



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

***School of Social Justice at  
Miguel Contreras Learning Complex***

322 S. Lucas Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90017  
TELEPHONE: (213) 240-3896 FAX: (213) 240-3886

***Austin Beutner***  
*Superintendent of Schools*

***Roberto Martinez***  
*LD Central Superintendent*

***Nova Star Meza***  
*Principal*

April 12, 2019

To whom it may concern,

We are writing as representatives of the School of Social Justice (SSJ) on the Miguel Contreras Learning Complex (MCLC) to convey our interest in becoming a Community School. Over the last six years, the School of Social Justice has operated as a pilot school among three other schools on campus to educate, organize, and advocate as lifelong champions of dynamic social change.

Embedded in much of what is done at the School of Social Justice are the pillars of Community Schools. A priority at our school in integrating student supports includes a college and career seminar class where students learn about regulating strong socioemotional habits, maintaining effective work habits, and being more aware about social justice issues. Councils at the start of the week in each of these seminar classes are also an effective way of making sure that students are monitored and mentally prepared to embrace challenges in the classroom. In the academic settings, Service Learning Projects (SLP) continually engage students in the issues that plague our community from homophobia to racism. Centered on action-based research and community engagement, the SLP is something that all students participate in throughout each year. Early stages of the SLP have students reflect on their own position regarding social justice issues and as the year progresses, students influence our community through the creation of clubs, programs, and presentations. The School of Social Justice is committed to addressing the needs of the whole child. As such, we are always striving to provide and improve upon supports that will allow every student to access learning.

Currently, the School of Social Justice has several programs for expanded learning time. SSJ itself offers tutoring after school in our school's Mandatory Study Time (MST) tutoring lab. City Year offers Extended Learning Time (ELT) as well as designated English Language Development Study Room (where bilingual TAs are placed after the school day). These programs allow all students to get the supports they need to complete their SLP as well as other academic assignments. Community partnerships with organizations like World Fit for Kids, the Youth Policy Institute, and Peace over Violence also aid our school in providing opportunities for students to continue engaging in social justice issues as well as recreational sports / hobbies. Beyond these partnerships that we have that take place on campus, the School of Social Justice also has strong partnerships with CARECEN, CHIRLA, SALEF, CCNP and Homies Unidos. Because students routinely coordinate and support programs with these organizations, a goal of our school in the near future is to establish Memorandums of Understanding to allow for greater and more integrated programming with these organizations.

These community organizations influence not just our students, but also our families. Especially at a time where parents were concerned about political changes, the School of Social Justice teamed up with CHIRLA to provide legal counsel and presentations with real lawyers in a school assembly. Organizations like CHIRLA and CARECEN have also been fundamental in Know Your Rights presentations which take place later in the evening for parents to gain access to this information outside of work. Beyond what these organizations provide, the school also promotes family and community engagement through Student Led Conferences where students present their progress regarding the SLP to their families as well as Culture and Potluck Nights for parents to get to know their teachers on a more humanizing level.

The spearhead of our family and community engagement comes from one of our Pilot committees, the Parent and Community Engagement Committee. Among our other Pilot committees include Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports and Operations. At a Pilot School, each teacher signs the Election to





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Work Agreement every year, which entails additional responsibilities including their committee interests and committee work as well as running school events, providing supports after school, and even adhering to school initiatives like mastery learning and peer mediation. This collaborative leadership structure allows for teachers, the people who know these students best, to drive the direction of our school.

Although the vision of our school currently aligns to the pillars of Community Schools, we have an opportunity for growth with coordinating more community specific, needs based programs that also include our family of schools and feeder schools. Athletic events and pep rallies allow our school to integrate with the other three schools on our campus, but very little is done beyond that. In the early discussions of wanting to seek Community School status, the MCLC schools began to communicate with each other regarding the interest in establishing a formalized dream center for all students on our complex to use as well as a mobile food pantry for students to be able to take donated food home. There were discussions of assessing space on our campus so that we could provide greater programs for our community during the day and after school as well as greater programming at night for parents and students to use the school as a hub in their community.

In the planning stage of Community School status, our hope is to begin making concrete steps towards our school being a community space for organizations, parents and stakeholders to utilize. The other schools on the MCLC campus have also expressed and shared this desire in obtaining and providing resources for our students that we have not been able to provide in the past. We would like to thank you for this opportunity to express our intent. And we appreciate your time and consideration

Sincerely,

Nova Meza  
Principal

Aprille Abram  
UTLA Chapter Chair

Roberto A. Martinez  
Local District Central Superintendent

**COMMUNITY SCHOOL DESIGN TEAM CONTACT INFORMATION**

A design team should represent all stakeholders of a school – Principal, Teachers, Counselors, Students, Parents, and Community Partners. **FILLABLE FORM**

**NAME OF SCHOOL:**

NAME	ROLE AT SCHOOL (e.g., Teacher, Parent, Principal, Student)	EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER