



**Office of the Mayor
City of Los Angeles**

ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 24, 2009**

Contacts:

Nadia Gonzalez, Partnership Schools (213) 300-9987
Jonathan Powell, Mayor's Office (213) 978-0741
Naomi Rodriguez, DIRECTV (310) 964-4821

MAYOR VILLARAIGOSA LAYS FOUNDATION FOR PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS

Partnership for LA Schools unveils model parent center, expands effort to empower parents, and encourages families to get involved in their children's education

LOS ANGELES – Following through on his promise to make parent engagement a centerpiece of school reform, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa today unveiled a model parent center at Gompers Middle School.

Mayor Villaraigosa was joined by dozens of parents, Watts-area community members, DIRECTV, LA Conservation Corps, AmeriCorps, and students and teachers from Gompers Middle School.

“With the school house doors opened wide, it’s now time for parents to be active partners in their children’s education,” Mayor Villaraigosa said. “We have to go beyond the bakesale and make parents true stakeholders in our public schools.”

Empowering parents to get involved in their children’s education is a key component to the Partnership for LA Schools’ overall strategy to increase student achievement.

The Gompers Parent Center – a model for similar centers set to be renovated at each Partnership campus – will provide parents and caregivers a welcoming space to meet with teachers; plan events for students and the community; receive training on school report cards and emailing; and attend workshops on improving study habits and the importance of reading at home. Each center will also be staffed with a trained parent coordinator.

Thanks to the generous gift of \$250,000 from DIRECTV, each parent center will be renovated with furniture, two computers, a printer and a Samsung high-definition TV equipped with DIRECTV *GOES TO SCHOOL* programming.

- MORE -

"When we learned about the Partnership and its vital work to transform schools and communities in Los Angeles, we knew DIRECTV could make a meaningful contribution," said Paul James, Senior Vice President, Human Resources and Administration. "K-12 is a key area of philanthropic focus for DIRECTV, and through our grant to fund parents centers at all 10 Partnership Schools, we've established a corporate-community alliance that will make a positive, enduring impact on education for years to come."

Volunteers from the LA Conservation Corps and AmeriCorp also worked with Gompers' parents to clean and paint the centers.

Parent Centers

Parent Centers are part of a greater parent and community engagement program designed to create meaningful involvement of parents in the Partnership Schools with the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement.

Research has shown that "the nation's schools must improve education for all children, but schools cannot do this alone. More will be accomplished if schools, families, and communities work together to promote successful students" (Joyce Epstein, John Hopkins University, National Network of Partnership Schools).

Surveys asking parents for recommendations on what type of renovations were needed at each parent center were conducted at the beginning of the school year. Activities and programs at each center will be developed by Family Action Teams – groups of parents, community members, administrators and teachers on each campus dedicated to finding new and innovative ways to improve school quality and boost student achievement.

The first phase of parent center renovations will be completed by the end of March at Gompers Middle School; Hollenbeck Middle School; Stevenson Middle School; Santee Education Complex; and Ritter Elementary. With the second phase completed in early May at Ritter Elementary School; Markham Middle School; Figueroa Street Elementary; 99th Street Elementary and Sunrise Elementary.

Parent and Community Engagement

Each Partnership School is developing campus-specific goals for its parent and community engagement programs, but all will include the following objectives:

- Increase student achievement through meaningful and active parent involvement.
- Increase parent involvement by creating Family Action Teams at each campus and placing at each school a fully equipped parent center and a trained parent coordinator.
- Increase parent awareness and accountability for student achievement by hosting workshops on how student's can be academically successful and how parents and families can best hold student accountable and implementing School Report Cards.

- Improve communication to parents by re-evaluating current parent communication practices; creating parent newsletters; increase use of e-mail communication by providing e-mail training and e-mail addresses to parents and updating current parent contact data.
- Fostering strong partnerships with community organizations, youth programs and city services. Each school will create a plan for engaging and connecting community based organizations to the goals of the school.

Parent Participation Tracking System

The Partnership is currently working with school family action teams to implement a new "Parent Participation Tracking System," this is a web-based program that will allow schools to monitor the number of parents and hours they devote to school based activities. The system will also allow schools to track what type of involvement parents are attending, for example the system can track if parents are attending a workshop that aims to improve learning at home, if it is volunteer-based or if it involved making a school-based decision.

Each school will have its own web-based program and will be responsible for maintaining the data current. Next month, the Partnership will be conducting comprehensive training for school site personnel that will be responsible for the full implementation of this system at their school.

Partnership for LA Schools

Gompers Middle School is one of ten schools in the Mayor's Partnership for Los Angeles Schools. The Partnership oversees close to 19,000 students at 10 of the lowest-performing public schools in Los Angeles.

About DIRECTV, Inc.

DIRECTV, Inc. (NASDAQ:DTV - News), the nation's leading satellite television service provider, presents the finest television experience available to more than 17.6 million customers in the United States and is leading the HD revolution with more than 130 HD channels. Each day, DIRECTV subscribers enjoy access to over 265 channels of 100% digital picture and sound, exclusive programming, industry-leading customer satisfaction (which has surpassed national cable companies for eight years running) and superior technologies that include advanced DVR and HD-DVR services and the most state-of-the-art interactive sports packages available anywhere. For the most up-to-date information on DIRECTV, please visit directv.com.

#