We share great optimism and hope with the swearing in of the new Los Angeles Unified School District school board today. Our appreciation goes to the new and continuing board members as they take up the most noble task of overseeing the education of 700,000 young people and hence a huge hand in creating the future of L.A.

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and the business community joined Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and other partners in calling for a new and aggressive commitment to improve student success in L.A. The voters agreed and this board has a mandate to drive urgent and dramatic change.

The L.A. Area Chamber applauds the new school board for taking swift action in key areas of reform. Today, the board made a first motion to use student and district data to drive policy decisions including graduation, college acceptance, placement and eligibility rates, all of which are key measures for predicting the needs of the next generation workforce. The school board further discussed the need for all new and existing schools to be designed or organized as Small Learning Communities (SLCs) with no more than 500 to 1,000 students – a concept the Chamber has long advocated.

This is a historic moment. The new school board, the superintendent, the mayor, parents and the business community are all committed to improving our schools and are poised to take action. We must work together to aggressively confront the challenges ahead to ensure that all students are prepared to succeed in the 21st century workforce.

We look forward to working with the new school board to cast a future that boldly, creatively and courageously works to graduate all of our youth from high school, preparing them for careers and college. We urge board members to set high goals and establish aggressive timelines and benchmarks for action and results. We invite the school board and Superintendent Brewer to develop a shared agenda and urgent plan of action and commitment with Mayor Villaraigosa, organized labor, higher education, the business community, parents and other key stakeholders.

The Chamber has shown its commitment to public education and our youth through programs and campaigns serving more than 30,000 youth each year, including small school reform, Cash for College, Youth at Work and Principal For A Day. We have seen the power of schools that foster rigorous and relevant personalized environments where business people partner with teachers and students and yield fantastic results.

We urge all L.A. leaders and stakeholders to partner with this new school board to create a vibrant future for our students and our community. Educating our youth is a collective responsibility that we all share. And that’s The Business Perspective. We wish all of our readers a safe and joyous Fourth of July. We ask you to join us in remembering the thousands of women and men who are serving and protecting our great country and wish them a safe return home to their families.