California’s Charter Schools Act was passed in California in 1992 in order to support innovation and, “Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system.” The legislation also stated, “Increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low achieving.” The Charter Schools Act was celebrated by many but not by all and reflecting on its 27-year history, it is clear that the charter school legislation is currently experiencing some of its greatest opposition.

With over 600,000 students now attending California’s charter public schools, myths about charter schools are rampant and some are blaming us for the funding deficits in traditional public school districts. However, the root of the fiscal challenges lies in the insufficient funding California provides to all of its public schools and for some school districts, poor fiscal management. California ranks 7th lowest in the nation for public school funding despite its extremely high cost of living. In addition, we are hearing more and more accusations that charter schools only serve students who are academically high achieving, do not serve students with behavior challenges, and do not serve students with special needs. We know that these accusations are simply not true. All of this has been a catalyst to pending legislation in Sacramento and pending regulations in local school districts that will threaten the flexibility and existence of charter schools. Examples of this include but are not limited to removal of appeal rights of charter schools if denied by their authorizer and moratoriums and caps on charter school approvals.

It is clear that in our own 20-year history, we have positively affected thousands of lives and in keeping with the California Charter Schools Act, we have provided outstanding options in public education for the families in the NE San Fernando Valley and NE Los Angeles. From academic achievement to high school graduation rates to college entry rates and more, we have time and time again outperformed the traditional public schools in the communities we serve. In this time of anti-charter school sentiment and pending anti charter school legislation and regulations, we must raise our voices to protect and defend our right to continue to provide families with public school options and our right to exist.

In the coming weeks and months, we will send out calls to action to all of our stakeholders when legislation that is potentially damaging to charter schools is being discussed in Sacramento or damaging regulations are being discussed by our authorizer. These calls to action will come in a variety of forms. For example, we will provide links with easy to follow directions for e-mail messages to legislators, we may ask for calls or visits to school board members offices, attendance at rallies, etc. Please respond when you receive these requests.

If we believe in the intent of the 1992 California Charter Schools Act and we believe in the value of the work we began 20 years ago with the founding of Community Charter Middle School, we must defend our right to continue to serve our families and communities and the rights of others in public education who are positively affecting the lives of hundreds of thousands of students.
PUC Lakeview Charter High School Recognized as 2019 California Distinguished School

Submitted by Jorge Beas, Principal, PUC Lakeview Charter High School

PUC Lakeview Charter High School was just named one of California’s Distinguished Schools of 2019, a recognition granted by the state department of education to only an elite group of public schools. The high-performing high school is one of only 17 Los Angeles Unified schools recognized by the state. This year, 162 schools across the state were awarded for achieving exceptional student performance for two consecutive school years or closing the achievement gap between two school years.

“We believe in our students and demand a lot of them because when you have high expectations, all students will rise up to meet those expectations when provided the right support,” said Principal Jorge Beas. “Our dynamic teachers give personalized attention and are in constant communication with parents to support student growth and alumni and seniors model academic success to younger students, regularly reinforcing to them the importance of graduation and going to college.”

PUC Lakeview Charter High School has been recognized for being among the top 10 schools in Los Angeles for its high rate of UC admissions. In 2016-2017, Lakeview Charter High School graduated 100% of their class and every student met or surpassed the UC/CSU application requirements. Neighboring public schools graduated 56.6% of its students and 58.7% of their class graduated prepared for UC/CSU college admissions.

The school, which primarily serves Hispanic students (96%), boasts a consistently high graduation rate, a tight-knit community and strong alumni network. Though the majority of the students experience economic adversity - 81% of students are socioeconomically disadvantaged—that doesn’t stop them from succeeding and reaching their fullest potential.

Across the entire PUC Schools network, 100% of each graduating class has been accepted to colleges and universities.

“I am grateful for this prestigious recognition because it validates the hard work our teachers, students and parents put in every single day,” said San Fernando Valley Regional Superintendent for PUC Schools Adriana Abich. “We believe one of the reasons we consistently outperform our neighborhood schools is because our teachers and staff have built a culture of achievement and have committed to seeing each and every child succeed. They truly treat our students like their own children. Simply put, we’re a family that expects the most from one another.”

