



# the Parent press



The Newsletter for LAUSD Parents Vol. 15, No. 1 • Fall 2010

## Listening to Parents About School Reform

The first thirty LAUSD schools identified last year for major instructional reform under the Public School Choice (PCS) motion are now using the new strategies that were adopted.

The process included proposals for improvement from outside organizations and also school groups, plus discussions and presentations to parents and members of the community. There were orientation meetings so parents would understand how to participate. Next came an advisory vote by par-

ents and school staff on the proposals for their campus. The superintendent then took these results along with those from separate panels and presented his recommendations to the Board that made the final decisions.

Many parents felt they were not involved

enough in last year's process, which was completed in just a few months. This year in what is called Public School Choice (PCS) 2.0, there is ample time for parents and community members to become more involved and informed before they vote for their choice to run the school. "Last year, the time was too short, the outreach not strong enough," recalls Antonio Plascencia, LAUSD's PCS team. "We want to hear what families expect from their schools, what reform they suggest, and how they rate the applicants."

Twelve schools are targeted for PSC 2.0 academic transformation: 3 low-performing campuses and nine new schools. Originally, 8 low-per-

*"We want to hear what families expect from their schools, what reform they suggest, and how they rate the applicants."*

### PSC 2.0 Focus (low-achieving) Schools

Clay MS, Mann MS, Muir MS

### Improved schools removed from Focus list

Audubon MS, Harte Prep MS, Huntington Park HS, Los Angeles HS, Woodcrest ES

### New Campuses

CRES #14, relieving Lake St. PC, Rosemont ES, Union ES  
SRES #6, relieving 61st St, 66th St., 68th St. ES  
CRMS #7, relieving Carver MS, LA Academy MS  
CRHS #16, relieving Santee EC  
CRHS #13, relieving Eagle Rock, Franklin, Marshall HS  
SRHS #2, relieving Fremont, Jefferson HS  
SRHS #4, relieving Banning, Carson HS  
VRHS #4, relieving Granada Hills, Kennedy, Monroe HS  
VRHS #5, relieving Kennedy, San Fernando, Sylmar HS

Message from

Ramon C. Cortines  
Superintendent of Schools

## Helping Your Son or Daughter to Excel



You've probably heard the expression that a parent is a child's first teacher.

In reality, a parent is a child's most important teacher long after your little one takes those first steps or speaks his or her first words. At LAUSD, we need your help to teach your child.

As we settle into the 2010-2011 school year, remember that excellence begins with good habits. Set some goals for this school year such as perfect attendance. Being on time for school is also important; being five minutes early is even better. Being prepared to learn is essential. Make sure your children have what they need—and that they don't forget it because you are running late or there is early morning chaos at home.

Encourage your child to pay attention in class by asking every evening: What did you learn in school today? What did you like about school today? Be specific. What did you work on in reading or English? What did you do in math? Did you understand the lesson? Did you ask your teacher for help?

Be an active partner. After all, we share the same goal—the best education for every student.

See **SCHOOL REFORM**, p. 7



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All inquiries should be sent to:  
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1360 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90026  
(866) 669-7272  
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<http://sfpc.lausd.k12.ca.us/pcsb>

Translated by  
Jaël Ovalle, PCSB

message from

**Christopher Downing**, Administrator, Parent Community Services Branch



**More than ever before, the two words Action and Parents are being invoked**

**throughout the district to provide the best academic experiences for our children:**

Action by Parents to choose a better school for their students if the home campus is not meeting their expectations; Action by Parents to speak emphatically for and against reform plans being proposed to improve their schools; Action by Parents in making decisions about how money will be spent on their local campus; Action by Parents as they take parent education classes

to build their own strengths; and Action by Parents to stop truancy so that their children can graduate successfully.

A new initiative to develop a strong teacher evaluation system is gearing up, and parents will have an opportunity to volunteer to participate in its design. Your ideas count just as much as those by administrators, teachers, and education experts.

Our parent centers are stronger, better equipped, and more welcoming than they've ever been. Nearly 1000 community representatives received intensive training to open the centers' doors every day with answers and opportunities for all families. Visit yours often and join the team of Action Parents who, like you, want to be involved in your child's successful education.

## New LAUSD Leaders

**Dr. John Deasy is the new Deputy Superintendent of LAUSD, reporting directly to Superintendent Ray Cortines.**

Previously, he served as Deputy Director of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle, Washington. He also was Superintendent of Schools for Prince George's County in Maryland, Santa Monica-Malibu School District, and Coventry Public Schools in Rhode Island.

