

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Para Los Niños – Evelyn Thurman Gratts Primary Center will be the highest quality, urban education center ensuring academic achievement by supporting the needs of the whole child.

Assurances

Para Los Niños is a non-profit organization (Appendix A). The Para Los Niños – Evelyn Thurman Gratts Primary Center (PLN – Gratts Primary Center) will serve students in grades K-2 who reside in the attendance boundary designated by LAUSD and who are representative of the school community demographics in the Pico-Union area (Appendix B1 and B2). Para Los Niños is a financially solvent organization (Appendix C). PLN – Gratts Primary Center will adhere to and fulfill the requirement of the Modified Consent Decree and other court orders imposed upon the district pertaining to special education (Appendix B3).

Student Population

PLN-Gratts Primary Center will serve 320 neighborhood children in grades K-2 residing in the attendance area of the school. Based on demographic data from Gratts Elementary School, the Elementary School from which PLN-Gratts Primary Center will relieve overcrowding, we have developed a profile of our anticipated student body. We expect that:

- The majority, approximately 95%, of our students will be Latino.
- Other ethnic groups, including African American and Filipino students will be represented in smaller numbers, 2% and 1% respectively.
- A high percentage, approximately 70%, of our students will be classified as English Language Learners.
- Most of our students, more than 90%, will come from socio-economically disadvantaged homes.

Our decision to expand our elementary school program into the Pico-Union area is based on our reflection on our track record of success at our Charter Elementary School. Opened in 2002, our Charter Elementary School now enrolls almost 350 students in grades K-5. The staff and administration at our Charter Elementary School has worked diligently to lay the foundation upon which we build the instructional model proposed for PLN – Gratts Primary Center. Our success is evidenced by a) the 148-point increase in our API scores between 2005 and 2009, b) our increase in students scoring advanced and proficient on the CST in both math and ELA, and c) the decrease in students scoring below basic and far below basic on the CST in both math and ELA during the same time period (Appendix D).

In addition to the success we have had in improving student achievement as measured by state and federal standardized measures, PLN – Charter Elementary School has maintained a rate of student attendance between 96% and 97% since 2006. Our families demonstrate a strong degree of satisfaction with the services they receive at Para Los

Niños as is evidenced by parents continued choices to enroll their children in PLN programs. 56% of our Kindergarten class at PLN – Charter Elementary School attended a PLN – Early Childhood Center. Since 2006, 93.5% of our students have returned to PLN – Charter Elementary School for the following school year, and 91% of the 5th grade graduates in the past 2 years have continued on to PLN – Charter Middle School. Our families see their children being nurtured and growing in our programs, and they continue to trust us to provide excellent services as their children develop from infancy to early adolescence.

Vision, Mission, and Philosophy

The mission of the Para Los Niños – Evelyn Thurman Gratts Primary Center is to help children and their families succeed. In keeping with the vision for Para Los Niños as an organization, PLN-Gratts Primary Center will be a center for urban education providing students and their families with all the support and tools necessary to ensure academic success for our students.

Our experience in working with infants-8th graders in schools along with an on-going examination of current research in education and examples of best practice around the country has led to the development of our understanding of how learning best occurs. We understand that:

- Children learn best when the learning is purposeful and has personal meaning.
- Children learn best when actively involved in the learning process through hands-on and first-hand experiences.
- Most children perform best in literacy when they have first established fluency in their primary language.
- Learning to ask questions is fundamental to extending learning that contributes to becoming life-long learners.
- Children’s learning increases when they are in a safe environment where they feel comfortable to take risks.
- Children learn best when specific and purposeful attention is paid to the development of a relevant and interactive school environment.

This educational philosophy is reflected in the instructional program and school community environment we propose for PLN – Gratts Primary Center that supports all students toward academic proficiency in a standards-based curriculum. Toward this goal, PLN – Gratts Primary Center has included three elements of research-based best practice applicable to working with high percentages of English Language Learners and students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. First, to ensure individual students and families are well known, teams of teachers will loop with students for the duration of their enrollment at the school. Second, staffing is maximized in order to provide multiple opportunities for small group, targeted academic support for all students. Third, PLN – Gratts Primary Center integrates on-site social services designed to support and stabilize students and their families.

A Typical Day

Students arrive on campus at PLN – Gratts Elementary School and may have breakfast each day from 7 – 7:55 AM. Attendance is taken daily in advisory at 8 AM. Advisory begins each day with a structured time for community building and developing strategies for academic success. Advisors are credentialed teachers who loop with students for the duration of their enrollment at PLN – Gratts Primary Center. The core academic curriculum, including time for English Language Development, English Language Arts, Math and a Literacy integrated Science/Social Studies block comprises most of the day. Visual Arts, Music, and Information Literacy are integrated into the curriculum and taught by credentialed teachers on a weekly basis. Students participate in 30 minutes of Physical Education every day. During the core part of the school day, most classrooms will operate with reduced student:teacher ratios allowing for targeted small group academic support for students achieving at, above, and below grade level expectations. Each day ends with an advisory period that can be used by classroom teachers for guided reading, writer’s workshop, processing the day, assessment, documentation and reflection, or in response to other student needs. We expect most of our student to come from working families and, therefore, to transition into our after-school program which provides enrichment activities and supervision on campus until 6 PM.

Educational Plan

PLN-Gratts Primary Center offers a standards-based program with high expectation for all students. The overarching goal of PLN-Gratts Primary Center is to set a solid foundation for students so that they may be successful in school and in life. More specifically PLN-Gratts Primary Center intends to ensure that all students:

- Feel safe at school and at home;
- Have access to the support necessary to maintain good physical and mental health;
- Develop the foundational skills necessary to be successful in 3rd grade and beyond;
- Develop a positive sense of their own capabilities;
- Are excited about learning.

All work at PLN – Gratts Primary Center is framed by what we understand about best practice designed to meet the needs of our anticipated population of predominantly economically disadvantaged students and English Language Learners. We know that for most children, literacy acquisition is most effective when skills and content are initially introduced in a child’s first language and then transferred in a systematic and supportive fashion into a second language. Parents have the option of enrolling children in either a Dual Literacy or English Only program. All students participate in English Language Development as part the core curricular program.

We also know that children being raised in poverty face significant challenges to academic achievement which cannot typically be controlled or influenced by a school staff or curriculum on a systematic level. PLN – Gratts Primary Center recognizes that these social issues must be addressed within the context of a high-quality educational program in order for students to achieve their maximum academic potential. Our Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM) allows us to bring targeted critical social,

clinical, and family services administered by trained experts directly to families and students at the school site. The Family Resource Center, located on campus at PLN – Gratts Primary Center, will improve accessibility for students, families, and school staff wanting to refer students for targeted support services.

At PLN – Gratts Primary Center, we know that how we teach is as important as what we teach and that how children learn is powerfully linked to what they are able to do. PLN – Gratts Primary Center teachers employ several targeted methodologies designed to accomplish the goals of our academic program.

Building Relationships

Our Integrated Service Delivery Model for supporting students' academic growth and social well-being is optimized by trusting and sustained relationships that lead to a more personalized school experience. Individual teacher and grade level team looping encourages the development of deep and sustained relationships between school staff, social service staff, and families. Looping allows teachers to track, build on, and celebrate student progress over time; develop relationships with families where honest conversations can take place; and, in the event of staff turnover, it allows for continuity in service to students and their families.

Evidence-Based Decisions

PLN – Gratts Primary Center uses a modified Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtI²) strategy to ensure that all students and their families are supported with appropriate services in our programs. Based on well-articulated outcomes, advisors and family advocates use universal assessment tools to assess student capacity in academic achievement, social skills, home environment, and mental health. Students are then recommended to appropriate educational and social services. Advisors work with other service providers in using a variety of assessment tools to ascertain student progress and build a comprehensive portfolio for each student. Advisors regularly modify student goals and services based on the information provided by these assessment tools.