The college counseling team brings every student to graduation by ensuring they meet university requirements, apply to a minimum of five institutions, complete financial aid, participate in internships, summer programs and complete community service.

“I am proud of PUC Lakeview Charter High and all that the students, teachers and staff have accomplished,” said PUC CEO & co-founder Jacqueline Elliot. “Like all schools in the PUC network, the people here value one another and are committed to uplifting the community. As our school continues to be recognized by the state, it’s important to acknowledge the community that helps to foster our success.”
In early February, the fourth grade team had a gallery walk to highlight the students’ informative writing, and mission projects. In starting a new writing and social studies unit, the 4th grade team at PUC Community Charter Elementary thought it would be a great idea to use an interdisciplinary approach and combine writing with social studies. This created a more time efficient and critical application to learning since the students had to read, research, and write.

The students completed their reading, research, and writing in class using collaborative grouping and teacher guidance. At home, they worked with their families to construct their mission project. Some students used their creativity and built their California missions out of cardboard boxes and other building materials. Many others created power points, posters, or a diorama.

The gallery walk was a success. We invited the third grade classes as well as administration to come check out their work. Our visitors asked compelling questions about the students’ research. The students were also asking each other questions about their research and missions. It was evident that the students were answering using evidence based responses. These 4th grade students are ready for college!
PUC eCALS: Self-Advocacy - Surviving the First Semester of College without an IEP

Submitted by Dr. Nancy Villagomez, Instructional Leader, PUC eCALS

Former eCALS student, Enrique Duarte, expresses how self-advocacy has led him to a path of success. Read how he has overcome many challenges to become a successful college student.

This article was originally published in January 2019 on lacomadre.org.

My interest in playing music began when I was given a guitar class in 9th grade. Throughout my time at the charter high school I was attending, the guidance of my music mentors helped me to become a full fledged musician. They introduced me to new types of music, summer programs, different instruments, and by the time my senior year had ended, they had introduced me to the music schools that they knew would fit me best.

I was even accepted to the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), but when the cost was too high, my music mentors once again helped me to be in the best place I could be. They introduced and urged me to attend the Herb Alpert School of Music at Los Angeles City College. There is an amazing scholarship program there called the Herb Alpert Scholarship. It puts full-time music students on a track to complete an associates degree, transfer to UCLA or CalArts, and could help pay with tuition at those schools.

If I weren’t a musician, I would have been nervous about the transition to a school that most likely didn’t provide the same level of support I had with an IEP. Throughout the semester I realized that due to the curriculum being so music focused, I didn’t have much need for all the support I had in high school. But when I did need it, the Office of Special Services at LACC was there to ease the stress of general education classes. Unfortunately, they are highly understaffed, but that’s a topic for another blog.

I took many high intensity classes required by the scholarship program, and I was able to maintain good grades the whole time. I took a piano class, a music theory class, and a very demanding general ed class that required listening and analyzing pieces from every period of music history, music appreciation. But the bulk of my experience came from my performance classes.

I was the only bass player in all of the applied program, meaning the only full-time bass player on campus every day, Monday through Friday. So, I was given the unique opportunity to play with a large amount of the applied program. Because of this, I was even given an award with a check for accompanying so many people in so many different settings throughout the semester.

I played with almost every group (about 5 or 6 in total) in my jazz class, I accompanied many people for Masterclass Performances, and I played for people in almost every instance of music 152 (a concert class). All while rehearsing, keeping up with homework, private lessons, mandatory practice hours, and maintaining a social life. I got a couple gigs outside of school too.

I just finished my busiest and most fulfilling semester of education so far, and throughout all of it, I found myself using everything I learned from my mentors throughout my whole semester of college, and I was able to learn a whole lot more.
PUC Lakeview Charter Academy: Water for South Sudan

Submitted by Adrianna Raya, Teacher, PUC Lakeview Charter Academy

After reading the true story of Salva Dut and the fictional story of Nya in A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park students at PUC Lakeview Charter Academy were concerned with the lack of clean water residents of South Sudan have access to.

