

## **First 5 LA Executive Director Kim Belshé's Letter to the Editor**

I applaud Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Board Member Bennett Kayser for showing he has a long-term vision of what will boost the educational achievement of the neediest children in our state and city: high-quality early education (“Early education needs more investment,” June 3).

As the Board Member notes, a growing body of research shows that high-quality early education programs are among the most effective, and most cost-efficient, ways to address LAUSD’s key educational priorities: it improves graduation rates, increases student enrollment, improves test scores, and even increases parental engagement. These programs are particularly effective with the students that the state’s new school funding system is intended to help the most: low-income students, English learners and foster youth. It is why First 5 LA is collaborating with a growing field of business leaders, educators, academics and others to advocate for expanding early learning opportunities.

Knowing the many and lasting benefits from early education, I share Board Member Kayser’s disappointment that the first proposed 2014-15 budget includes no additional funding for early education programs. And I join him in his call for all levels of government to increase investments in quality early education as a proven way to ensure that students are prepared to thrive in school and life.