**Five local districts have new superintendents as the 2010-2011 school year begins.**

As the instructional and administrative leaders of your child's education, you should know whom to call or visit. See the table below for the complete list of local district superintendents and their contact telephone numbers:

Local District 1	Linda Del Cueto	818-654-3600
Local District 2	Alma Pena	818-755-5300
Local District 3	Gay Havard (interim)	310-914-2100
Local District 4	Dale Vigil (interim)	213-241-0100
Local District 5	Robert A Martinez (interim)	323-224-3100
Local District 6	Rowena Lagrosa (interim)	323-278-3900
Local District 7	George McKenna	323-242-1300
Local District 8	Michael Romero (interim)	310-354-3400



## Parent Centers As School Centers



Assistant Principal Jose Kubes speaks to a parent workshop in the new parent center at Manual Arts High School.

**P**arents are streaming into Manual Arts High School these days, headed for the bright and busy parent center. "It's Room 146," says a teacher, pointing to the new facility.

The old parent center closed last year; the new one welcomes visitors with brightly painted walls, new furniture, new computers just for parent use, a separate space for parent trainings, a parent resource library, and room to help with teachers' projects. "Our goal is to increase parent participation by 12% this year," says Ruby Guerrero, speaking above the buzz of the busy room. It's the goal shared by

most of LAUSD's 500 parent centers.

Parent centers are becoming the resource center for families, according to Community Rep Esther Wieder at Tarzana Elementary. "There's always something valuable for parents – workshops, guest speakers, projects to help our teachers," she says. "I'm a parent, too. Everything we do for our schools is a good thing we do for our children." More than 1300 community representatives - who direct the Centers – are trained to offer everything from a warm welcome to a class in literacy to a private location for parent-teacher meetings. The Parent Engagement Tool Kit is the guide in every school. "Want to learn how to

See **PARENT CENTER**, page 7

## Technology to Combat Student Truancy



"When parents work with me to get their truant student back in school, we can be effective," says Garfield High School Attendance Counselor Veronica Villanueva, here counseling a returning teen.

**"W**hen parents get involved in their student's attendance problems, truancy usually stops," says Veronica Villanueva.

As the Attendance Counselor at Garfield High School, she knows first-hand how serious the problem of truancy is and how important it is for parents to participate in the solution. So Ms. Villanueva is pleased that LAUSD is using technology to make sure that parents are aware if their student is truant.

More than 27,000 LAUSD students, ages 6 – 18, are chronically truant in each school year – not in school and without a parent's excuse – or frequently tardy each year. Now an automated system that generates letters to parents will help reduce these costly and self-defeating absences. Notification letters to parents of truant students are now written through the district's Integrated Student Information System (ISIS) and sent out.

This upgrade speeds family notification and means parents can seek help and resources for their student more quickly. The sooner parents get help for their child, the

See **STUDENT TRUANCY**, page 4

## Parent Notes

The monthly meeting of the Parent Collaborative has a new date. The group, which welcomes all LAUSD parents, will now meet on the fourth Wednesday of each month beginning at 4:15pm. The Parent Collaborative, an open forum for discussion of the school issues important to parents and their children, is held at the Parent Community Services Branch, 1360 West Temple Street, Los Angeles 90026.

### PARENT SUMMIT

Mark Your Calendar! The 14th Annual Parent Summit will be held on Saturday, April 30, 2011 at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

### Student Truancy, from page 3

more likely his or her attendance will improve. In the past, these letters were created manually at individual schools. This was a very time-consuming process and not as accurate as technology can be.

"Parents pay attention to these letters. We will be bombarded, and that's good," explains Ms. Villanueva. "We want to work with families to determine why the child is missing school and provide the support and resources to put an end to additional unexcused absences. We have a 90% success rate when we work together." For more information, parents can call Pupil Services at 213-241-3844. ●

## Transition Kindergarten: Getting Kids Ready To Succeed in School



School has just begun for the new students in Transition Kindergarten at Ochoa Learning Center.

**This school year brings an opportunity for the youngest kindergartners to participate in a new program that can build a strong foundation in academic and social skills that are so important for school success.**

That program, Transition Kindergarten, is intended for four-year-olds who turn five between September 1st and December 2nd and designed to benefit from this year of special instruction before they enroll in traditional kindergarten.