Students were also impacted by the long walks young girls have to take to a pond only to retrieve dirty drinking water. Students took it upon themselves to become agents of change by collecting money to donate to the organization Water for South Sudan which was funded by Salva Dut. The purpose of this organization is to build wells in South Sudan in order to bring clean water to residents.

Lakeview Charter Academy students are currently participating in the Iron Giraffe Challenge to collect $1,000 to support the organization. Students have collected donations by adding change into cohort jars, selling donuts, friendship bracelets, candy apples, popcorn and churros. As of now students have exceed the goal and are continuously donating to support this important cause. As a prize to completing the pledge to raise $1,000 students are now inserted into a drawing to win a visit from Salva Dut to our school. Wish us luck!
PUC Community Charter Elementary School:
Bringing Student Council to Campus!

Submitted by Jennifer Lopez, Teacher, PUC Community Charter Elementary School

During the months of November and December, CCES elected its first ever student council! Students started by campaigning for different cabinet positions, which included President, Vice President, Secretary and grade level representatives.

They campaigned by creating posters, flyers, power points, and videos to share school wide with their peers. During our morning assembly, candidates also gave speeches to convince their student body why they were the best fit for the position they were running for. Every student running did a great job and put forth an amazing effort! Our elected officials are: Armando Izaguirre (President), Isaiah Villa (Vice President), and Sofia Pelayo (Secretary). Our grade level representatives for third and fourth grade are Mia Torres, Darlene Olvera, Jesus Morales and Amaia Beltran.

After they entered office, our student council committee got right to work and hosted their first fundraiser; our Valentine’s Day Candy Grams! They did a great job of putting it together and are currently in the works of producing a school newspaper that highlights important events on campus, classrooms and student accomplishments. They are also preparing to host their first school dance. Stay tuned for more news and pictures of their future projects!
PUC Triumph Charter High School: Step Challenge

Submitted by Kristine Diano, Teacher, PUC Triumph Charter High School

It’s not about who gets the most steps; it’s about whom you take those steps with. I don’t think that’s an actual saying, but it’s how the staff at PUC Triumph Charter High School feel as they complete the second round of an intense step challenge.

The challenge began in November when our college counselors lamented the impending holiday season for no other reason except that it usually meant excess consumption and excess sitting around doing very little. To combat the holiday slump, Ms. Christina Sanchez and Ms. Lauren Wolk tossed into the universe the idea of a step challenge. Dean of Instruction, Jen Dobson, always present in the universe, jumped on board, and, being the supportive leader that she is, helped Ms. Sanchez set up a Google spreadsheet (with “fancy auto-calculating”) on which all the participants could record their daily steps for five consecutive weeks – ending before Winter Break. Every week, each participant saw how many steps her colleague was taking and felt either satisfied with her own number or became motivated to step it up, so to speak. (It’s also worth noting that the challenge has produced a great many step puns that would embarrass even Shakespeare.)

The first step challenge garnered twelve participants at TCHS, and when the new semester (and the new year) rolled around, the next step challenge had twenty staff members participating. This time, participants worked in pairs to compete. Partners exchanged cell phone numbers to text each other their progress. Apple Watch wearers shared access to their rings. Fitbit folks checked on each other’s syncs. There were friendly taunts, and “How are you?” was code for, “So, how many steps do you have right now?” While some participants run after school as part of a staff run club, the challenge has reminded many of what it’s like to walk about unhurriedly but often. In fact, some participants meet during lunch and after school to go for a walk around campus.

This challenge, when it started in November, made us aware of how little we actually moved outside of our classrooms, and the most important step we’ve taken has been to change that fact. (Told you about those puns). In fact, our goal is no longer to get the most steps (especially since a pair literally has over 1,000,000 steps between them) but to meet our own personal goal: at least 10,000 steps a day.

