



**Parent Handbook
2018-2019 Academic Year**

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What is a Charter School?

A Charter School is a public school that is given operational autonomy in exchange for being held highly accountable to the eight state priorities of the Local Control Funding Formula and documented in the school's charter petition, which is approved by the local school district - the Los Angeles Unified School District. PUENTE was first authorized in 2002 and has successfully renewed its charter three times, the latest including a revision to expand to fifth grade.

PUENTE Charter School

PUENTE Charter is proud to offer the community of learners an intentionally-designed dedicated Children's Wing that incorporates literacy work stations and technology enhancements for an experiential and participatory learning program. As educators we understand that students learn in different ways, so we offer rich and differentiated learning opportunities. Using all five senses provides an appropriate scaffolding approach as students build high-level academic content knowledge, skills and language. PUENTE's unique classroom rotation supports the multiple opportunities for students to express that understanding-- through the visual arts (hands-on project based learning, mural and collage- making, realia) and the performing arts (music, creative dance and drama). Students also participate in the designing, engineering and presentation of projects that connect to our theme- based learning. Through these peer-based projects, students are able to apply their content and skill knowledge in purposeful and meaningful ways. Parent feedback concerning the respectful and dignified school design and curriculum resources confirm this value-add component of PUENTE. Parent satisfaction with facility environment yields a consistent 98% "extremely satisfied" response rate during the term of the charter.

To promote meeting the needs of all students, the use of effective, research-based class management procedures to embed appropriate depth and complexity to the Common Core State Standards provide the ability for the instructional staff to meet students at their mastery level, including advanced, and allocate the resource support accordingly. For example, the rotation- based schedule with work centers provides the ability to cluster, and have flexible student groupings, and teaching to the zone of the proximal development. The option to strengthen student momentum and reinforce anchor activities with additional take home work is utilized regularly by the instructional team.

PUENTE Charter School students and families receive a high quality education that integrates the arts, math and science (including engineering) into all disciplines. Carl Sagan stated, "All children are born natural scientists." The primary role of our PUENTE instructional and administrative team members is to leverage this curiosity into a continued love for learning. When planning curriculum, our teachers use the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and California State Common Core Standards (CCSS) as the learning goals, yet are responsive to students' questions, ideas and interests. We believe that planning and instruction should be integrated and

interdisciplinary, as these approaches lend themselves to more meaningful, in-depth and engaged learning. Our classrooms environments are designed to foster 21st century skills--critical thinking, communication, creativity, and collaboration, and to help students feel safe so that they can be inquisitive learners.

Our culturally-relevant learning environment respects and celebrates our diverse representation of students and is a key component of the strengths perspective of our school culture. Our service to our Latino families offers us the opportunity to ensure family communications are accessible in English and Spanish. Our students and families' bilingual capacities are affirmed as assets to the school community. Our inclusive embracing of our families' rich identities is a guiding principle of our school operations and is expressed through our available parent education supports.

Our intentional emphasis on quality parent/caregiver engagement in support of a strong home-to-school connection serves to honor parents' role as "first teacher" and to responsibly initiate parents into the school system. With the extension of tools, resources and an "open" school environment, the promotion of parent advocacy for the rights of their child and themselves is encouraged and supported.

With the standards-based, Common Core-aligned curriculum focusing on the core skills and content area knowledge, and the building of critical-thinking skills that students need to excel, PUENTE Charter School personalizes the learning for each student and family in recognition of their existing strengths, and is the full expression of our belief that every child can succeed regardless of perceived obstacles.

Classes are offered at the PUENTE campus at 501 S. Boyle Avenue in Boyle Heights, The state-of-the-art facility, built to stringent seismic code and safety specifications, feature modern classrooms; fully networked computer labs/stations; children's lavatories; and access to a multi-purpose room and indoor food court. The facilities also feature a recently installed outdoor playground.

Address and Telephone Number

PUENTE Charter School operates from within PUENTE Learning Center, located at:

501 S. Boyle Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90033
323.780.2961

Personnel

There are key staff members to provide support with your family questions and concerns.

Chief Executive Officer: Andrea Bazán
Teaching staff: **Instructors: Jannette Cañas (K); Noelle Walker (K);
Bubby Yu (1st); Shivani Modi (1st)**

Principal: Jerome Greening
Dean of Engagement: Diana Juarez
Dean of Curriculum & Instruction: Dr. Norma Moreno
Office Support: **Graciela Ramos**

Paraprofessionals: Irene Ortiz (K); Maria Gomez (K); Maria Elena Pinedo (1st); & Lupita Santana (1st)

Curriculum

Curricula Overview

The desired outcome of the culturally responsive teaching at PUENTE Charter School is a powerful double-focused one. First, including rich cultural components in the curriculum content and classroom instruction in support of Common Core State Standard mastery and cultural heritage understanding, and the development of social consciousness, intellectual capacity, and personal and political efficacy to combat prejudices and other forms of oppression and exploitation to best support our students as the future global leaders.

