



For Immediate Release

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Parents at Fishburn Elementary Pull the Trigger

Maywood, CA – Parents of Fishburn Elementary in Maywood have begun to collect petitions, utilizing their rights under the Parent Empowerment Law, to bring change to a school that has academically been on the decline over the past several years. Between 2012 and 2013, the school's API score dropped from 823 to 782, a decline of 41 points, and an overwhelming majority of students in the third grade, 64% of them, are below proficient in reading and writing.

Parents at the school, currently collecting petitions under the Transformation Model of the law, say the main factor for such low academic performance is poor school leadership. With students excited to learn, amazing teachers who love to teach, and parents willing to volunteer at the school, parents believe that poor school leadership is the missing factor in a school culture that would otherwise be set up for success. As part of the Transformation Model parents are asking for three main actions to take place: 1) the immediate removal of the principal; 2) for parents and teachers to be part of the hiring committee for a new principal; and 3) for additional academic resources for the students and the school.

And in the first ever parent trigger campaign, teachers stand united with parents, as they point to school leadership for creating an unhealthy learning environment that has stunted student performance, and more drastically, pushed parents and teachers out of the school. A strong majority of teachers have publicly stated such, (see attached teacher letter of support) and are working collaboratively with the parents to remove current leadership at the school. Although teachers are uneasy with the use of the law and don't necessarily support a trigger campaign they agree that the principal needs to be replaced. Parents and teachers allege that school leadership has divided the school community by using bully tactics, constant harassment, and making false allegations of child abuse to school police, police, and child protective services, parents who were once part of school leadership and parents who volunteered regularly have fled the school in fear of retaliation and that their families may be torn apart.

However, this is not the first time parents and teachers of Fishburn Elementary have worked together to try and remove the principal. In years prior, both parents and teachers signed petitions to remove the principal after first learning that the administrator was capable of retaliation and harassment. However, those petitions were ignored by district officials and school board members. School administration parents allege, in an effort to retaliate against parents and teachers who complain about school matters, had at one point shut down all the water fountains, closed student restrooms or refused to stock toilet paper, and kept parents with special needs students waiting up to three years to give them an IEP.



In addition, parents are concerned that administration is not utilizing financial resources that have been allocated to the school and have secured fiscal budgets, all public information, showing that the administration has returned much needed dollars that could have been spent of student and teacher resources.

District officials, parents say, have long known about the problem as parents have again and again reached out to the area superintendent's office, submitted both Uniform and Williams Complaints, and all to no avail. As part of what they feel is their due diligence, parents reached out to Superintendent Cortines, of Los Angeles Unified School District, to meet and discuss the issues and see if collectively they can reach a resolution to a problem that has long faced the students, parents, and teachers of Fishburn Elementary. Parents and teachers are very hopeful that Superintendent Cortines will do what's necessary for the students of Fishburn Elementary and they will continue to push for making their school a better school for the community of Maywood.

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