Parent Amanda Navarette already knew how important age – even a few months – can be to a student's success in kindergarten. "My son was the baby of his kinder-

garten class; he didn't turn five until November, and he struggled in his first school experience two years ago," she recalls. So when her younger daughter Beatrice had the chance to enroll in the transition kindergarten at Ellen Ochoa Learning Center, she signed up quickly.

This year of preparation for age-eligible children is offered in 37 LAUSD elementary schools. "We noticed that children who were asked to repeat kindergarten were usually those with birthdays later in the year," explained Mara Bommarita, Principal at Ochoa Learning Center. "This new program gives them the gift of time – to talk and play with others, to prepare for reading and writing that older four and five-year-olds usually can do."

Message from **Yolie Flores** LAUSD Board Member



Parents at Fletcher Elementary School greeted Board Member Yolie Flores (center front) during her campus visit.

## Welcome to all LAUSD parents, family and friends as we begin a new school year!

Whether you are a parent of a new or returning student, you are one of our most valuable resources and a critical partner in your child's education. At LAUSD, one of our new goals is to ensure that parents are provided the access, tools and information needed to be an actively engaged partner in his or her child's education. I urge you to be active in your school community and help us provide a quality education to every student.

Over the past year, we have been discussing the importance of effective teachers as the most significant element of a quality education. While our focus on this started with a Teacher Effectiveness Taskforce created by the Board of Education in 2009, the Los Angeles Times series on teacher effectiveness helped bring this issue into the public spotlight and garner the attention it needs.

Recently, my colleagues and I unanimously passed a resolution directing the Superintendent to begin the union negotiations needed to implement the Taskforce recommendations related to teacher and

administrator evaluations. We also adopted six principles to make clear our expectations for a new evaluation system. Specifically, these include:

1. Meaningful parent engagement that will result in multiple evaluation measures that address the needs of parents to understand student and teacher performance, and to make informed decisions about their children's education.
2. Multiple measures including a balanced use of appropriate value-added data.
3. Differentiated levels of instruction and performance including actual good instruction/leadership.
4. Strong emphasis on evidence of student learning over time, offering feedback to instruction rather than feedback to simple routines.
5. Ratings must always be useful to teachers and administrators. They must result in timely, specific feedback on all levels of performance, be used to establish a roadmap for needed supports, and to improve instructional dialogue at the school level.
6. Must inform all employment decisions including tenure, hiring for specialist or leadership positions, new hires, or when restructuring a school.

*At LAUSD, one of our new goals is to ensure that parents are provided the access, tools and information needed to be an actively engaged partner in his or her child's education. I urge you to be active in your school community and help us provide a quality education to every student.*

**Yolie Flores**  
LAUSD Board Member

Parents are a critical part of this process. We need your support, feedback and involvement to ensure this new system will provide what you need to make informed decisions about your child's education: the progress of your child's school, the effectiveness of your child's teacher, and the progress of your child's learning. When parents, teachers and administrators work together to create strong learning environments in schools, classrooms and at home, our children will soar beyond our imagination to reach their fullest potential. ●

## Parents Can Choose Better Schools for their Children



Parent Kathlyn Evans chose to transfer her son Dakota using NCLB–Public School Choice and is proud of the improvement in his academic achievement.

### Public School Choice in LAUSD has several faces.

One face receiving attention recently is a program to improve selected low-achieving schools by implementing new educational models. Called Public School Choice Motion 2.0, the reform program applies to 12 schools this year.

Another face is named No Child Left Behind–Public School Choice (NCLB-PSC) and is required by the federal government's No Child Left Behind Act. A lesser-known program, but available to over 400,000 LAUSD parents, NCLB-Public School Choice provides parents of students who attend low-achieving (called Program Improvement or PI) schools with the option to transfer them to campuses that meet or exceed government academic standards. There are 359 PI schools in the district.

NCLB-Public School Choice mandates that parents can request a student transfer from a PI school to a non-PI school. "Parents have the opportunity, when they use NCLB-PSC, to access new opportunities for their children and to provide them with the best quality education available," says Kathleen Mooney, Director of School Partnerships at Families In Schools. "Every year parents should think about which

school is best for their child." Yet, last year fewer than 800 parents chose to transfer their children using NCLB-PSC.