In addition to having much of the staff moving more, a pleasantly surprising upshot of this challenge has been the time we take to decompress and just be with people we genuinely enjoy being around. Students have encouraged us to take more steps because they like stoking the competitive fire, but they also enjoy the fact that their teachers, counselors, and leaders respect and like one another, which ultimately contributes to a positive school culture. Principal Emily Biddle has joined us for our walks around campus, and campus aides have noted how happy we look taking laps.

Indeed, choosing to walk outside has helped clear our heads and refresh our spirits, and while we can’t claim that this is the key to happiness at work, we can’t deny that there’s a lot of laughter and connection that happen on these walks, the reverberations from which our colleagues and students benefit.
I would like to share my experience since being hired on this school year as ‘Coach’. I was originally hired on by the Athletic Director (A.D.), Mr. Antonio Chang (Coach, as I like to call him), as head volleyball coach for girls varsity and junior varsity (JV) teams. Both teams had successful seasons. We all grew as a team, learning each and everybody's different styles of playing and learning to communicate effectively as a team. Varsity made it to the first round of playoffs, but unfortunately we did not continue on. The JV girls learned from all that they did in both the wins and the loss column. Next season, both teams will have learned from our losses and strive to be more effective in winning games and accumulating fewer losses. I was asked by Coach if I was interested in coaching girls basketball and the boys JV basketball teams. Without hesitation, I agreed to take on the opportunity to continue coaching at CALS.

Both teams had successful seasons with wins and losses. Although JV boys basketball did not have a playoff at the end of the season, I believe our boys would have done great. In fact, I believe they could have won easily and brought home a championship. Our girls basketball team made the playoffs, but unfortunately we did not make it out of the first round. However, it was a job well done by all the players involved. I as a coach continued to learn from our student athletes. During the basketball seasons, I was again approached by our A.D. and asked if I were interested in coaching softball. Did I here softball? Yes, yes I did! Softball has got to be by far the greatest sport to coach, in my eyes.

The athletic ability to underhand a pitch at 60 MPH is amazing. The team work that is woven together by all players collaborating for one general purpose: to win. I have never been a part of a softball team that did not show the strength and energy necessary to get the job done, effectively. On a side note, I have coached both travel basketball and travel softball with both of my daughters for 4 years each. To coach basketball, softball and volleyball at a high school level is a great honor to me. Before coming to PUC CALS, for approximately 14 years I volunteered as a coach for many different sports in Northeast Los Angeles. Coaching is my passion. Coaching, whether on the volleyball/basketball court, or out on the dirt/grass areas of a softball field, is what I choose to call ‘My Office’.

I am blessed to be able to go out every day and help the young members of our community. To be able to teach discipline, structure, communication, respect and honor is something that will benefit all players that encounter me as a coach in their lives. I’m not just ‘Coach.’ I work to incorporate real life scenarios, I work to teach that ‘Failure is an option’. Without failure, we have no success, so fail but fail better, I tell them.

This season we are blessed to have such a large group of student athletes showing interest in playing softball. Again, I look forward to having an incredible season of awesome wins. Whether we win or lose, we all shall learn and continue working toward the common goal of learning every step of the way. Thank you for allowing me to share my story with you and the rest of our family here at PUC Schools.
Monday February 4th was the big day for the event at the Sylmar Complex! There was a great turn out of presenters even with the rain. Many students were looking extra sharp as they were encouraged to wear business attire. What an amazing opportunity for our students to hear from business professionals, who are experts in their field, speak on their personal career journey.

There were...
989 Students
152 Sessions
84 Guest Speakers
50 Chaperones
13 Additional Event Staff
...and a partridge in a pear tree!

None of this would have been possible without the coordination of fieldtrip schedules, school lunches, catering, IT, Daniela Ponce and her operation team, support from teachers, office staff, college counselors, volunteer PUC presenters, the students, and months of coordination. Thank you everyone for supporting this unique event.
PUC Alumni Spotlight Series

MOHAMADOU KRUBALLY
PUC Community Charter Early College High School, ‘18
US Navy 2018

The PUC Alumni Spotlight Series showcases and recognizes outstanding PUC high school Alumni for their academic and professional achievements, and their continuation of the PUC Commitments. Through this series we will explore and regularly share the diverse accomplishments of our PUC high school graduates.