One of the leading advocates of this approach is Luis C. Moll, associate professor at the University of Arizona. Moll has been studying literacy instruction and directing field studies for more than a decade. His findings have made him a strong advocate for leveraging home and community resources to best support student learning. Conducting what he terms an "ethnographic analysis" revealed that many families have abundant knowledge that the schools did not know about--and therefore did not use in order to teach academic skills.

Moll described the potential use of this cultural capital as "truly formidable." He noted that once they are uncovered and mobilized for learning, they can become a social and intellectual resource for a school and has named this instructional approach supporting an intentional home-to-school connection, Funds of Knowledge.

For PUENTE, Funds of Knowledge represents a culture of excellence and progress in addition to our mission guided by the values of equity serving the needs of all our students. In practice, our teaching approach using Funds of Knowledge will allow PUENTE teaching staff to leverage student experiences and interests to develop culturally responsive content to be applied towards subject mastery and language mastery. Consistent with the tenets of socio-cultural theory, students will then use their own bank of knowledge including information, skills, and strategies, and develop more formal, scientific, conceptual knowledge analogous to schooling delineated by the Common Core State Standards for grades TK-5.

The PUENTE Charter School instructional design aligns with the new California Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts and mathematics, the

English Language Development (ELD) standards, the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and the History-Social Science Content Standards for Public Schools. The core subjects at PUENTE Charter School are English language arts, mathematics, science and history-social science. Current state board of Education approved textbooks and materials, aligned with the California Common Core Standards, as well as other additional resources, establish the scope and sequence for each of the following core curricular areas.

PUENTE Charter School provides students in grades TK – 5 an instruction program plan and environments intentionally designed to address age appropriate learning styles. Students in grades TK – 2 focus on learning their foundational skills, academic and social areas of development providing children the tools to become confident and independent learners in the core content areas. TK – grade 2 teachers discuss specific methods young students need to smoothly transition and reach level proficiency in the upper elementary grades.

To help children excel in the upper grades 3 – 5, teachers will focus on specific foundational and grade level skill sets, such as reading by grade 3. Specific PD’s, trainings, collaborative team teacher meetings, RTI sessions, and lessons support students to reach specific grade level benchmarks.

Students enrolled in grades TK - 2 and in grades 3 – 5 each have their own separate bell schedule and designated classroom areas best suited for optimum student success.

PUENTE’s goal is to provide its students with the necessary tools needed for deeper learning experiences and preparation needed of the following core concepts. The TK – Grade 5 specific content core areas are specified in the following tables:

Content Core Areas TK – Second Grade				
Grade/Source	ELA	MATH	SCIENCE	HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE
TK -California Preschool Learning Foundations Volume 1 CCSS NGSS History-Social Science Content Standards for California	Reading Literature Reading: Informational Text Reading: Foundational Skills Writing Speaking & Listening Language	Counting & Cardinality Operations & Algebraic Thinking Measurement & Data Geometry	Physical Sciences Life Sciences Investigation & Experiments Earth Sciences	Learning & Working Now & Long Ago
Kindergarten CCSS NGSS History-Social Science Content Standards for California	Reading Literature Reading: Informational Text Reading: Foundational Skills Writing Speaking & Listening Language	Counting & Cardinality Operations & Algebraic Thinking Numbers & Operations in Base Ten Measurement & Data Geometry	Physical Sciences Life Sciences Investigation & Experiments Earth Sciences	Learning & Working Now & Long Ago
First Grade CCSS NGSS History-Social Science Content Standards for California	Reading Literature Reading: Informational Text Reading: Foundational Skills Writing Speaking & Listening Language	Counting & Cardinality Operations & Algebraic Thinking Numbers & Operations in Base Ten Measurement & Data Geometry	Physical Sciences Life Sciences Investigation & Experiments Earth Sciences	A Child’s Place in Time & Space