Kathlyn Evans got a transfer for her son Dakota. "Our local schools were PI. I wanted something better for him." So she applied for NCLB-Public School Choice and chose Portola Middle School. "It was very different for him; they had lots of computers, uniforms, and better student behavior on campus." After Portola, Kathlyn chose the new Visual and Performing Arts High School in downtown LA. for Dakota. "He knows his education is better. He's more academic and interested in art and music, too"

Kathlyn knew about NCLB-PSC because "I pay attention and read a lot." The application comes to every district home in the annual Choices Brochure, the publication, which also contains information about LAUSD's Magnet and Permits With Transportation Programs. Parents do not have to find a non-PI school. After they apply, they receive the names of two higher-performing, non-PI schools to choose from.

The Choices brochure will be mailed to LAUSD homes in early November. For more information, go to [www.lausd.net](http://www.lausd.net) and type NCLB-Public School Choice in the search box or call 213-241-6532. ●

## A Gift to Parents



**T**housands of LAUSD parents have been targeted for a gift that will multiply for them and their children for years to come.

Parent Center libraries will soon spring up around the district stocked with books and materials that can guide parents to build literacy skills, academic achievement, and family effectiveness for their children as well as for themselves. These new Parent Center libraries are possible—thanks to a gift from the Target Corporation of \$150,000.

"This generous investment in our parents, students, and literacy creates an environment where parents are respected and encouraged to expand their abilities to support their children's education," says Melissa Infusino, LAUSD's Director of Partnership. "Target is a valuable partner in this important work." The corporation previously contributed \$50,000 to the district's Parent Summit.

The grant will fund 100 parent center libraries in elementary schools. Individual schools will submit applications for funding. Besides shelves and books, each Parent Center library also will receive a computer for training and online resources; workbooks, information about community services, and LAUSD's Parent Engagement Took Kit will be housed there, too. The libraries can become the Center's hub for parent training, whether in workshops or individual learning.

A bulletin will be sent to elementary schools in October, alerting the Parent Center and the principal of the opportunity and with information about applications for these Target Parent Center Libraries. ●

# A Healthy Corner

The goal of the *Network for a Healthy California—LAUSD* is to increase healthy eating and physical activity among pre-K through 12th grade students in the district. We should all be motivating children to eat more fruits and vegetables and enjoy 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Here's an easy way to get started:

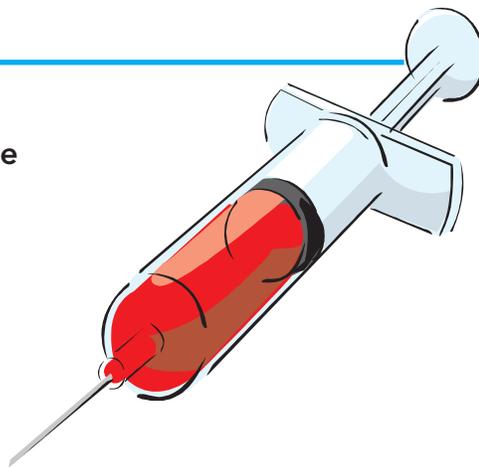
Simple Snack Substitutes for a Healthier Diet	
Less Healthy 	More Healthy 
Potato chips with creamy dip	Whole wheat pita bread with hummus
French fries with ketchup	Celery sticks with peanut butter
Candy	Dried fruit (raisins, cranberries, apricots)
Ice cream	Frozen banana pops

The *Network* provides teachers with lesson plans plus fresh fruits and vegetables in classrooms. It also offers free classes for parents who want to learn how to create a healthier lifestyle for their families. The website is [www.healthylaUSD.net](http://www.healthylaUSD.net). It contains dozens of healthy ideas for everyone.

## Time to Protect Children and Families with Flu Vaccines

Doctors tell us that everyone 6 months of age and older should get vaccinated against the flu. That means the whole family should be protected from an illness that strikes 1 in 5 people, with school-age children much more likely to be infected than adults.

Flu shots can be obtained at no charge through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program at their regular doctor's office (ask if he or she is participating) or at health clinics. If your children or you are uninsured, find no- or low-cost immunization by calling 2-1-1 for a nearby location.



Outreach clinics should be in place by October 25th.

Go to [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip) for complete details.

## School Reform, from page 1

forming schools were selected. However, the state's 2010 API scores indicated that five of those schools made sufficient improvement to be removed from the 2.0 list.

More than 14,000 families have children in the PSC 2.0 schools. Family groups are being selected to anchor a series of parent conversations, as outside organizations and groups apply to reform instruction in those schools. Parent input is crucial. "Some of the applicants are already reaching out to families," Mr. Plascencia adds. Right now, we're urging parents to join the discussions." In December, all parents in the 12 PSC 2.0 schools will be invited to consider both summaries and full presentations of the reform models proposed for their school.

Every parent is encouraged to get involved now so that parents' voices will be heard and respected. For more information, go to [www.lausd.net](http://www.lausd.net) and click on Public School Choice or call 213-241-2547 to volunteer, get information, or learn more about the reform. Calls from Connect-Ed will also alert parents about how to get involved.

## Parent Center, from page 3

improve your child's reading skills? Your parent center can offer a class for you," reports Alvaro Alvarengo, an LAUSD parent involvement specialist. Improve your computer skills? Talk to the principal? It's all available in the center." Parent Center staff can also help parents learn how to use the School Report Cards to connect with their child's teacher to develop ways they can help with study habits at home.

More than 50 community and business organizations are helping to fund the strengthening of LAUSD parent centers. The entire renovation of the facility at Manual Arts was paid by private donations. Parent education is in full swing there, with a ten-week class in tenants' rights to be followed with one on computer technology. "We think of the parent center as our homeroom," says parent Ana Carrion.

# More Parental Choice: The Romero Open Enrollment Act

**P**arents have more options to improve the quality of education for their children than at any time in recent memory.

The newest choice is a state law that permits parents of students attending one of California's 1000 low-achieving schools to request a transfer to another campus with a

higher API score either within their current district or in another district. Eighty-three LAUSD schools are included on the state's list of 1000 low-achieving campuses.

The Romero Open Enrollment Act, named for Gloria Romero, the state legislator who sponsored the bill, "expands the possibilities for parents and students who want a school where the educational outcomes appear to be stronger," explains Rene

Gonzalez, LAUSD's Assistant Superintendent for Student Health and Human Services. Parents and guardians can apply to transfer their children from a Program Improvement (PI) school to a higher performing school inside or outside LAUSD. If the school of choice is inside LAUSD, parents must apply for the 2011-2012 school year by January 1, 2011. If that school is outside LAUSD, the parent must contact that district for details and application rules.

## Transition Kindergarten, *from page 1*

"It's not too late to enroll. Some of our transition programs still have space," says Ruth Yoon, an administrator of the district's Transition Kindergarten, which is a full-day program. Diana Rodriguez' daughter Leah likes her Ochoa class. Her mom says, "I knew she was smart, but also that she wasn't

mature enough to sit still much. This is a good program for her. Already she can spell her name."

For more information about enrolling your four-year-old now, call one of the schools below. ●

SCHOOL	PHONE	SCHOOL	PHONE
Calahan St. EL	818-886-4612	Rosewood Ave. EL	323-651-0166
Germain St. EL	818-341-5821	Cesar Chavez EL	323-276-1440
Hart St. ES	818-340-6222	Rowan EL	323-261-7191
Lanai Rd EL	818-788-1590	Sheridan St. EL	323-263-9818
Langdon Ave. EL	818-892-0779	Sierra Park EL	323-223-1081
Limerick EL	818-341-1730	Ellen Ochoa LC	323-869-1300
Sunny Brae EL	818-341-0931	Martha Escutia PC	323-585-8237
Winnetka EL	818-341-5422	Middleton PC	323-826-9533
Canterbury EL	818-892-1104	Stanford PC	323-563-9208
Coldwater Canyon EL	818-765-6634	99th St. EL	323-564-2677
Columbus Ave. EL	818-779-5440	116th St.	323-754-3121
Sherman Oaks EL	818-784-8283	Graham EL	323-583-1263
Braddock Dr. EL	310-391-6707	John Mack EL	323-730-7620
Cienega EL	323-939-1138	McKinley Ave	323-582-7481
Richland EL	310-473-0467	135th St. EL	310-324-4454
Western Ave EL	323-295-3261	Broad Ave. EL	310-835-3118
Kingsley EL	323-644-7700	Cabrillo Ave. EL	310-832-6446
Lafayette Park PC	213-380-5039	Dominguez EL	310-835-7137
MacArthur Park PC	213-381-7217	Gulf EL	310-835-3157

*"We have many fine schools within LAUSD. We invite parents to work with us. Schools get better when we all work together."*

"We have many fine schools within LAUSD," Mr. Gonzalez says. "We invite parents to work with us. Schools get better when we all work together." Only online applications will be accepted. The Open Enrollment Permit Application will be available on November 1st at [www.lausd.net](http://www.lausd.net), click on Families. Lists of low and higher-achieving schools can be found at the California Department of Education website at [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/eo/op/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/eo/op/). For LAUSD application help, call 213-241-3844. ●