A Culture of Empowerment

At the core of each teacher's interactions with students and families at PLN – Gratts Primary Center is a belief in the capacity of each child to be highly successful. PLN – Gratts Primary Center places students, their ideas, their conversations, and their goals at the center of all learning. Teachers act as guides, facilitating the acquisition of skills necessary to achieve individual goals. PLN – Gratts Primary Center assumes that every one of our students will become a productive and contributing member of society and facilitates the development of the tools necessary to do so.

Constructing Environment

At PLN – Gratts Primary Center, careful attention is paid to the construction of a safe and stimulating school environment. Our programs are committed to providing all children a safe, nurturing, respectful environment free of harassment. Once safety is established, the environment opens up as a place in our schools with carefully organized provoking and stimulating objects, books, and other materials. Our intent is to create space for children

to wonder and question, explore and discuss. The environment extends to all areas in our facilities and includes displays, public documentation, and visual representation of students participating in our programs. Common areas become the vehicle for creating a stimulating community environment that reflects expectations, standards, and celebrates achievement.

Community Impact and Involvement

PLN-Gratts Primary Center will extend the education and social services Para Los Niños has provided in the Pico-Union area for over 14 years. In the Pico-Union area Para Los Niños operates two well-enrolled, high-quality Early Education Centers serving almost 300 children every day. Our Family Service Headquarters and Administrative Offices are also located in this area, the latter being directly across the street from the proposed facility site (Appendix E). Our proposed instructional program builds on the strong relationships and unique perspective we have developed in our work with this community. PLN – Gratts Primary Center will benefit from the already established network of local partnerships Para Los Niños has established in the Pico-Union neighborhood including the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and the Koreatown Youth Community Center (Appendices F1 and F2). PLN – Gratts Primary Center will continue to reach out to local community organizations and groups that may enhance our educational program and the services we can provide to our school community.

Leadership/Governance

The Para Los Niños Board of Directors governs Para Los Niños as an organization, provides general oversight and approves the budgets for all organizational programs. The PLN – Gratts Primary Center Advisory Board reports to the PLN Board of Directors (Appendix G). Advisory Board members represent school stakeholders including parents, school staff, and PLN administrative staff as well as experts in education and representatives from local businesses, organizations, and cultural institutions with an interest in serving the students at the school. PLN – Gratts Primary Center will be directed by Para Los Niños administrative staff with expertise in school finances and operations, assessment and measurement, and educational programming.

Fiscal Plan

PLN – Gratts Primary Center has optimized the flexibility afforded charter schools to develop a financially sound plan for implementing the proposed instructional program. By prioritizing highly qualified staffing and partnering with reputable organizations such as Teach for America (Appendix F3) and local university schools of education, we provide students with access to qualified teachers throughout the academic day. Additionally, by working with our existing services (e.g., operations, finance, human resources, IT) including social services, we are able to offer high quality program, operational, and back-office support within an economy of scale. PLN – Gratts Primary Center financial affairs will be overseen by the PLN CFO with overall governance provided by the PLN CEO and the Board of Directors.

II. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Curriculum Map and Summary

Scope and Sequence

PLN-Gratts Primary Center's curriculum builds toward our vision of our 2nd grade graduates. The overarching goals for each grade level are based on the "Investigation and Experimentation" strand of the California Content Standards for Science. "Big ideas" are introduced throughout the school year as a way of connecting and deepening student conceptual understanding of the content standards. Students enrolled in our dual literacy program build foundational understanding in Language Arts in Spanish. Students enrolled in our English Only program work toward the same content area standards in English. By the end of second grade, all our students will have developed foundational skills in literacy, mathematics, inquiry, and critical thinking preparing them to be successful and motivated in upper elementary school and beyond (Appendix H1).

In addition to the grade level content area standards, teachers at PLN – Gratts Primary Center will be responsible for supporting the English Language Development of English Language Learners. Because we anticipate that a large percentage of our students will be identified as English Language Learners and that most of those students who are not identified ELL will come from homes where English is not the primary language, all of the students will participate in our ELD program designed to make explicit the instruction of academic and content area vocabulary and skills designed to support the development of oral and written English Language Skills. ELD instruction based on the California State Content Standards for English Language Development will be differentiated to address the specific language learning level of each child (Appendix H2).

Instructional Materials

PLN – Gratts Primary Center uses both state approved and supplemental curricular materials to support our instructional program (Appendix I). Teachers may work with the principal and the curriculum committee of the Advisory Board to gain approval for the use of alternative materials than those listed in this proposal. Prior to adoption, a team comprised of teachers and members of the Advisory Board will assess curricular materials for ease of use and alignment with curricular program, including the California state content standards.

Targeted Instruction

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will offer targeted academic instruction to support all students toward high levels of academic achievement. The PLN – Gratts Primary Center staffing model (Appendix J) allows students to work with credentialed teaching staff in smaller group settings daily (Appendix K1). Visual arts, music, and information literacy are integrated into our curriculum and supported by community partnerships with Inner City Arts, the Colburn School of Dance, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Trash for Teachers, and the Getty Center. Core teaching staff are provided with on-going professional development designed to facilitate the integration of arts education and the use of the arts to allow students multiple ways of accessing and representing information.

A full time librarian works with staff and students to support the development of information literacy skills.

Track Record of Proposed Curriculum

The California Content Standards

The California Content Standards are embedded in our project-based, inquiry focused curriculum. They act as a context for the interactive educational environment in which students explore their own ideas and as a reference for teachers and parents looking for opportunities to gauge student progress. Including the California Content Standards in this manner allows our students the opportunity to be prepared for any upper elementary school in which they choose to enroll. Additionally, technology standards based on the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) have been included. NETS standards are applied at each grade level in a manner consistent with grade level appropriate content and expectations.

Research-Base

Our educational program is founded on contemporary socio-cultural research, which tells us that knowledge is constructed as students and more capable others, in this case, teachers, work together toward common goals.ⁱ Rooted in the discourse of L.S. Vygotsky,ⁱⁱ this constructivist theory of education believes that development occurs when the learner engages in the use of the tools of learning (e.g., language and skills) toward a meaningful outcome. With this as the core of our understanding of how all people learn, our curriculum and instructional practice are strongly influenced by recommendations from the National Research Council and the schools for young children in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

Instructional Strategies

Making Learning Meaningful

Three major findings from the report *How People Learn*ⁱⁱⁱ have informed the development of our instructional methodologies. This report suggests that curriculum developers and professional development providers should reference the following principles in order to ensure best practice in their instructional program:

- 1) Learners *preconceptions* about how the world works must be engaged so that they may grasp new concepts and information in a meaningful manner;
- 2) When knowledge is *learned in the context* of a conceptual framework, learners will develop a deep foundation of factual knowledge and they will know how to organize that information in ways that facilitate retrieval and application;
- 3) Learners must be in *control* of their own learning by defining goals and monitoring their progress in achieving them.

At PLN – Gratts Primary Center, we apply these principals in several ways:

- 1) Because students are well-known, teachers are able to draw both from student personal experience and from common experiences developed in the context of the school in order to connect new learning to prior understanding of concepts. Additionally, our emphasis on student voice in the classroom dialogue and on teachers use of guiding questions as an instructional technique allows teachers to

- have an on-going understanding of the evolution of student thinking.
- 2) Our Scope and Sequence includes the framing of the content standards with “Big Ideas.” The connections between the content standards and a larger conceptual framework allows students to create deeper and more meaningful connections to the material.
 - 3) Classroom assessment strategies include an on-going cycle of student goal setting and reflection on accomplishments. Rigorous documentation of student work and progress accompanied by systematic and guided reflection on that work toward setting meaningful goals facilitates student metacognition about their academic achievements.

