

# WALNUT PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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[www.walnutpark-laUSD-ca.schoolloop.com](http://www.walnutpark-laUSD-ca.schoolloop.com)



April 11, 2019

Dear Selection Committee:

It is with great excitement and expectation that I write this letter of intent to be considered as one of the Community Schools for the Los Angeles Unified School District. Now more than ever, it truly "Takes a village to train a child," especially in a community where resources are scarce. It has become Walnut Park Elementary School's mission to provide resources and supports to help our students and communities thrive. As a Community School we will be able to continue the work around the four foundational pillars, helping to ensure student success.

Integrating student supports are pivotal in ensuring a fair, accessible and equitable education for all children. At Walnut Park, most of our families come from low-income households, broken homes and have a limited knowledge base to access additional academic resources, which often result in barriers that impedes their success. We are committed to remove these obstacles by connecting students and families to service providers that bring holistic programs and services into the school, helping families meet their basic needs. Currently we offer Tier 1, 2 and 3 supports. These include our psychologist, Pupil Service and Attendance counselor, and our Restorative Justice Program. We have a partnership with Almansor Mental Health Clinic, which provides weekly 30-minute sessions for students. Additionally, we refer our students and families to the District services and agencies. Furthermore, we provide supports via the Los Angeles County Psychiatric Mobile Response Team. We are grateful to have such resources, however they are not enough. Becoming a Community School will allow us to provide local and extended agencies, organizations, and entities that will meet the physiological, safety, social belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs by offering high quality services at a FREE, reduced or low cost.

Walnut Park Elementary understands that due to time constrains, financial barriers, and lack of knowledge, our students and communities are limited to what is offered during the school day. For this reason, we make it our goal to expand learning time and opportunities beyond the school day. We have partnered with YWCA, Parks and Recreation, Families in Schools, and Beyond the Bell, which provide extended learning opportunities and enrichment experiences that build upon the cultural, linguistic and entrepreneurial assets of the community. We also provide after school clubs in robotics, drama, and Zumba. As an added support, we offer intervention and tutoring before school starts, during the school year using a pullout model, field trips, labs, and after school/Saturdays/summer sessions. Additionally, we have purchased software that allows students to work from home. Through the Community School model, we will actively enhance and expand these learning opportunities to augment the traditional learning.

Family and community engagement is essential to Walnut Park's vision for student success and well-being. Many large events are held on a yearly basis like family nights (reading, science, math, movies), family picnics, a costume parade, family projects, and a college and career day. We also host regular meetings for our parent book club and a monthly coffee with the principal meeting. Becoming a community school will allow us to continue growing in this area as we help engage families and the community. The staff is, therefore, knowledgeable and well prepared to continue with this work. We plan to expand our current events, as well as, add some additional ones with new resources, which could include family gardening days held in our school garden, teacher led workshops for parents, ELD classes and after school clubs for children and parents.

*Learners today, leaders tomorrow.*

Walnut Park Elementary prides itself with a collaborative leadership that focuses on improved student learning, safety, and a positive culture. Using the distributive leadership model, all stakeholders are validated and heard. Decisions about academic programs, budgets, and personnel resources are made through our School Site Council, English Learner Advisory Committee, Student Council and Local Leadership Teams. As a Community School we could expand these groups, provide more supports and offer additional meeting times.

Serving in an incorporated area of Los Angeles, where resources are not readily available, having partnerships becomes an integral part of the school's vision. We are fortunate to partner with organizations that provide resources and supports. We work closely with Supervisor Hilda Solis and Assemblyman Reggie Jones-Sawyer to provide basic needs and resources to our students (food drives, health drives, career fairs, etc...). We have also partnered with Tierra Mia/Read with Me, Reading is Fundamental and the Rotary Club to promote the love of reading. The Century Sheriff's Station and Safe Passages Program helps keep our school and community safe by providing workshops for parents and informational resources. Furthermore, the Florence-Firestone Chamber of Commerce and the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation offer monthly meetings to network with all the local agencies and service providers. Despite these wonderful resources, our families still face challenges of inaccessibility. As a Community School we would create the following partnerships with: colleges and universities to provide academic learning opportunities; museums and research-based organization to expand our STEAM focus; entities that promote health and wellness to have fitness days, walking days, and health fairs; our local government so our students and families have civic engagement.

One benefit of serving in a small community is the strong bond and open communication we have with our Family of Schools. Since the opening of Walnut Park Middle School and Linda Marquez High School, it has been our priority to vertically articulate to ensure a path of success for our students. We have established great rapport with the principals and work closely with them in providing events for our students and their families, supporting each other academically, opening our doors for students to complete service hours, projects, and tutoring sessions. Our goal as a Community School is to continue and expand this work with our LAUSD schools and link learning engagement to our college and university communities. Walnut Park Middle School is also applying to become a Community School and the principals at Marques HS have shown great interest in this model as well. Together, with the common vision, we can ensure the success of the whole student through a precise plan for all of the students' educational future.

Our school community has a long established collaborative leadership model. As a former LEARN school, Walnut Park has evolved to incorporate many more stakeholders in making school wide decisions including our advisory committees, Student Council, PTO, Professional Learning Communities, Local Leadership, and city engagement organizations. Through this collaboration, we have been able to provide numerous resources, successful events, additional funding, and community projects that help our families. However, as the Community School Design Team came together to discuss this plan, it was evident that Walnut Park Elementary needs more - the equity gap is great! If given this opportunity, we can close this gap and bridge resources to student success.

Sincerely,

  
Sarah Luna  
Principal

  
Lydia Torres  
UTLA Chairperson

  
Jose Huerta  
LD East Superintendent

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ATTACHMENT A

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

Sign in  
4/3/19

NAME OF SCHOOL: <i>Walnut Park ES.</i>			
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