

Letter of Intent

This Letter of Intent will provide formal notice to LAUSD regarding an applicant’s intention to submit a proposal for the 2010-2011 school year. The information presented therein is non-binding; specific details provided below may be finalized in the proposal submission.

Applicants must submit this Letter of Intent and the following data where applicable: CST, API, AYP, EL reclassification, CAHSEE, SAT and AP no later than 5 p.m. on November 16, 2009. If you should have any questions about any of the requirements listed in this Letter of Intent, please contact LAUSD at (213) 241-7000. Letters of Intent must be submitted via superintendent@lausd.net

Organization Information	
Name of applicant (for profit entities may not apply)	Para Los Niños
Address	500 Lucas Avenue Los Angeles, California 90017
Phone	213-250-4800
Website (if applicable)	www.paralosninos.org
Main contact name and phone number	Gisselle Acevedo 213-250-4800
Basic Proposed School Information and Description	
Proposed neighborhood school/site name (must agree to serve all students in that community)	Gratts Primary Center
Brief description of community engagement activities planned or completed	See below
Brief description of proposed vision, mission, education plan, and partnerships	See below

I. Brief description of community engagement activities planned or completed

Para Los Niños has been a consistent presence working closely with the poorest children and their families in Los Angeles since 1980. In almost 30 years of service, Para Los Niños has developed strong community ties in all sectors, from families with children to the governing officials guiding the policy affecting the communities in which we work. The LAUSD Public School Choice Program allows us the opportunity to expand our commitment to communities in which we already have deep roots.

From the windows of our executive offices, we have watched the construction of Gratts Primary Center. As we opened our Charter Middle School on Skid Row and a new Child Development Center in East Los Angeles, we watched as a facility was erected with all the same potential to house our exemplary programs literally within our reach. The Public School Choice Program comes at the exact moment in the evolution of our organization at which we are prepared to expand our services to another elementary program in the Pico-Union Area. Both of our well-enrolled and deeply entrenched child development centers at 1521 West 3rd Street and 234 Loma Drive enroll neighborhood children who live in the service area of Gratts Elementary School. In past years, however, many of these families have chosen to enroll their children at our Charter Elementary School in the Skid Row area in order to continue their experience with Para Los Niños. These families are as committed to continuing their children's tenure with Para Los Niños programs as we are committed to providing them with on-going services. Locating another charter elementary school in the Pico Union area would allow us to continue our educational services at greater convenience to our already engaged families as well as to new families living the area.

Para Los Niños Family Service Center headquarters located at 234 Loma Drive has provided for the basic needs of our Pico-Union families in crises for over 14 years. As part of our strategic plan, Para Los Niños strives to co-locate critical social services alongside our educational programs in order to enable us to support every aspect of a child's development. We provide a wide array of services designed to strengthen and stabilize families with children living in and around Pico-Union every day. Our services include: emergency service (food, transportation, shelter), a food pantry, in-home case management, domestic violence support and prevention, family preservation, mental health services, and parenting classes.

Our history of service to the Pico-Union has provided us a unique understanding of the strengths and needs of this community, and we are committed to work with its families and children.

II. Brief description of proposed vision, mission, educational plan, and partnerships

The mission of Para Los Niños is to help children and their families succeed. We provide high-quality educational experiences and critical social services to students toward improving the future prospects for children living in challenging life circumstances, including urban poverty. Through hands-on, experiential projects, students enrolled in our educational programs engage with their environment and develop the academic and social skills needed to build a strong foundation for a promising future. Programs in the Para Los Niños family cultivate and celebrate the potential within each child and equip students with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to succeed in a multi-cultural world. Under the direction of Para Los Niños, Gratts Primary Center will provide experiences that inspire critical thinking, imagination, self-reliance, and respect for others. We will develop core academic and language skills in relation to the lives of the students we serve.

Para Los Niños brings to Gratts Primary Center, years of experience in early childhood and primary elementary education. Our elementary charter school provides service to over 300 students. Historically, we have enrolled students who are predominantly poor (98% low-SES), English Language Learners (85%), and Latino (98%). Despite working with students placed at high risk for academic failure, we have achieved notable successes. Our charter elementary school has never been in Program Improvement. Gratts Elementary School, the companion school to Gratts Primary Center, and 9th Street Elementary School, the closest neighborhood school to our Elementary Charter School are in years 5 and 4 of Program Improvement, respectively. The following tables show our Charter Elementary School's CST, API, AYP and EL Reclassification data from 2005-2009.

Table 1. Para Los Niños Charter Elementary School API and AYP data

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
API Growth Score	554	653	676	734	702
Growth points from prior year	N/A	99	25	60	-33
Met AYP	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	No

Table 2. Para Los Niños Charter Elementary School CST scores Percent Proficient and Advanced ELA and Math

Year	Content Area	Grade Level			
		2	3	4	5
2009	ELA	22%	16%	38%	40%
	Math	33%	55%	40%	20%
2008	ELA	25%	32%	36%	18%
	Math	67%	72%	38%	39%
2007	ELA	27%	21%	6%	28%
	Math	43%	59%	13%	29%
2006	ELA	22%	3%	Insufficient numbers	Not enrolled
	Math	60%	39%	Insufficient numbers	Not enrolled
2005	ELA	3%	Insufficient numbers	Not enrolled	Not enrolled
	Math	25%	Insufficient numbers	Not enrolled	Not enrolled

Table 3. Para Los Niños Charter Elementary School EL Reclassification Data

Year	Previous Year # EL	# Reclassified	% Reclassified
2008-09	267	23	8.61
2007-08	231	31	13.42
2006-07	189	7	3.7
2005-06	181	0	0
2004-05	123	0	0

Para Los Niños has developed an educational program designed to promote academic achievement through research-based methods. Our early elementary school programs combine best practice inspired by the world renowned *Reggio-Emilio* schools in Italy and derived from a constructivist theory of education. Our students develop in-depth conceptual understanding and are supported in their development of both English and Spanish literacy. Emphasis is placed on developing the skills necessary to become successful students and developing a life-long love of learning. Because we know that a large percentage of the neighborhood students attending Gratts Primary Center will be English Language Learners and first language Spanish speakers and because of our past history of success with a similar population of students and families, we believe that our program will improve the academic outcomes for children in grades K-2 in this area.

Students enrolled in any Para Los Niños educational program benefit from our extensive network of support services. Additionally, students at Gratts Primary Center will benefit from our partnerships in the Los Angeles community. Para Los Niños prides itself on developing and nurturing meaningful and long-lasting partnerships with organizations providing services outside our scope of service. Inner City Arts and the California Science Center, for example, are each working with staff, administration, and students at various Para Los Niños programs to enrich the arts and science education we offer our students. Partnerships with LAUSD have allowed us to provide high-quality after-school services to 11 neighborhood campuses throughout the district. Additionally, our partnership with LAUSD will result in a joint use, collaborative redevelopment of the 9th Street Span Campus.

The public school choice program at Gratts Primary Center is another way that Para Los Niños and LAUSD can work together to provide high-quality educational services to students with extreme academic and personal needs.