The School Infrastructure

PLN – Gratts Primary Center is inspired by the knowledge about school environment and infrastructure that have come from the schools for young children in Reggio Emilia, Italy.^{iv} The construction of PLN – Gratts Primary Center’s instructional program was inspired by three basic tenets central to the programs at the Reggio Emilia schools:

- 1) Organization of the Staff: PLN – Gratts Primary Center values collegiality, relationships, and includes time for professional development in the work week. Staff have regularly scheduled time for professional development and collaboration. Students stay with the same teachers for 3 consecutive years.
- 2) Role of the Teacher: At PLN – Gratts Primary Center, the teacher is a participant in the learning going on in the classroom. The teacher’s role is that of a resource and guide, and all teacher’s are seen as researchers carefully observing, documenting, and reflecting on the work of children. Teachers are also committed to reflecting on their own teaching and learning.
- 3) The Physical Environment: The environment at PLN – Gratts Primary Center is seen as the an integral part of the instructional program. Presenting an environment that is aesthetically beautiful is seen as an important part of respecting students. The classroom is organized in a way that supports small and whole group interaction with teachers and peers. The environment offers opportunities for discovery, research, extended explorations, and problem solving. The systematic documentation of student work and reflection on that work is displayed prominently, often using photographs.

The Whole Child

It is well established that external influences, including negative factors associated with poverty, can present multiple barriers to academic achievement. Physical stressors such as poor health or nutrition have been linked to lower levels of cognitive performance,^v and mental stressors such as increased exposure to domestic abuse, insecure attachments, and depression can also lead to lower levels of achievement.^{vi} A likely contributing factor to the persistent achievement gap along the socio-economic spectrum is the tendency for children from more affluent families with higher levels of parental education to be exposed more purposefully to cognitively enriching activities^{vii} such as visiting cultural institutions or being read to.^{viii} These issues are exacerbated when linguistic or social barriers exist and because children living in socioeconomically depressed neighborhoods are often enrolled in struggling schools. Too often, the result for children being raised in

poverty is that they do not have access to opportunities or support for optimal development at home or in school, and, thus, the academic achievement gap persists.

Based on everything we know about the negative effects of poverty on academic achievement and personal well-being, it is clear that barriers to effective teaching and optimal student learning in our urban communities mandate the implementation of an innovative and comprehensive educational model that builds on best practices, fosters academic achievement as well as critical thinking and inquiry, and is tailored to respond to the circumstances and needs of our students and their families. An effective education model must attend to the “whole child” as well as his/her family, coordinating and integrating effective educational services with social support services in a way that engages families and hold high expectations for children and their communities.

The Para Los Niños Integrated Model of Urban Education represents our commitment to the whole child. Through our Integrated Service Delivery Model, a team of caring experts in education (teachers) and social services (licensed family advocates) create individual plans to address the needs of the whole child in the context of the family in order to provide a support system that maximizes on the learning potential of each of our students.

Addressing the Needs of All Students

The structure of the academic day and the staffing at PLN – Gratts Primary Center allow the instructional staff to target and fully support students with special academic needs in a variety of settings.

English Language Learners

The instructional program of PLN – Gratts Primary Center is specifically designed to enable English Language Learners to succeed and to close the achievement gap between these students and their English proficient peers. PLN – Gratts Primary Center enrolls students in either a Dual Literacy or English Only Program. In the Dual Literacy Program K-2 students learn to read in their primary language (Spanish), while simultaneously learning academic English in math, science, social studies, art and music. Students whose primary language is Spanish are recommended to enroll in our Dual Literacy Program. Students whose first language may be Spanish, but who have acquired a greater foundation in English Language and Literacy are recommended to enroll in our English Only Program. Enrollment in both programs is at the discretion of the parent.

Additionally, all students participate in targeted English Language Development instruction daily to develop ELD tools such as academic vocabulary, syntax, and knowledge of language structure. All teachers front-load all academic lessons with the introduction and review of academic vocabulary.

In order to address the individual needs of English Learners, PLN – Gratts Primary Center carefully monitors the performance of students on classroom assignments and standardized testing. Students scoring in the lowest levels of the CELDT are provided targeted English instruction. Targeted instruction focuses on skills, functional vocabulary, and information that supports students throughout the school day. The goal is to ensure a

quality instructional program that enables English Language Learners to attain English proficiency, achievement in all academic subject areas, and to have full access to the educational opportunities offered at the school.

Gifted Students and Students Achieving Substantially Below Grade Level

All students are challenged by differentiated instruction in the classroom, additional challenge activities in each subject, and the opportunity to explore subjects at a higher-grade level. Due to the nature of the PLN – Gratts Primary Center curriculum and teaching methodology, children are able to explore concepts in greater depth. Teachers work individually with students to ensure that they are stimulated and have access to additional resources. Should a student be achieving below grade level, teachers provide targeted interventions. Teachers have the opportunity several times a week to work in smaller group settings with students in need of targeted intervention.

Economically Disadvantaged Students

The environment, curriculum, and activities at PLN – Gratts Primary Center are specifically designed to address the needs of an economically disadvantaged population. In addition to developing a strong academic base that enables students to close the achievement gap with their more affluent peers, PLN – Gratts Primary Center creates a physical environment that is welcoming and safe, includes stimulating and varied materials, and is aesthetically beautiful. Community building activities in advisory promote a safe place for children whose home neighborhoods are often characterized by chaos, violence, or both. Students have ample opportunity to play and work outside, and we include multiple opportunities for field trips in our financial model. A full spectrum of nutritious food is offered during Breakfast, Lunch, and Nutrition. Our Integrated Service Delivery Model and Response to Intervention and Instruction system ensures that all our students and families have access to any needed social, family, or mental health support services necessary to ensure opportunities for optimal academic development.

Special Education

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will operate as a local education agency for the purposes of special education and provide its own special education program consistent with EC Section 56195(a). PLN – Gratts Primary Center's program for special education students is based on an inclusive philosophy and model that focuses on preventing learning deficits and comprehensively serving students with disabilities.

All students at PLN – Gratts Primary Center participate in a universal assessment. Part of this process is designed to identify students who may have special needs. Students recommended for further assessment are discussed during a Student Success Team (SST) meeting including a credentialed resource teacher and the student's advisor. The team makes recommendations for further assessment or action based on the SST. Parents are advised of all recommendations related to their child and special education and are participants in the decision making process. Teachers and parents can also convene an SST for a student who is not indicated through the RTI² process.

When there is a request for assessment of a PLN – Gratts Primary Center student, the school shall be responsible for the development of the assessment plan. The assessment plan will describe the types of assessments that may be used to determine the eligibility of students for special education instruction and services. Assessments will be conducted, within legal timelines, after receiving the parents’ written consent. PLN – Gratts Primary Center shall conduct an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meeting that includes required team members within mandated timelines for each student assessed to discuss results, determine eligibility, and (if eligible) specify special education instruction and services. PLN – Gratts Primary Center will make decisions regarding eligibility, goals, program, placement, and exit from special education through the IEP process in accordance with federal and state special education statutes and regulations and in accordance with District policy and procedures.

Once a IEP has been established for student identified as qualifying for special education services, services will be provided by PLN – Gratts Primary Center resource teachers and staff, or, if necessary, PLN – Gratts Primary Center will contract with district or outside service providers on a fee for service basis for services indicated by the IEP that PLN – Gratts Primary Center for which no in-house capacity is available.

III. SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

Description of Culture

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will be a center for urban education in the Pico-Union neighborhood. We believe that schools have the potential to act as a proxy for community development, and we will welcome our families, their strengths, and ideas into a safe and celebratory school culture. Parents, teachers, and support staff will comprise teams working together to develop a personalized and appropriate educational experience for each student. The Family Resource Center will strengthen resilience and stabilize families in a respectful environment. In the classroom, teachers will celebrate student achievement and progress.

Advisory is at the heart of community building at PLN – Gratts Primary Center and the first place where students are introduced to the Safe Schools curriculum (Appendix L1). Safe Schools was developed at the UCLA Lab School in collaboration with the Graduate School of Education as a way to establish a safe and healthy school community through positive interaction, the development of respect for others, and conflict resolution. Advisory teachers introduce the Safe School’s “Cool Tools” that give students a common language for resolving conflicts and other socialization issues. The goal at PLN – Gratts Primary Center is to establish a safe, nurturing atmosphere where all members of our school community are free from harassment.

