



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

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### **New Video Shows Impact of Charter School Success** *Video Released Day Before LAUSD Board Elections*

Los Angeles, CA – (May 15, 2017) *La Comadre*, an organization that advocates for school choice, released today a video featuring the success of a charter school in Pacoima once known as one of the worst in California.

In 2003, Pacoima Elementary School parted ways from the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to form an independent charter school due to its high suspension rates, low achievement scores and ineffective teachers. The school is located across the street from San Fernando Gardens, one of the largest housing projects in the area.

“Our score on the Academic Performance Index was 398, far below the minimum target of 800,” said Sylvia Fajardo, principal at Pacoima Charter, the new name of the school.

Today, Pacoima Charter API is 794. The API measures academic performance and progress of individual schools in California based on state test scores.

“We have the highest science scores in the area,” Fajardo states in the video. “Seventy percent of our students score proficient and advanced in the state tests in science and the state average is only 59 (percent).”

The release of the video comes a day before the board election of Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) on Tuesday. The video is posted at [www.lacomadre.org](http://www.lacomadre.org) **To view the video, [CLICK HERE](#):** An editorial by Fajardo was published May 5 in [La Opinión](#).

“After becoming a charter school we continue to improve and our API continues to grow,” Fajardo added.

Pacoima Charter consistently outperforms all local LAUSD, while serving the same socio-economically disadvantaged community.

Victor and Maria Mendoza have a son at Pacoima Charter, a school with an in-house doctor, a chef, a psychologist, two speech pathologists and two social workers that care for student's social, emotional and physical needs.

"My son is in the third grade," said Victor Mendoza. "But he is more advanced in a charter. He's reading at a fourth grade level."

"The chef prepares the food for the kids... not processed foods, which are healthier," said his wife, Maria. "If he (son) is healthy, he is more productive and his mind is working better in class."

LAUSD hosts more charter schools than any system in the nation. There are more than 270 charters schools that operate in LAUSD. Four of them are conversion elementary schools in Pacoima.

Students who enter Los Angeles charter schools are more academically advanced than their peers in traditional public schools, according to a recent [study from the University of California Berkeley](#).

Xitlali Castro has an 11-year-old son with autism who spent two years at a traditional LAUSD school.

"He was placed in a special education class with children that had even more special needs than he did," she states in the video. "Today, he is able to read at a ninth grade level and he is only in fifth... He is classified as a gifted student. He is a violin player in an orchestra. I see a world of a difference."

Alma V. Marquez, founder of [La Comadre](#), met with parents for a Mother's Day celebration used to talk about the importance of school choice.

"I don't know if you've heard, but many times they attack the (charter) schools our children attend," she said. "These schools are working. We want all schools to succeed so we can make the dreams we have for our children a reality."

The school once labeled as a 'failure' has come a long way since 2003.

"We cannot give the system an excuse to let low-income children fail for generations in traditional public schools," added Fajardo. "Our school is a perfect example of how becoming a charter school saved this school. And how it has changed the lives of many of our children."

### **About La Comadre:**

*La Comadre is a group of Moms, Tias, Ninas and Play-Tias who love children in our lives and we want to help every child succeed in school. Navigating schools and education—from preschool to college—is hard. We want to help each other with this. For more information, please visit [www.lacomadre.org](http://www.lacomadre.org)*