Second Grade CCSS NGSS History-Social Science Content Standards for California	Reading Literature Reading: Informational Text Reading: Foundational Skills Writing Speaking & Listening Language	Counting & Cardinality Operations & Algebraic Thinking Numbers & Operations in Base Ten Measurement & Data Geometry	Physical Sciences Life Sciences Investigation & Experiments Earth Sciences	People Who Make a Difference
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Content Core Areas Grades 3 – 5				
Grade/Source	ELA	MATH	SCIENCE	HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE
Third Grade CCSS NGSS History-Social Science Content Standards for California	Reading Literature Reading: Informational Text Reading: Foundational Skills Writing Speaking & Listening Language	Counting & Cardinality Operations & Algebraic Thinking Numbers & Operations in Base Ten Measurement & Data Geometry	Physical Sciences Life Sciences Investigation & Experiments Earth Sciences	Continuity & Change
Fourth Grade CCSS NGSS History-Social Science Content Standards for California	Reading Literature Reading: Informational Text Reading: Foundational Skills Writing Speaking & Listening Language	Counting & Cardinality Operations & Algebraic Thinking Numbers & Operations in Base Ten Measurement & Data Geometry	Physical Sciences Life Sciences Investigation & Experiments Earth Sciences	California: A Changing State
Fifth Grade CCSS NGSS History-Social Science Content Standards for California	Reading Literature Reading: Informational Text Reading: Foundational Skills Writing Speaking & Listening Language	Counting & Cardinality Operations & Algebraic Thinking Numbers & Operations in Base Ten Measurement & Data Geometry	Physical Sciences Life Sciences Investigation & Experiments Earth Sciences	United States History & Geography: Making a New Nation

Student Assessment

Throughout the school year, all students will take assessment tests, including the NWEA Map Assessment, administered by the Charter School instructors. Results of the Assessment will establish a starting benchmark and on-going progress monitoring from which we will track and measure academic growth. In addition, the ELPAC - English Language Proficiency Assessments for California is administered to children whose home language is other than English.

Progress Reports

Student progress reports are prepared three times each school year and sent home to the parent/guardian in October, March, and June. Parent conferences are scheduled for all students in October and March.

Student Cumulative File

A cumulative file will be established for each student enrolled in the PUENTE Charter School. The file will contain all registration forms, immunization records, attendance records, tardiness reports and student progress reports. Records may also contain information from a transferring school or other information pertinent to the child's

education. Student records are confidential and only school staff and the child's natural parents or legal guardians will have access to the records.

Attendance Procedures

Student Drop-Off/Pick-Up

Streets and driveways around the school are congested at arrival and dismissal time. Please use extreme caution when dropping off students or picking them up after class.

Cars must be parked head-in only.

Morning drop-off: Children may arrive no earlier than 7 am, and must be at school by no later than 7:45 am. Parents arriving with their children prior to 7 am must remain with the child in the Multipurpose Room until an authorized PUENTE Charter School representative arrives to supervise the children.

Afternoon pick-up at 2:15 p.m.: Children will be escorted to the main PUENTE entrance where parents, guardians or other authorized adult may meet the child. Changes in Consents must be submitted to the Charter School Office in writing.

Tardiness

Punctuality is an important lesson for children to learn and must be practiced and demonstrated to them by their parent/caregiver. All students are expected to be on time every day, and parents/caregivers are asked to please make punctuality a daily priority.

Late arrivals: It is important that you make every effort to drop your child off by 7:45 every morning. On the rare occasion when you are unavoidably late, you must sign your child in at the Charter School office and initial a late arrival form. Persistent tardiness will be noted in the child's permanent record and made available to subsequent elementary schools.

Late pick-up: It is important that you always pick your child up on time. Late pick-ups are very upsetting to a child and discourteous to teachers and staff. On the rare occasion when you are unavoidably late, you must pick up your child from the Charter School office. Persistent tardiness will be noted in the child's permanent record and made available to subsequent elementary schools.

Student Illness

We request that you make every effort to ensure that your child is in school every day. However, if your child is sick and unable to come to school, please call the Charter School office at **323-780-2961** to notify us of the absence. PUENTE's voice mail system is activated when the office is closed or unsupervised. In no call is received, we

will call your home or work to confirm the absence. Please send a written excuse to your child's teacher upon his/her return to school.

If your child is sick for more than one day, we ask that you please call each morning. If your child was out sick with something that was contagious, we ask that you provide a doctor's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and able to return to school.

Appointments

A student is not permitted to leave school during the day unless a written request has been received from the parent. Parents are asked to make every attempt to schedule appointments during after school hours. When it is necessary for the child to leave school before the scheduled dismissal time, we ask that the parent/guardian provide a written request at least 24 hours in advance, stating the date, time and reason for the early dismissal request. Students excused during school hours are to report to the Charter School office at the time of the approved dismissal and upon returning to school.

Daily School Schedule

<u>7:00 – 7:30 am</u> <u>(30 min)</u>	<u>Breakfast</u> <u>Food Court</u> <u>MPR</u>
<u>7:45 – 8:00 am</u> <u>(15 min)</u>	<u>Welcome</u> <u>Get Organized</u> <u>MPR</u>
<u>8:00 – 9:00 am</u> <u>(60 min)</u>	<u>English Language Arts</u> <u>Integrated Instruction</u> <u>Thematic Learning</u> <u>Science/Social Studies</u>
<u>9:00 – 10:00 am</u> <u>(60 min)</u>	<u>Math Designated Instruction</u> <u>Blended Learning</u> <u>Research Stations</u> <u>/Technology</u>
<u>10:00 – 11:00 am</u> <u>(60 min)</u>	<u>ELA Designated Instruction</u> <u>Blended Learning</u> <u>ELL Vocabulary Dev.</u> <u>Workshops/Stations</u>
<u>11:00 – 12:00 pm</u> <u>(30/30 min)</u>	<u>Lunch & Play Rotation</u>
<u>12:00 – 1:00 pm</u> <u>(60 min)</u>	<u>Project-Based Learning</u> <u>Science/Engineering</u>
<u>1:00 – 2:00 pm</u> <u>(60 min)</u>	<u>Social Science/Humanities</u>
<u>2:00 – 2:15 pm</u> <u>(15 min)</u>	<u>Evaluation</u> <u>Dismissal</u>

Student Conduct

Attire

PUENTE Charter School students are expected to abide by a dress code in which all students wear navy and white clothes. The uniformed attire consists of the following:

Girls

White blouse
Navy blue jumper, skirt or pants

Boys

White shirt
Navy blue pants

Personal Property

We ask that student toys and novelties be kept at home. Bringing such items to class can be disruptive and items can be lost or broken. Students may be invited to bring specific items to class if they pertain to the theme of the week.

Label Children's Clothing Items

Because many clothing items look similar, we ask that you label clothing, lunchboxes, backpacks and other personal property. A label on items will help owners to identify their belongings. PUENTE Charter School is not responsible for any items that are lost or stolen.

Inappropriate Behavior

Respect is fundamental to the PUENTE Charter School educational culture and therefore will be emphasized and expected of all students. Inappropriate behaviors include: pushing or running; rude or unkind comments; distracting other students; disrespectful conduct with other students or supervising adults; playing with or throwing food; throwing toys or other objects in the classroom or play yard.

In the halls, Multipurpose Room and classroom areas, the following behaviors are expected:

- Walk quietly.
- Keep hands to yourself.
- Respect school property and the property of others.
- Respond appropriately to directions from all school personnel.

School Safety

Safety Procedures

The PUENTE Charter School strives to provide an environment in which your child is safe from accidents. If an accident does occur, first aid will be administered unless otherwise instructed. First aid implies an ice pack, simple bandage or washing or a cut. Parents will be notified if additional treatment is deemed necessary.

Parents are responsible for informing the school of the child's allergies and the proper treatment of the child, in the event an allergic reaction occurs during the school day.

Fire Drill

In case of fire, the fire alarm will sound and emergency lights will flash. Each teacher will instruct students regarding specific, orderly evacuation procedures. Students will practice fire drills periodically throughout the school year.

Earthquake Drill

In Los Angeles, earthquakes are inevitable and may occur at any time without warning. To ensure that children know what to do in the event of an earthquake, periodic earthquake drills will be held throughout the school year. Children will learn to duck and cover, avoid falling objects and glass, and to listen to their teachers for specific instructions.

Building Security

To ensure the safety of all PUENTE students and staff, visitors must check in at the Children's Office before proceeding to any classroom.

Student ID

Students will be issued an official PUENTE Student Identification badge, which they are asked to wear visibly on their person at all times while in the building or on PUENTE grounds.

Student Services

Emergency Medical Information

Each child must have current emergency contact information on file in the Charter School Office. Throughout the school year, please be sure the Office has current home, work and cellular telephone numbers so that you can be reached promptly in the event of a medical emergency. Also, please be certain that emergency contacts are current.

Special Medical Needs

Children with chronic disabilities or illnesses are often able to attend school through the effective use of medication. It is strongly recommended that medication be administered at home whenever possible. If medication needs to be administered during the school day by a Charter School employee, parents/guardians must provide written instructions for the administration of the medication, and must also sign a form releasing the Charter School and its employees from any and all responsibility for the child's health as it relates to the medical condition and the administration of the medication. The Charter School Administrator must be informed of all necessary medications to be administered during the school day prior to the child's first day of school.