College and Career Readiness

PLN – Gratts Primary Center embraces the research showing that the quality of early childhood and primary grade educational experiences has broad effects on adult outcomes. Children who participate in high-quality early childhood and primary grade programs are more likely to attend college and have more positive social outcomes such

as higher income and more stable jobs and lower incidents of delinquency.^{ix} At PLN – Gratts Primary Center, we establish a solid foundation for future academic success and social well-being. Our conversations with students and parents explore not only the possibility but the expectation that all our students will be prepared to attend college when they graduate from high school and that their experience in the primary grades helps set students on the path toward college enrollment and career readiness.

School Calendar/Schedule

PLN-Gratts Primary Center will maximize staffing to allow for lower student to teacher ratios during most of the academic core of our school day (Appendix K1). Our experience working with similar populations of students at our Early Childhood Centers, Charter Elementary and Middle School, and After-School programs leads us to anticipate that the population of students enrolled at PLN-Gratts Primary Center will be characterized by degrees of need for targeted or specialized academic and social service support, including academic remediation, ELD, and mental health counseling. We have structured our academic day to allow for such targeted instruction. Furthermore, because we know that many of our students will come from working families with childcare needs that extend beyond 3 PM, Para Los Niños will provide high quality childcare and enrichment activities through our SAYS after-school program until 6 PM.

In order to support families with students enrolled in multiple LAUSD programs, PLN-Gratts Primary Center will generally follow the LAUSD academic calendar beginning with the 2010-2011 school year (Appendix K2). Teachers will have a mandatory period of professional development for nine business days prior to the first day of school. PLN – Gratts Primary Center will add four days to the LAUSD calendar to accommodate Pupil Free days during the school year for in-depth professional development and planning.

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will operate on a 180-day instructional calendar and strive to provide each student access to high quality and meaningful instructional minutes beyond those required by California Education Code.

Proposed Annual Instructional Minutes			
	K	1	2
PLN-Gratts Primary Center	56,700	56,700	56,700
Ed Code Required	55,100	55,100	55,100

Student Discipline

Discipline policies will reflect our goal of supporting our students and their families in developing the ability to overcome challenging living environments. PLN – Gratts Primary Center prescribes rules consistent with guidelines prescribed by the State Board of Education and the LAUSD Discipline Foundation Policy. PLN – Gratts Primary Center abides by Sections 48980 and 48981 that mandate the notification to parents or guardians of all pupils registered in the school of the availability of school rules pertaining to student discipline. Discipline policies will be disseminated annually to families and staff through the “Safe School Guidelines and Contract” (Attachment L). These guidelines include anti-bullying and harassment policies.

Teachers will teach the guidelines in the context of the classrooms and provide social skill development throughout the year. Parents/guardians and students will be asked to acknowledge their understanding of the discipline policy and procedures in writing through the Safe School contract. Our Safe School Guidelines require that all personnel promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among students, staff and parents.

Student discipline practices will involve active participation of students, parents and staff and will include opportunities for students to work cooperatively with each other, be respected and demonstrate respect for others, learn conflict resolution strategies, and take responsibility for daily behavior. Students will learn how problems are initiated and how problems escalate. Students, guided by the teacher, will learn appropriate “replacement behaviors” to resolve future problematic situations. Consequences for behaviors will include loss of privileges; letters or phone calls to parents/or guardian; parent/student/teacher conferences; behavioral contracts; in-house suspension; and Student Success Team meetings.

When a student has repeated difficulty meeting the behavior standards of the school, a Student Success Team (SST) will be convened by parents (guardians), teachers, principal, and social service staff. The SST will develop a support plan that describes the behavioral goals, type of assistance, modifications and interventions to be implemented to assist the student and/or family in improving student behavior. A follow-up meeting date will be set at the initial SST meeting to ascertain progress.

Health and Nutrition

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will employ a full-time licensed nurse to attend to the health of our students. Specific and/or chronic health needs identified through a 504 or Individualized Education Plan will be monitored by the school nurse and the student’s advisors and may be referred to the Social Service Administrator if additional services are necessary. PLN – Gratts Primary Center students will have access to all the clinical services supporting physical and mental health available through Para Los Niños and our partnering agencies. Breakfast, Morning Snack, and Lunch meeting, at minimum, LAUSD nutrition guidelines will be provided to all students every school day.

IV. ASSESSMENTS AND SCHOOL DATA

Educational Goals and Metrics

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will help children succeed through an instructional program guided by our understanding of the 3 critical components necessary to become educated citizens in the 21st Century:

- I. The development of knowledge and specific knowledge related to academic disciplines
- II. The development of generalizable skills
- III. The development of character and a sense of community

These critical components frame the PLN – Gratts Primary Center educational objectives.

Knowledge

Students enrolled at PLN – Gratts Primary Center have access to a rigorous, standards-based curricular program. We understand that, in order to be academically successful in 3rd grade and beyond, PLN – Gratts Primary Center is responsible for ensuring that all students build a foundation for standards-based academic content in upper elementary school.

- A. All students will achieve proficiency in the California Content Standards.
- B. All students will develop and be able to use grade level appropriate, content area specific vocabulary appropriately
- C. All students will be able to articulate and demonstrate their understanding of key concepts in each content area using a variety of methods and tools.

Skills

Student enrolled at PLN-Gratts Primary Center will participate in classroom, school, and community based activities designed to foster the development of generalizable skills critical to academic and personal success. We understand that in order for students to be successful in school and in life, they need the ability to access, organize, process, and apply the information presented as part of a standards-based curriculum. Furthermore, we understand that 21st century activities require successful citizens to negotiate relationships and interactions with a global community.

- A. Students will think critically and solve problems
- B. Students will work productively as a member of a team
- C. Students will present their ideas articulately to a variety of audiences
- D. Students will utilize a variety of tools, including the tools of technology, to solve problems and communicate their ideas
- E. Students will be responsible for their own success and growth

Character and Community

Beyond the knowledge and skills necessary to participate successfully in society, PLN – Gratts Primary Center expects our students to develop a sense of personal integrity within the context of the community in which they reside. We understand that it takes a special kind of resilience for children raised in poverty to avoid the socially derisive activities that are often prevalent in their lives and provide them access to the resources necessary to develop this resilience.

- A. Students will articulate their hopes, dreams, and challenges
- B. Students will be leaders as well as team-members
- C. Students will develop the ability to constructively resolve conflict
- D. Students and families will be knowledgeable about the resources available to support the development of a personal sense of safety and well-being

Additional Student Outcomes

PLN – Gratts Primary Center places a high value on student, parent, and teacher satisfaction as evidence that our school community is safe and welcoming. PLN – Gratts Primary Center will find evidence of success toward this objective if:

- A. The school's daily attendance rate meets or exceeds 95%
- B. The school's year-to-year transiency rate is not greater than 10%

- C. A parent or guardian representing at least 95% of the families enrolled at PLN – Gratts Primary Center participates in at least 1 school function annually
- D. The annual staff turn-over rate does not exceed 20%

PLN – Gratts Primary Center’s plan for student achievement around quantifiable measures is outlined in the Accountability Matrix (Appendix M1).

Student Assessment Plan

Using data to create, support, and sustain a high-quality school is essential to PLN – Gratts Primary Center’s mission to help children and their families succeed. PLN – Gratts Primary Center will use a variety of assessment tools to measure student outcomes (Appendix M2). These include standardized tests, publisher made tests from our curricular materials, universal assessments, project- and performance-based assessments, rubrics, teacher observations, teacher designed assessments, class work, AIMSweb assessments, student portfolios, and parent/student/teacher conferencing. Assessments will be used to celebrate and document student progress as well as a means to identify students who need more targeted instructional support in order to achieve grade level expectations. All school stakeholders (i.e., administrators, teachers, parents, and students) will work together and be accountable for student progress.