Joining the US Navy:

Mohamadou took the leap of faith, chose the path less traveled, and joined the US Navy. This was no easy decision but Mohamadou's parents are supportive of him and his decisions. He shared about the initiation process of joining the Navy, which is no simple task. It started on July 2nd with him flying out to Chicago. He had to let go of his civilian clothes and possessions, sending them home. They gave him a yellow shirt, sweatpants, and hat that says recruit. Everyone's heads are shaven to look uniform, and then the processing begins. He had to re-pass physical tests, academic tests, and team building exercises. All of which are to ensure that each recruit has what it takes to be in the Navy.

He shares that is a hard process and huge reality check, but you need to know that you can trust your peers and that they are well prepared for whatever comes their way. Mohamadou gets to work with new people and he has learned to value working within diverse groups. He shared that you learn a lot about yourself in this process.

PUC Commitments 1 & 3:

"Take your education very seriously because in the end it is all you have." Mohamadou understands the value of serving his country in the US Navy and the importance of a college education. Serving in the Navy has opened many doors for his future. Serving will help him pay for college so he can pursue his dream of being a pediatrician. "My mother is a CNA in a nursing home. I've always been really interested in the medical field because learning to save lives has always been a goal of mine." He is currently taking a class at a local college to get him started on his pediatric career. This is on top of working 12-hour shifts in the Navy. Mohamadou is a hardworking PUC Alumni who is finding the balance of going to school and giving back to his community. We are blown away by his dedication to serving his country and to serving our future generation.

Thank you for your service.

*If you know of awesome Alumni to nominate to be a part of the Alumni Spotlight Series, please click here to nominate them!
PUC Alumni Spotlight Stories

Nominate an Alumni today!
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PUCspotlight

>>>>>

Deadline to Apply:
March 22

PUC Lakeview Charter High School

PUC Alumni Panel Opportunity

Come speak to PUC LCHS juniors about your college experience!

FRIDAY MARCH 29,
2:45-3:50PM
@ PUC LCHS, SYLMAR

Register at
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LCHSpaanelreg
Just Move!

Submitted by Jada Kelly, Health & Fitness Manager, PUC Schools

Did you know that just 30 minutes a day of movement can change the quality of your life? So many of us have found ourselves in a slump—lacking energy, anxious, with weakened immune systems and gaining weight. We all know that being in that state does NOT feel good or allow us to be our best.

The good news is there is a simple solution...commit to moving 30 min a day with the purpose of exercise!

Here are some other benefits of moving for 30 minutes a day:

- Stress reduction
- Increase in energy and stamina
- Improved immune system
- Manage and lose weight
- Prevent or manage type II diabetes
- Lower blood pressure
- Decrease depression or anxiety
- Improve cholesterol

Simply speaking, exercise could be the missing link from you being good and being your BEST! If you don’t know where to start, PUC has some great resources! Come to the PUC Parent Center and Zumba with Sonia every Friday morning at 9am (picture shown). I had the pleasure of trying it out last Friday and I couldn’t stop smiling. I felt amazing after the workout, which is appropriate for any level, and best of all the class is FREE and open to the public.

We are hosting our yearly PUC Family Health Day on Saturday April 13th! Come and learn from the pros about health, fitness and wellness. Try out the fitness demonstrations, get a few FREE health screenings and find out what type of movement you like! The health fair and screenings are FREE and everyone is welcome.

Here is the link for more info: pucschools.org/healthday5k

This is your time to make a step towards your best. Excuses only get us deeper and deeper into that negative place. Use these resources and commit to moving 30 minutes a day!
PUC PRESENTS THE 2019 FAMILY HEALTH DAY + 5K

All proceeds go directly to our schools to use for needed supplies, field trips and student enrichment.