Special Education Services

PUENTE Charter School recognizes the importance of providing educational opportunities to all students regardless of physical or special needs. To that end, PUENTE Charter School will provide special education services to the identified students and for ensuring that appropriate programs are implemented based on the student's Individualized Education Program in compliance with state and federal laws. Special education services are provided at no cost.

Ongoing, formal efforts will be made to identify students who are suspected of having disabilities and who show potential signs of needing special education and related services. Parents or guardians may refer their child for assessment for special education services. Teachers and other school personnel may also refer a child for an assessment. Within 15 days of the receipt of a referral for assessment, not counting school vacations, the parent or guardian will receive a written response from PUENTE Charter School.

Detailed information on special education assessment and Individualized Education Program will be shared with the parent/guardian prior to conducting the assessment. Special Education services are provided through contractual arrangement between the PUENTE Charter School and Comprehensive Therapy Associates & Total Education Solutions.

School Meal Program

School Nutrition Plus (SNP), PUENTE's school meal provider, is committed to providing quality food service and nutrition education. They have chefs and registered dietitians who recognize that the health of our youth and has a significant impact on school performance. SNP is a scratch-cooking operation and frequently use local, seasonal produce on their menus and they are fully compliant with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. Meals are served in our student-only Food Court adjacent to the multi-purpose room.

Parent/Family Participation

Monthly Family Meeting

Family Meetings are typically scheduled on one Tuesday evening of each month. We strongly encourage all parents/caregivers and Charter School students to attend these meetings. Strengthening the home/school connection and relationship through engaging interactives and recognition of students who have attained perfect attendance in the prior month will be the focus of the meetings. Meetings are held in the Multipurpose Room, beginning promptly at 6:15 pm.

Parent/Family Newsletter

A weekly newsletter will be sent home with your student each Monday. The newsletter contains important information for parents/caregivers as well as a summary of the week's academic activities. This is provided to encourage conversation at home between parents/caregivers and their children with regard to what was learned in school each day. The newsletter often contains educational resources that parents/caregivers may obtain to reinforce at home the lessons being taught in the classrooms.

Coffee with the Principal

Join the Principal and the Deans for quarterly gatherings to share, discuss and participate in our school updates including the development of our Local Control Accountability Plan. These gatherings are announced in the Family Newsletter and are conducted in the Multi-Purpose Room.

Charter School Advisory Committee

The PUENTE Charter School Advisory Committee reviews admissions procedures; parental involvement; curriculum and instruction; student assessment; and any other operations of the charter schools. The Committee also reviews the LCAP in order to recommend approval by the full board, and provides educational and management expertise and guidance as needed by PUENTE throughout the year. The PUENTE Charter School Advisory Council provides feedback and guidance to the PUENTE Learning Center Board of Directors and does not have any direct responsibility for establishing or approving operating procedures or policies. The PUENTE Charter School Advisory Council meets quarterly and is comprised of the following: *A parent/guardian of currently attending students from each grade level; Principal of the PUENTE Charter School; Chief Executive Officer of PUENTE; A community member; and Two instructional team members (rotation participation by instructional team members every year)*

Parent/Family Involvement

Research has shown that children do better in school when their parents/caregivers are actively engaged in supporting their learning activities at home:

Family Meeting: Please join with the instructional team at these monthly interactive meetings intended for the entire family to enjoy!

Adult Education. Enrollment in PUENTE's adult education classes is open to all parents/caregivers. Classes include English as a Second Language, Computer Applications, Computer Repair, GED Preparation, Adult High School Diploma, and Reading Academy. Morning, afternoon and evening classes are offered. All are offered tuition-free.

Communication

PUENTE Charter School staff is committed to providing an exemplary educational experience for all children and their families. We encourage honest, open and respectful communication between parents/caregivers, teachers and administrators. Because all staff have specific, assigned duties during the school day, we ask that parents/guardians call the Charter School Office 323-780-2961 to schedule appointments to speak with any of the Charter School staff.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parents/Guardians will be expected to meet periodically throughout the school year with teachers to review their child's progress report. Special conferences may be scheduled as needed in addition to the regular Parent/Teacher conferences. Information on Parent/Teacher conferences will be publicized in the Parent Newsletter.

Special Events

Birthday Celebrations

Unless otherwise requested in writing by a parent/guardian, children celebrating birthdays will be identified and sung to by their classmates and teachers. No birthday parties for Charter School students will be held on school grounds.

Special Activities and Field Trips

Throughout the year there may be special activities and field trips planned that require children to leave the PUENTE campus. Prior to these activities, parents/guardians will be notified and will be required to provide signed permission slips allowing the children

to participate in the off-site activity. Parent volunteers may also be recruited to chaperone the children.