Methods for Assessing Student Progress

All students will achieve proficiency in the California Content Standards.

The California Department of Education (CDE) has set annual benchmark goals for the percentage of students achieving proficiency or higher in ELA and Math toward 100% proficiency in 2014. PLN – Gratts Primary Center will use data collected through the administration and scoring of the California Standards Test (CST) to measure school-wide progress toward the CDE goals. Additionally, teachers will benchmark student progress toward grade level content area mastery of the standards-based curriculum using data provided by a Universal Assessment for collecting baseline student achievement data as well as on-going classroom-based assessments.

CST. The California Standards Test is administered to students beginning in Grade 2. Data collected from the CST at PLN – Gratts Primary Center will serve as a cumulative marker of our success in developing student proficiency in ELA and Math content area standards. The CST is administered annually in the Spring.

Universal Assessment. The PLN – Gratts Primary Center Integrated Service Delivery Model and Response to Instruction and Intervention strategy require an initial screening of all students in order to establish a baseline from which we can measure student progress and as a means for identifying students who may require more targeted academic or social support. For academic baseline achievement in ELA and Math, PLN – Gratts Primary Center will use the AIMSweb assessment tools appropriate for Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades. If warranted, PLN – Gratts Primary Center teachers and principal may work with the Curriculum and Research Committee of the Advisory Board to adopt a new measure for baseline academic achievement. Additionally, students at

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will be screened by qualified PLN Social Service staff in order to identify students who may need targeted social service support.

Classroom-based Assessment. Classroom teachers' observations about student progress provide valuable feedback on the incremental progress students make toward achieving standards-based, grade level content area mastery. All PLN – Gratts Primary Center teachers are responsible for teaching a standards-based curriculum. Teachers will use state-adopted, publisher made assessment measures, especially in Kindergarten and First Grade before students participate in the CST, to ensure that students are making sufficient progress toward standards-based objectives. Teachers will also measure student progress in ELA using assessment measures from the Columbia University Teacher's College Reader's and Writer's Workshop series and using writing rubrics (Appendix M3).

All students will develop and be able to use content area specific vocabulary appropriately.

The PLN – Gratts Primary Center instructional program is designed to support English Language Development for our entire student body and, especially, for those students identified as English Language Learners. Teachers use strategies, including front-loading lessons with selected vocabulary, that make both content area and academic vocabulary explicit and accessible to all students. Vocabulary development as part of our overall ELD program will be measured using journals in math and science and a spelling inventory in ELA. Additionally, CELDT data will be examined to evaluate the overall success of our ELD program.

Journals. PLN – Gratts Primary Center students will record their reflections and ideas stemming from class work in journals. Journals provide teachers an on-going and individualized record of student progress in writing conventions, vocabulary development, and conceptual understanding. Journals will be used as evidence of progress. Developing writers will be supported in recording their ideas through pictures, symbols, and by dictating ideas to an adult or peer-writer. Rubrics will be developed to evaluate student journals for writing conventions, vocabulary development, and conceptual understanding on a 4-point scale.

CELDT. The California English Language Development Test is administered annually to students for whom English is a Second Language. Data from the CELDT will be analyzed to determine whether the PLN – Gratts Primary Center ELD program is supporting our ELD students toward reclassification. PLN – Gratts will consider itself successful if ELD students make consistent progress toward reclassification by advancing at least 1 CELDT level per year.

All students will be able to articulate and demonstrate their understanding of key concepts in each content area using a variety of methods and tools.

Conferencing. Classroom teachers will develop a system for regularly conferencing with individual students. All students should participate in a 10-20 minute student/teacher

conference, at minimum, on a bi-weekly basis. Conference templates (Appendix M4) based on identified standards-based objectives are used to record student progress evidenced by conversations had during the course of the conference.

Students will think critically and solve problems, work productively as a member of a team, present their ideas articulately to a variety of audiences, and utilize a variety of tools, including the tools of technology, to solve problems and communicate their ideas.

PLN – Gratts Primary Center students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate their ability to apply the tools of learning. All PLN – Gratts Primary Center students design, implement, and present multiple student driven inquiry projects throughout the school year. Inquiry projects offer students the opportunity for integrated learning around topics that are relevant and interesting to them and offer teachers the opportunity to evaluate student capacity to apply discrete skills and overall comprehension of content. Teachers observe, document, and reflect upon student performance on inquiry projects.

Observation Tools: All PLN – Gratts Primary Center teachers participate in professional development designed to maximize on the potential of teacher observation as a form of meaningful data collection about student progress. Teachers are expected to develop systematic ways in which they will record their observations about student learning. Examples of observation tools available for teacher use are: 1) daily notes about student highlights and concerns related to specific student objectives, 2) teacher made observation forms, and 3) photographs of student work in progress. The school principal will work with grade level teachers to develop a systematic approach to performance-based assessment.

Project Rubrics. Teachers will develop project rubrics designed to evaluate components of student learning through inquiry projects. These rubrics will evaluate, at minimum, a student's ability to work collaboratively with peers in a variety of roles, a student's ability to apply critical thinking skills to solve problems, a student's ability to clearly articulate their ideas, and a student's ability to synthesize and present information using a variety of tools.

Students will be responsible for their own success and growth.

At PLN – Gratts Primary Center, we believe students should be empowered in knowing that they are in control of their academic success. Teachers and students work together to set personal academic goals and engage in evidence-based reflection of student progress.

Student Portfolios. Student portfolios are a purposeful collection of evidence showing student learning. Evidence can include assessment data from any of the measures used at PLN – Gratts Primary Center including photographs taken of student work in-progress. All evidence included in a student portfolio must be explicitly linked to a specific learning objective and include a reflection on the significance of the work as a means to show student progress toward that learning objective. Students and teachers add to and

revise student portfolios, at minimum, on a monthly basis and use portfolios as a goal setting tool at least twice a year.

Students will articulate their hopes, dreams, and challenges.

Students at PLN – Gratts Primary Center are asked to define and articulate their personal academic and life goals as well as areas in which they would like to strengthen their capacity through both the portfolio process and during student/teacher conferences.

Students will be leaders as well as team-members.

Students are expected to take on a variety of roles in the classroom and in work requiring peer collaboration. Individual student capacity to take on various roles is recorded and reflected upon by teachers using their classroom-based observation systems.

Students will develop the ability to constructively resolve conflict.

PLN – Gratts Primary Center students participate in the Safe Schools curriculum designed to develop student capacity to peacefully resolve conflict. Students engaged in peer conflict in any capacity participate in a documented process of conflict resolution. That documentation is shared with classroom teachers and parents and may be used by students as evidence of improving conflict resolution skills.

Students and families will be knowledgeable about the resources available to support the development of a personal sense of safety and well-being.

All PLN – Gratts Primary Center families are encouraged to participate in family surveys that will be developed to ascertain the level of parent satisfaction with the PLN – Gratts Primary Center experience as well as the level of knowledge about and use of available resources. Data collected from annual surveys will be evaluated by the school principal and used to make programmatic decisions, especially related to communication with and services offered to families.

Standardized Testing

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will administer all state mandated assessments including the STAR reporting program and the CELDT.

Data Team and Instructional Team

The PLN – Gratts Primary Center school principal is responsible for reporting school progress to the President of Para Los Niños and the Governing Board. The annual report to the Governing Board will include the an analysis of the API, AYP, CELDT and STAR report data in addition to other measures of achievement such as results from the family survey, attendance and transiency data, and information related to the use of PLN social support services at PLN – Gratts Primary Center. A similar presentation will be made available for parents and the school community as well.

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will use Efforts to Outcome (ETO) software to compile and analyze student data. All teachers will be trained on how to input and access student data using these tools. Additionally, monthly scheduled grade level meetings will be held to analyze student data related to instructional goals and discuss how this data informs instructional practice. All data analysis meetings will be facilitated by the school principal or *pedagoga* to support teacher learning about the interpretation and application of data.

