PARTNERSHIP FOR THE FUTURE of LEARNING
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School and Organization Overviews

Felicitas & Gonzalo Mendez High School, Los Angeles Unified School District

Felicitas & Gonzalo Mendez High School (Mendez) is a community school located in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of East Los Angeles. Named for the plaintiffs in the 1946 landmark desegregation case, Mendez has a robust network of partnerships that engage and support its students and their families. Staff, families, and partners share leadership opportunities at this 12-year-old community school and provide students with rigorous and engaging academics in a nurturing and inclusive environment. The byproduct of a grassroots campaign for new schools led by InnerCity Struggle, Mendez was the first high school to open in Boyle Heights in 85 years. The school has four foundational partners—InnerCity Struggle, Promesa Boyle Heights, the Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, and Communities in Schools of Los Angeles—and over 30 additional community partners that provide programming in four areas: (1) health and wellness, (2) arts and enrichment, (3) academic support and case management, and (4) leadership development and community organizing. To coordinate these partnerships, Mendez's community school coordinator maintains deep relationships and consistent communication with staff, partners, and community members.

The school serves 958 students, 95% of whom are from families earning a low income, 21% of whom are students with disabilities, and 10% of whom are classified as English learners. Ninety-seven percent of students identify as Hispanic.[1]

[1] California Department of Education, DataQuest.

Art by Arleny Vargas, @arlenyarielle

Sycamore Junior High School, Anaheim Union High School District

Sycamore Junior High School is a community school located in the Anaheim Union High School District serving grades 7 and 8. Sycamore, along with Anaheim High School, is one of two schools in Anaheim that have piloted the community school model. In its first official year as a community school, Sycamore has been laying the groundwork to serve as a hub for the community, including supporting families facing mental health and food insecurity challenges during the pandemic. To advance the school's mission of supporting students to be equipped for college, career, and life, Sycamore provides students with enriching college-preparatory programs, such as a Dual Language Academy and AVID as well as Career Technical Education pathways in such areas as biotech and the culinary arts.

The school serves 1,325 students, 94% of whom are from families earning a low income, 37% of whom are classified as English Learners, and 15% of whom are students with disabilities. Ninety-six percent of students identify as Hispanic.[2]

San Francisco Beacon Initiative

The San Francisco Beacon Initiative (SFBI) is an intermediary organization that coordinates public–private partnerships and funding to create programs that provide safe, supportive, and engaging environments for youth. Beacon Centers build deep and focused relationships with schools that facilitate and strengthen the connection among youth, families, schools, and communities. These partnerships ensure a comprehensive approach designed to increase opportunities for success for students and families. SFBI convenes Beacon Center staff—including Beacon directors, who fulfill the role of community school coordinators—to support them in providing professional development, facilitating peer learning, coaching, and sharing of best practices to strengthen the initiative districtwide. There are currently 27 Beacon community schools in the San Francisco Unified School District that provide family partnership and engagement, behavioral health and wellness services, and expanded learning and that support school transitions.

[2] California School Dashboard.

The Coalition for Community Schools

The Coalition for Community Schools is an alliance of community school stakeholders collaborating to grow and sustain high-quality community schools throughout the country. The Institute for Educational Leadership supports the Coalition for Community Schools by working with the Coalition's national intermediaries and place-based networks. The Coalition for Community Schools prepares and supports community school leaders through technical assistance, a professional network, and national conferences on community school strategies and practices. The Coalition for Community Schools also advocates for state and federal funding to develop and sustain community schools.

All artwork comes from artists commissioned through the California Partnership for the Future of Learning 2021 and 2022 Art Showcases, with individual artists attributed below each image.

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