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PRESS ADVISORY

PUENTE Learning Center Approved by LAUSD to Expand Charter School from TK - 5th Grade

Los Angeles, April 11, 2018 – In 2002, PUENTE Learning Center founded Boyle Heights' first charter school, serving students in kindergarten and their families. On April 3, 2018, The Los Angeles Unified School District approved the expansion to serve students through 5th grade. Utilizing the slow growth roll out model, one grade will be added each year, beginning with first grade for the 2018-2019 school year. This will allow all the charter school to expand its capacity from 100 to 400 students.

Current parent Candy Torres stated, "The community is so excited to have PUENTE Charter School become a complete elementary school. The students and families love the school and now we can have our children there for many years!"

The Boyle Heights community has long requested PUENTE Charter School expand to a full elementary school to provide children and families in Boyle Heights with academically-sound educational activities and experiences. Leveraging our existing relationship with the Boyle Heights community, PUENTE will continue to provide educational services for the entire family.

The charter school will utilize a new instructional design, "Funds of Knowledge." This framework recognizes, celebrates and incorporates our families' cultural wealth into lesson plans and learning objectives using center-based workstation activities aligned to Common Core Standards. Because the overwhelming majority of our students are English learners (70%), Funds of Knowledge applies students' backgrounds and family environments to help them explore multiple pathways to mastery of grade level standards.

Two new employee positions; Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, and Dean of Community and Parent Engagement will work with the School Principal to ensure the school's curriculum is implemented and follows best practices. In addition, PUENTE will hire a Special Education instructor to ensure the recruitment, enrollment, service, and retention of students with disabilities at PUENTE Charter School.

Our inaugural class of first graders will begin the 2018-2019 school year in our new "butterfly" wings comprised-of two new classrooms, constructed with the generous support from the Vernon CommUNITY Fund. Plans for future classroom construction in our Boyle Heights building is in the works as PUENTE Charter School continues to expand.

About PUENTE Learning Center - An established nonprofit presence in the Los Angeles community for over 30 years, PUENTE Learning Center is recognized for its commitment to its mission and focus on education. PUENTE's programs are designed to create a pipeline or "bridge" for students in all levels of their education in the community of Boyle Heights, East Los Angeles and beyond. Annually, PUENTE provides academic instruction to more than 3,600 children, youth, and adults and, to date, over 100,000 individuals have made use of the tuition-free resources on the path to self-sufficiency for themselves and their families.

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