Classroom teachers are expected to engage in an on-going and systematic process of analyzing student data. The construction of student portfolios, at minimum on a monthly basis, requires teachers to reflect on evidence of student learning. Teachers will also be expected to bring evidence to monthly scheduled grade level meetings for collaborative analysis and discussion.

Parents will be informed of individual student progress during bi-annual parent/teacher conferences and via report cards distributed at the end of each semester. Additionally, all teachers are expected to be in regular contact with the parents of their advisory students to maintain an open communication between the home and school.

Data Systems

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will partner with LAUSD and use the Integrated Student Information System to track student records and identify services as required by the Modified Consent Decree.

LAUSD School Report Card

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will compile and report all information required for the School Report Card including enrollment data, teacher qualifications, CST, AYP, and API data, accessibility to instructional materials and textbooks, and facility condition via the SARC website.

Research and Evaluation

PLN – Gratts Primary Center agrees to participate in research and evaluation projects that collect and disseminate best practices.

Operational Goals and Metrics

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will track and evaluate its progress toward such operational goals as teacher retention, financial solvency, and adherence to the Modified Consent Decree (Appendix N).

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Professional Development

Professional development for teachers will be managed, organized, and typically conducted by the PLN – Gratts Primary Center principal in collaboration with the Para Los Niños *pedagoga*. Our schedule allows the principal to meet regularly with staff members individually to address specific areas of needed growth in addition to the regularly planned professional development periods. Professional development topics

will support PLN – Gratts Primary Center staff as they implement our rigorous curricular program. The principal will arrange for experts in relevant areas of education to work with PLN – Gratts Primary Center staff.

PLN – Gratts Primary Center staff will also benefit from the expertise and resources provided by our parent organization and other programs. Representatives from the many branches of the organization that serve students and families in different capacities (e.g., mental health services, family support) will work closely with PLN – Gratts Primary Center staff to ensure that they understand the factors that may impact this population’s academic performance and the resources this organization can provide access to for struggling students and families. Additionally, PLN – Gratts Primary Center will work with mentor teachers at our Charter Elementary School to enhance their understanding of our instructional model through professional collaboration.

PLN – Gratts Primary Center teachers will be professional educators at various stages in their professional careers. We believe that their professional skills should be nurtured and grown in the same way that our student’s academic skills will be attended to. Our teachers will be well known and given access to the highest degree of professional development and support we can provide. We recognize the high rate of teacher turnover in many new, inner-city charter schools, and we intend to combat that statistic by creating an invigorating atmosphere of respect, support and professionalism leading to the highest standards in educational practice. Our prior success at retaining teachers at our K-5 charter provides an example of our ability to do just this.

Teacher Orientation

All PLN – Gratts Primary Center staff are required to participate in nine days of professional development and planning prior to the first day of school. This period allows new teachers to become oriented to the PLN – Gratts Primary Center instructional program and community and returning teachers to plan and deepen their understanding of how to apply the PLN – Gratts Primary Center program. Additionally, grade level teams will be comprised of both apprentice and master level teachers allowing opportunities for professional collaboration and mentorship.

PD Calendar

PLN – Gratts Primary Center teachers are given on going and multiple opportunities to grow as professional educators. Para Los Niños employs a *pedagogista* whose responsibilities include working closely with school administrators to implement an appropriate and rigorous program for professional development. All teachers at PLN – Gratts Primary Center will have at least three hours of common planning time weekly. A weekly staff meeting will allow for regular professional development and support. PLN – Gratts Primary Center has planned four Pupil Free days during the school year in order to facilitate deeper professional development opportunities, including observations of model teachers at our Charter Elementary School. Monthly topics provide a framework for discussion and focus for the entire staff at PLN – Gratts Primary Center (Appendix M).

Program Evaluation

The PLN – Gratts Primary Center principal and *pedagoga* will work with the PLN Vice President of Quality Assurance and Research to conduct an annual program review including a review of student data and its implications for professional development.

VI. PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

Professional Culture

All staff at PLN – Gratts Primary Center are expected to collaborate as members of a professional community designed to support student achievement. Teaching staff, social service staff, and parents work as team members to identify each child's needs and implement an appropriate instructional program.

Evaluation

The PLN – Gratts Primary Center principal is responsible for the evaluation and support of all teaching staff at the school. The Social Service Administrator is responsible for the evaluation and support of all social service staff at the school. The two administrators work closely together to ensure a high standard of professional conduct across all programs. Teachers are evaluated formally twice a year using the teacher evaluation form based on the CTC's *Standards for the Teaching Profession* (Appendix O1). The principal works with teachers in the Fall to set individual goals and then conducts classroom observations. After Winter Break, teachers are observed again and conference with the principal to provide evidence and self-reflection about their progress toward their individual goals and other issues that may have arisen. The principal meets with individual teachers on a monthly basis to help trouble shoot any issues that have arisen. Teachers who either self-identify as struggling or who have been identified by the principal as struggling receive a counseling notice (Appendix O2) and a specific plan for continued evaluation and opportunities for support and remediation is developed.

Feedback

All PLN – Gratts Primary Center staff will be given the opportunity on an annual basis to anonymously evaluate their work experience at Para Los Niños, including their interactions with the school administration. Surveys are administered and processed by the PLN Human Resources department. Areas of concern, including conflict with a school administrator are brought to the attention of supervisors for corrective measures.

VII. SERVING SPECIALIZED POPULATIONS

Specialized Instruction

The structure of the academic day and the staffing at PLN – Gratts Primary Center allow the instructional staff to target and fully support students with special academic needs in a variety of settings. Students have access to credentialed teachers in smaller settings during core academic coursework. Additionally, our teaching team includes one full time resource teacher and one family advocate for social services.

English Language Learners

The PLN – Gratts Primary Center instructional program is specifically designed to enable English Language Learners to succeed. PLN – Gratts Primary Center enrolls students in either a Dual Literacy or English Only Program. In the Dual Literacy Program K-2 students learn to read in their primary language (Spanish), while simultaneously learning academic English in math, science, social studies, art and music. Students whose primary language is Spanish are recommended to enroll in our Dual Literacy Program. Students whose first language may be Spanish, but who have acquired a greater foundation in English Language and Literacy are recommended to enroll in our English Only Program. Enrollment in both programs is at the discretion of the parent.

Additionally, all students participate in targeted English Language Development instruction daily to develop ELD tools such as academic vocabulary, syntax, and knowledge of language structure. All teachers front-load all academic lessons with the introduction and review of academic vocabulary.

In order to address the individual needs of English Learners, PLN – Gratts Primary Center carefully monitors performance of students in classroom assignments and on standardized testing. Students scoring in the lowest levels of the CELDT are provided targeted English instruction in small group settings. Targeted instruction focuses on skills, functional vocabulary, and information that supports students throughout the school day. The goal is to ensure a quality instructional program that enables English Language Learners to attain English proficiency, achievement in all academic subject areas, and to have full access to the educational opportunities offered at the school.

Gifted Students and Students Achieving Substantially Below Grade Level

All students are challenged by differentiated instruction in the classroom, additional challenge activities in each subject, and the opportunity to explore subjects at a higher-grade level. Due to the nature of the PLN – Gratts Primary Center curriculum and teaching methodologies, children are able to explore concepts in greater depth. Teachers work individually with students to ensure that they are stimulated and have access to additional resources. Should a student be achieving below grade level, teachers provide targeted interventions to assure that the student's needs are addressed. Teachers have the opportunity several times a week to work in smaller group settings with students in need of targeted intervention.

