is dedicated to offering students a world-class education to prepare them for success and career in the 21st century. Under its Achieving Greatness Initiative, the district is realigning all aspects of its operations to strengthen and expand instructional programs, enrichment and extracurricular activities, and support systems for students. For more information, visit www.lynwood.k12.ca.us.

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