APRIL 13, 2019
9AM-1PM
(5K starts at 9:15 AM sharp!)

HANSEN DAM RECREATION AREA
11770 Foothill Blvd., Lakeview Terrace, CA 91342

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

5K: Pre-register or donate online at: www.pucschools.org/healthday5k

$10 for PUC Students
$12 for Children (Ages 5-17)
$20 for Adults (Ages 18+)

Register by March 31st for these early bird prices!

HEALTH FAIR:
• Free Health Screenings
• Raffles
• Student Performances
• Fitness Demonstrations
• Weight Management
• Health & Wellness Exhibitors
• Music/Dancing
• Food Trucks
• Fun Activities for All Ages
Food Services Update

Submitted by Rosa Arrington, Food Service Operations Manager, PUC National

Food Services Manager and staff are working with our current Vendor Revolution Foods to gather data from students. PUC Schools form student groups that began to meet to discuss menu planning and new menu items. Chef Nate Lopez, from Rev Foods, lead the focus group discussions. Students completed surveys and shared their ideas on how to improve the Food Service program at their school site. Schools that participated were: PUC Community Charter Early College High School, PUC Community Charter Middle School, PUC Lakeview Charter Academy, PUC Lakeview Charter High School, PUC Triumph Charter Academy, PUC Triumph Charter High School, PUC Inspire Charter Academy, PUC CALS Charter Middle & Early College High School, and PUC Excel Charter Academy.

PUC Sylmar Education Complex Food Service Manager Yolanda Rodriguez (pictured, left) and PUC National Food Service Operations Assistant Andrea Alvarez (pictured, right) and staff visit Oxnard School District to learn how to implement a Salad Bar food program. The Food Program is piloting the program in the month of April and implementing the full program at middle and high schools next School year.
Follow PUC on Social Media!

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PUC Excel Charter Academy
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PUC Lakeview Charter High School
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PUC Milagro Charter School
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PUC Nueva Esperanza Charter Academy
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PUC Santa Rosa Charter Academy
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PUC Triumph Charter Academy
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PUC Triumph Charter High School
www.facebook.com/puctchs
www.twitter.com/puctchs
PUC is on the Glassdoor and indeed job site where you can leave a review about your experience here at PUC! In case you're not familiar with the job sites they are similar to Yelp!

See our links below:

http://www.glassdoor.com/Overview/Working-at-PUC-Schools-EI_IE465918.11,22.htm

http://www.indeed.com/cmp/Puc-Schools

Leave us a review!
Employee Perks Program

All employees have exclusive access to the Working Advantage discount network, which allows you to save up 60% on ticketed events and online shopping. Through Working Advantage you can save on: Movie Tickets, Theme Parks, Ski Tickets, Broadway Shows, Sporting Events, Hotels and Travel, Health and Fitness, Museums and City Passes, Merchant Gift Certificates, Online Shopping...and much more! To subscribe, you may access the Working Advantage website by clicking here: workingadvantage.com. When opening an individual account you will need the PUC Schools ID #413401740.

Working Advantage offers 24-hour online shopping and customer support Monday through Friday from 5:30 AM to 3:30 PM Pacific Standard time. If you have specific questions regarding the site, please contact Working Advantage at 800-565-3712.

T-Mobile offers exclusive discounts for PUC Schools employees. Click here to visit T-Mobile’s promo website. To enroll by phone, contact Advantage Direct at 866-464-8662 and use promotional code 20356TMOFAV.

Sprint is pleased to offer monthly service discounts to eligible employees, students and organization members. Click here to visit Sprint’s promo website.

Get the completely NEW Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2019 suite for your home. If you use a Mac, get Office Home and Business 2019 for Mac for the same low price: $14.99.

For instructions on how to purchase Microsoft Office for home use, please click here.
FOR SALE

PUC Polo Shirts - $20

PUC Laptop Bag - $40

Items can be purchased throughout the year. Please contact Human Resources at hr@pucschools.org to place an order. Please be sure to indicate your shirt size. Polos are available in both men’s and women’s sizes.