At-Risk and Economically Disadvantaged Students

The environment, curriculum, and activities at PLN – Gratts Primary Center are specifically designed to address the needs of an at-risk population, including students identified as economically disadvantaged. In addition to developing a strong academic base that enables students to close the achievement gap with their peers, PLN – Gratts Primary Center creates a physical environment that is welcoming and safe, includes stimulating and varied materials, and is aesthetically beautiful. Community building activities in advisory promote a safe place for children whose home neighborhoods are often characterized by chaos, violence, or both. Students have ample opportunity to play and work outside, and we include multiple opportunities for field trips in our financial

model. A full spectrum of nutritious food is offered during Breakfast, Lunch, and Nutrition. Our Integrated Service Delivery Model and Response to Intervention and Instruction system ensures that all our students and families have access to any needed social, family, or mental health support services necessary to ensure opportunities for optimal academic development.

Special Education

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will operate as a local education agency for the purposes of special education and provide its own special education program consistent with EC Section 56195 (a). PLN – Gratts Primary Center’s program for special education students is based on an inclusive philosophy and model that focuses on preventing learning deficits and comprehensively serving students with disabilities.

All students at PLN – Gratts Primary Center participate in a universal assessment with their advisors. Part of this process is designed to identify students who may have special needs. Students recommended for further assessment are discussed during a Student Success Team (SST) meeting including a credentialed resource teacher and the student’s advisor. The team makes recommendations for further assessment or action based on the SST. Parents are advised of all recommendations related to their child and special education and are participants in the decision making process. Teachers and parents can also convene a SST for a student who is not indicated through the RTI² process.

When there is a request for assessment of a PLN – Gratts Primary Center student, the school shall be responsible for the development of the assessment plan. The assessment plan will describe the types of assessments that may be used to determine the eligibility of students for special education instruction and services. Assessments will be conducted, within legal timelines, after receiving the parents’ written consent. PLN – Gratts Primary Center shall conduct an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meeting that includes required team members within mandated timelines for each student assessed to discuss results, determine eligibility, and (if eligible) specify special education instruction and services. The school will make decisions regarding eligibility, goals, program, placement, and exit from special education through the IEP process in accordance with federal and state special education statutes and regulations and in accordance with District policy and procedures.

Once a IEP has been established for student identified as qualifying for special education services, services will be provided by PLN – Gratts Primary Center resource teachers and staff, or, if necessary, PLN – Gratts Primary Center will contract with district or outside service providers on a fee for service basis for services indicated by the IEP that PLN – Gratts Primary Center for which no in-house capacity is available.

VIII. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Identification

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will extend the educational and social services Para Los Niños has provided in the Pico-Union area for over 14 years. In the Pico-Union area, Para

Los Niños currently operates two fully enrolled early childhood education centers serving over 300 students daily. Pico Union is also home to our Family Service headquarters and our administrative offices. The latter is directly across the street from the proposed facility site.

The Pico Union area of downtown Los Angeles has a rich history. Originally designed as one of the first wealthy suburbs of Los Angeles, Pico-Union has always been a community of immigrants. Some of the first residents were European immigrants and later, in the 1980s, waves of refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala joined Mexican-American residents to give the neighborhood its current predominantly Latino demographic. The neighborhood has evolved to become mostly working class with one of the densest population concentrations in the United States. Over 20,000 people live in the roughly 1.5 square mile area just West of the 110 Freeway compared to an average 8,000 persons per square mile in city of Los Angeles at large. 89% of the population of Pico-Union identifies as Hispanic or Latino. Only 13% of adults over the age of 25 have a high school diploma or the equivalent, and almost half of the population lives below the federal poverty threshold.

Understanding the history and composition of this community is an important aspect in developing an appropriate educational program for its students. There is a diversity of proud cultural and linguistic traditions to be respected and negotiated, and there are some pervasive social issues that present challenges for students and families participating in the public school system. Para Los Niños has 30 years of experience in addressing the negative effects of poverty on children and families and has the resources in Pico-Union to support children and families grappling with the challenges of socio-economic disadvantage. We believe that in order for children to achieve their greatest academic potential, they must be healthy, and feel safe and secure. To that end and with the specific student population we anticipate serving at PLN-Gratts Primary Center, our high-quality educational program is integrated with critical social services designed to support the needs of the whole child toward academic success.

Family and Community Engagement

Parents at PLN – Gratts Primary Center will have multiple opportunities to be involved in both decisions related to their child’s educational program and school-wide programs and activities. Parents are critical members of the support team comprised of a student’s advisor and other support staff who regularly monitor student progress. Parents participate in parent-teacher conferences at least twice a year. Parents interested in school-wide decision making may participate in the school site council or parent teacher association. All family members of PLN – Gratts Primary Center students will have access to services provided by Para Los Niños. Para Los Niños will continue to provide social service and early education opportunities to the entire Pico-Union community.

The proposed instructional program at PLN – Gratts Primary Center was created with input from families enrolled in our Charter Elementary and Middle Schools, and Pico-Union Early Childhood Development Centers. Approximately 100 parents participated in 3 focus group sessions designed to elicit input from parents about important elements of

the instructional program including, the schedule, the integration of on-site social services, and parental priorities for English Language support and development. An independent consultant ran the focus groups at our Early Childhood centers in both Spanish and English. The meeting with parents at our Charter Elementary and Middle Schools was conducted in Spanish by the principal of the Charter Elementary School.

Key Community Partnerships

Para Los Niños will continue to participate as an active member of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, and partner with such community based organizations as the Koreatown Youth Community Center. These organizations provide a network of support options for our students and families that can, ultimately, affect their quality of life and academic achievement. PLN – Gratts Primary Center will continue the work of Para Los Niños as an integral member of the Pico-Union community open to conversations and partnerships with any local organization that may support our efforts to serve our students and families. The Para Los Niños Vice President of External Affairs will work closely with the PLN –Gratts Primary Center administration to facilitate the development of strong and supportive community partnerships. The PLN – Gratts Primary Center advisory board will include a targeted collection of community-based organizations and businesses interested in the success of the students. For example, we would be interested in inviting representatives from Gratts Elementary School, Leichty Middle School, Miguel Contreras High School, and the Roybal Learning Complex, Good Samaritan Hospital, and the Rampart Police Division as well as representatives from our existing partnering agencies, to serve on the PLN – Gratts Primary Center Advisory Board.

IX. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

PLN – Gratts Primary Center shall form a school site council pursuant to California Education Code regulations comprised of equal parts school personnel (principal, teachers selected by teachers, other personnel selected by their peers) and parents selected by other parents. The primary objective of the school site council shall be the development, monitoring, and, if necessary, revision, of the Single Plan for Student Achievement and the related funds.

School and Advisory Organizational Charts

The Para Los Niños Board of Directors governs Para Los Niños as an organization, provides general oversight and approves the budgets for all organizational programs. The PLN – Gratts Primary Center Advisory Board reports to the PLN Board of Directors (Appendix G).

The PLN – Gratts Primary Center Advisory Board will consist of between nine and twelve members representing the stakeholders and the community. The constituencies will be the parents, school staff, PLN agency representatives, community representatives from business, industry or public agencies, and cultural arts organization representatives. Members will be selected based on their expertise, experience and interest in the school.

Selection of Board Members

Pursuant to the by-laws of Para Los Niños as a non-profit California corporation and as the governing body of the PLN – Gratts Primary Center, a new member of the Para Los Niños governing board is elected by a majority vote of the then-current members of that governing board (following nomination by the Executive Committee of that board), and serves for a three year term (Appendix P).

The overarching criterion in selecting PLN – Gratts Primary Center Advisory Board members is a clear commitment to children and their success. To that end, identifying potential members begins with proactively seeking individuals that represent one of several categories, namely education expertise that addresses the population served by Para Los Niños, a parental relationship, community collaboration, and capacity to promote the school with the philanthropic community. In addition to proactively seeking members in these various categories, the school also welcomes and embraces unsolicited interest in serving on the PLN – Gratts Primary Center Advisory Board. Once a potential new member is identified and reviewed, a vote is taken by the then-current members of the PLN – Gratts Primary Center Advisory Board to approve a new member to that Board.

