



YOUTH COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor Edwin M. Lee
Honorable Members, Board of Supervisors

CC: Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board
Hydra Mendoza, Mayor's Families & Children Advisor
Honorable Members, Board of Education
Richard Carranza, Superintendent, San Francisco Unified School District
Jason Elliott, Director of Legislative & Government Affairs, Mayor's Office
Nicole Wheaton, Commissions & Appointments, Mayor's Office

FROM: Youth Commission

DATE: October 22, 2012

RE: Youth Commission position on Board of Supervisors file no. 120997 Ordinance appropriating \$3,000,000 of State Reserves for the San Francisco Unified School District for Fiscal Year 2012-2013

At our regularly scheduled meeting on October 15, 2012 the Youth Commission voted unanimously to support the following motion:

To support file no. 120997, which would improve the rates of students who are on track to graduate from San Francisco public high schools by appropriating \$3,000,000 of State Reserves to allow the San Francisco Unified School District to subsidize opportunities for students to earn and recover credits during the school year and in the summer months for FY2012-2013.

We would like to give you some context for the position expressed above.

Our motion to unanimously support the proposed action by the Board of Supervisors to provide supplemental appropriations that will expand credit-recovery options at SFUSD schools came out of a deep concern over the alarming rates of students in the class of 2014 who were not on track to graduate. While the implementation of the A-G course sequence as a requirement for graduation was a positive step in ensuring that all SFUSD students would graduate college-ready or possessing the skills for a living-wage job, this policy was met with a number of challenges in its implementation. Among these challenges was ensuring that there were adequate supports being provided for students in order to be successful in A-G courses, namely credit-recovery opportunities during the school year, after school and in the summer sessions. Securing financial resources that will improve the capacity of the A-G graduation policy, as is proposed in this legislation, will be key to the overall success of students who are

most at risk for not graduating.

During discussion on this item, Youth Commissioners proposed four recommendations regarding this legislation:

The Youth Commission urges the Board of Supervisors and the San Francisco Unified School District to identify and secure a sustainable source of funding that can support credit-recovery options for future graduating classes. As we understand it, the supplemental appropriations discussed in this legislation are one-time money from the state. While the development of an Early Warning Indicator (EWI) system will assist in identifying students at risk for not graduating A-G and will hopefully reduce the district's reliance on credit-recovery options, it would be a sound precaution to take to make sure that funds for credit-recovery opportunities are also available for future graduating classes if necessary.

The Youth Commission urges the Board of Supervisors and the San Francisco Unified School District to closely monitor and report back on the student *take-up and completion rates* for A-G credit-recovery course offerings. Given that the resources for this program are exhaustible one-time funding, it is critical that we ensure that the students who are most at risk to not graduate and have the highest need for credit-recovery opportunities are successfully being placed into, and are completing these courses.

The Youth Commission urges the Board of Supervisors and the San Francisco Unified School District to ensure that the credit-recovery opportunities being offered are fully inclusive of student sub-groups with unique needs. Specifically, credit-recovery options should accommodate students who are English Language Learners (ELL) or have learning disabilities.

The Youth Commission urges the Board of Supervisors and the San Francisco Unified School District to focus on pursuing additional equity-minded policies beyond A-G that will reduce the achievement gap among low-income students and students of color in the district. One means of accomplishing this would be to identify the SFUSD schools where low-income students and students of color have the strongest outcomes (standardized test scores, graduation rates, college matriculation rates, etc.), build a list of best practices based on the model schools, and scaling up these practices to schools throughout the district.