The Advisory Board will be responsible for making recommendations to assist the school in accomplishing its vision and goals. In partnership with the principal the PLN - Gratts Primary Center Advisory Board will make recommendations for the following: operational matters, staffing patterns and levels, the hours of operation and the annual calendar, the procurement and use of grant funds, and the adoption and purchase of curricular materials. Additionally, the Advisory Board will assist in the recruitment of volunteers and business partners, and the development of other resources.

Board Meetings

The governing board, committees, and Advisory Board will meet quarterly. Meeting notices for committees and the Advisory Board will be distributed via e-mail or hard copy to members prior to meetings. Advisory Board actions will be recorded in official minutes, which will be kept on file at Para Los Niños' administrative offices.

Notices, agendas and prior meeting minutes recording governing board actions of all PLN – Gratts Primary Center Board meetings and Advisory Board meetings will be posted for the public in ways to ensure full accessibility and appropriate Para Los Niños procedure vis a vis the Brown Act. These include:

- Posting in English and Spanish on the PLN – Gratts Primary Center campus (ADA compliant)
- Posting in both languages on the Para Los Niños website

X. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP & STAFFING PLANS

Leadership Team Capacity

The instructional program for PLN – Gratts Primary Center was created by a diverse team of experts in the various components of our plan (Appendix Q):

- Gisselle Acevedo, President and CEO of Para Los Niños: Lead Petitioner
- Katheryn Steward, Chief Financial Officer: Fiscal Plan
- Bob Karcher, Vice President of Operations: Operations and facilities plan
- Elena Stern, Vice President of External Affairs: Community Partnerships and participation, including parental participation in PSC process
- Lisa Marin, Director, PLN Family Services: Social Service Integration
- Norma Silva, Principal, PLN Charter Elementary: Instructional Program development
- Judy Perlmutter, Principal, PLN Charter Middle School: Instructional Program development
- Gabriela Cardenas, Teacher, PLN Charter Elementary: Instructional Program Development
- Olivia Lozano, Teacher, PLN Charter Elementary: Instructional Program Development

Staffing Model

The PLN – Gratts Primary Center staffing model supports the unique aspects of our instructional program, including targeted small group academic instruction. PLN – Gratts Primary Center students have access to credentialed teachers, and support staff for special education, social services, information literacy, and a school nurse (Appendix J).

Compensation

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will employ both apprentice and master level teachers. The PLN – Gratts Primary Center teacher pay scale will closely mirror the LAUSD pay scale. Other employees will be paid competitive wages for their positions (Appendix R).

School Leadership

Qualifications for the principal are a master’s degree or higher, a valid California teaching credential, experience in educational leadership, experience with and knowledge about organizational development and collaborative management, experience with and knowledge about education of low-income, language-minority students, an entrepreneurial approach to school development and program design, bilingual abilities, excellent oral and written skills, and strong interpersonal skills (Appendix S1).

The PLN – Gratts Primary Center Principal job description will be widely circulated within Para Los Niños particularly to employees of our educational programs and Advisory Boards for recommendations. The position will be advertised in newspapers, online and to appropriate professional organizations including colleges and universities with credentialing programs. Members of the leadership team using a semi-structured set of interview questions will interview appropriate candidates. Final candidates will be invited to present to a larger hiring committee including a parent representative and representatives from the Board of Directors. The final hiring decision will be made by the Para Los Niños President upon recommendation from the hiring committee.

Leadership Team beyond the Principal

Qualifications for the Social Service Administrator are comparable to those of the principal. Desired qualifications for the Social Service Administrator include a Master's Degree in Social Work or a related field, evidence indicating experience and success working in a school setting (e.g., PPC), and experience in administration. The PLN – Gratts Primary Center Social Service Administrator job description will be circulated to employees of our social service programs and partnering agencies for recommendations. Members of our leadership team, including the director of family services or a proxy, will interview appropriate candidates. Final candidates will be invited to present to a larger hiring committee including a parent representative and representatives from the Board of Directors. The final hiring decision will be made by the Para Los Niños President upon recommendation from the hiring committee.

Recruitment of Teaching Staff

In order to obtain a diverse pool of qualified applicants, Para Los Niños uses internal and external recruitment. Teacher selection is based on teaching experience, demonstration of knowledge of instructional practices appropriate to the needs of the student population, level of bilingualism and bi-literacy, and interest in working collaboratively with peers. Efforts are made to recruit teachers who represent the diversity of the population of the school and community (Appendix S2).

Specialized teaching positions such as Family Advocate (Appendix S3), Special Education (Appendix S4), PE (Appendix S5), Art and Music and positions for the School Nurse and Librarian (Appendix S6) will have additional qualifications specific to those fields.

PLN recruitment and selection procedures and practices include notifying qualified PLN staff of available positions concurrent with external recruitment efforts; interviewing applicants personally; and obtaining three employment references. The Human Resources Department maintains complete records and encourages the use of standard interview questions that comply with our employment and labor laws. The following recruitment strategies are used to recruit and attract top talent: Local newspaper, Web sites, job fairs, word of mouth, personal contacts, and applicant files. Teachers from Gratts Elementary School or any other school affected by this effort are welcome to apply. All hiring will follow Para Los Niños' written procedures for recruiting, hiring and interviewing potential employees (Appendix T). Additionally, based on their track record of success in providing high quality teacher interns to inner city schools, Para Los Niños is partnering with Teach for America to support staffing efforts at PLN – Gratts Primary Center.

XI. OPERATIONS

External Applicants

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will enter into a facilities use agreement with LAUSD including a commitment to contract with the District as the default provider of outsourced school facility support services, such as cafeteria, custodial, maintenance, security, supplies, and transportation services. This agreement will include a specification that the

District must meet agreed-upon performance standards for competitive contracted services within an agreed-upon time frame. Should the District fail to meet these standards within the timeframe, and a timely discussion between Para Los Niños Operations staff, the District, and classified labor partners does not resolve the identified issues, Para Los Niños will have the right to contract with non-District providers for specified support services.

Master Service Agreements

Para Los Niños Operations staff will enter into a discussion regarding the viability of master service agreements.

School Operations Experience

The Para Los Niños Vice President of Operations will be responsible for coordinating all services related to school operations at PLN – Gratts Primary Center. The Para Los Niños Vice President of Human Resources and Risk Management will be responsible for coordinating all human resource and risk management activities, including payroll, at PLN – Gratts Primary Center.

Operations Start-up Plan

Para Los Niños will ensure that all operations-related activities in the planning year for PLN – Gratts Primary Center are completed in a timely fashion necessary to ensure the successful opening of the school (Appendix U).

Operations Plan

Based on the list of services provided by LAUSD, PLN – Gratts Primary Center has developed an operations plan (Appendix V).

XII. FINANCES

Funding

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will receive funding via charter school funding formulas.

Budget Narrative

The PLN – Gratts Primary Center budget was prepared assuming current charter school funding with a modest increase each year of 2.7 to 3.5%. The assumption for expenses, depending on the specific expense, is that they will increase 3-14% annually. The allocation of funding reflected in our budget shows our commitment to staffing PLN – Gratts Primary Center with personnel qualified to deliver our high-quality program. Our staffing model includes the teaching staff necessary to allow for frequent targeted, small group instruction as well as administrative and support staff in social services, resource, and a full-time nurse to support the healthy development of the whole child. Other examples of the synergy between our budget and instructional model include the allocation of funds for regular field trips and professional development (Appendix W).

Financial Controls

The financials of PLN – Gratts Primary Center will be monitored monthly by the PLN’s Finance department in accordance with the Para Los Niños Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual (Appendix X). The financials will be reviewed with the school’s administrative staff. On at least a quarterly basis, these financials will also be reviewed by the governing board. Reports will include a line item profit and loss statement, as well as any other reports deemed necessary to monitor the schools’ fiscal performance. The reports will be generated by PLN’s Director or Finance.

XIII. FACILITIES

PLN – Gratts Primary Center will work with the District on entering into a facilities use agreement.

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