

New LA Charter Statement in Response to Proposed Resolution from the Governing School Council of Baldwin Hills. Submitted to the West Adams Neighborhood Council

Date: March 15, 2019

Submitted by: Kate O'Brien, Principal New LA Charter

On behalf of the New LA community we want to say thank you for reaching out and giving us the opportunity to come and tell our story. We're so pleased to be here and look forward to building ongoing relationships with the Neighborhood Council.

New Los Angeles Charter Elementary (New LA) is submitting this response to the document and proposed resolution from the Governing School Council of Baldwin Hills Elementary to the West Adams Neighborhood Council. We ask that the Neighborhood Council does not go through with this vote to advocate for a Charter Free Zone at Baldwin Hills Elementary. We harbor no ill will toward Baldwin Hills Elementary School and have great respect for the work they are doing to educate students in our community. New LA is also doing great work in our community and while sharing the campus is challenging, we have made every effort to have the least impact in order to allow both schools to do what we do best which is serve children. As described below New LA is also an asset to this community and has made every effort to form a positive partnership with Baldwin Hills Elementary while we look for our permanent location.

New LA History

New LA opened a middle school in the Mid-City neighborhood in 2008. From 2008-2015 we were often asked by parents to open both an elementary school and high school as they saw the positive results in their children during the short 3 years of middle school and wished and hoped for more years with us.

New LA Academic and Enrichment Program

In October of 2015 the charter for New LA Charter Elementary School was unanimously approved by the LAUSD school board. New LA has a commitment to being a community-based school with foundations in social justice. We operate under 3 main mission pillars, Passion for Learning, Respect for Self and Others and Engagement in the Community. Below we've outlined some of the key elements of our program:

- Comprehensive balanced literacy instruction with readers and writers workshop at the core
- (CGI) Cognitively Guided Instruction in Mathematics - we committed to a full implementation of this innovative math methodology when our school opened. In the years since, LAUSD has also determined that this is the direction math instruction is heading, and is actively training teachers in CGI.
- Hands-on inquiry-based science instruction
- Social justice curriculum through social studies and integrated throughout the program through culturally responsive and culturally relevant teaching strategies

- Computer Science/Coding curriculum for all students - students have regular access to chromebooks in their classrooms and are able to engage with 21st century skills via technology in the classroom
- Visual Art
- Music instruction
- Mindfulness curriculum
- Free After School Program

Timeline and Efforts to Minimize Impact

New LA made regular and constant efforts to have as little impact on the existing Baldwin Hills space and program. We've outlined those efforts here as well as pointing out some inaccuracies in the Resolution put forth by Baldwin Hills Elementary.

May 2016-August 2016: New LA Elementary opened its doors in Aug. 2016 with TK-1st grade. We planned to grow one grade level per year until we were a full TK-5th grade program. New LA was offered 8 classrooms on the Baldwin Hills campus for the 2016-17 school year. These were to accommodate our 6 general education classrooms, 1 special ed. classroom, and 1 office space. New LA looked critically at the space, understanding that a co-location can cause a strain on the host school. We noticed that The Delta Professional Development Center was located on campus and used the equivalent of 3 classrooms. This space was not counted as part of Baldwin Hills Elementary's room count, as it was District level space dedicated to offices and meeting spaces. New LA worked with the Prop 39 office to see if the Delta Center could be vacated and that space be used for New LA classrooms in order to lighten the impact on Baldwin Hills. We were able to convince LAUSD to go forward with that plan so we moved into those 3 classrooms and only 5 of the Baldwin Hills rooms.

An important note about shared locations and Prop 39: When a co-location happens the charter and district schools are to negotiate the shared space on campus. Using a formula that accounts for the number of students at each school, a percentage of all the shared spaces is allocated to the charter school. Included in those shared spaces are all yard spaces, auditorium, lunch area, faculty lounge, library, computer lab, music room, and art room. New LA had no intention of having that level of impact on the Baldwin Hills community, and we knew we could provide a quality art, music and computer program within our classrooms. We declined use of Baldwin Hills' computer, music and art spaces. Additionally, we chose not to use the library - instead we have built extensive classroom libraries. In Prop 39 arrangements, schedules for shared use spaces are supposed to be negotiated. It is expected that the two schools will work together to come to a mutual agreement for how to share the space. It is not an expectation that a co-located Charter School will simply work around the existing schedules. However once again with the utmost consideration, New LA was sensitive to the impact and agreed to schedule recess, lunch, arrival and dismissal times around the existing schedules at Baldwin Hills.

May 2017-August 2017: New LA grew to add 2nd grade and was able to do that with the addition of only one classroom. This plan was submitted to LAUSD and they again offered us space at Baldwin

Hills with the addition of Room 23. Room 23 was not occupied by a classroom nor was it used for critical programs by Baldwin Hills as is stated in the proposed resolution given to the WANC. Room 23 was a book room. It was filled with old books and shelving units - students were not using that space. Despite our enrollment growth we agreed to maintain a single recess and lunch period so as not to have further impact.

May 2018-August 2018: New LA grew to add 3rd grade. We requested 2 additional classrooms from LAUSD and they again placed us at Baldwin Hills with those rooms allotted to New LA. The two classrooms were both used by Baldwin Hills to provide after school programs. One sat empty throughout the school day (room 27), the other (room 31) was often empty though occasionally used for individual student services. New LA also advocated for use of a private space to provide student counseling. It was determined that this would happen in room 31 one day a week. Neither was a student classroom or computer lab. We are unaware of why Baldwin Hills chose to close their computer lab, but we can assure you that New LA did not take it over.

2018-2019 School Year: For this school year, New LA uses 8 Baldwin Hills classrooms spaces (this is the same number we were offered in 2016 and had been determined by the district to be available) along with the 3 rooms in the Delta Center. We also have continued to have just one recess and lunch rotation to Baldwin Hills' 3 rotations. At this point New LA has 200 students to Baldwin Hills' 400, and we are using far less space than we were offered under Prop 39.

March 2019: New LA has requested no additional rooms on the Baldwin Hills campus. We are making plans to accommodate our growth to 4th grade with the existing classrooms that we currently use.

Campus Security

The document submitted to the West Adams Neighborhood Council by the Governing School Council of Baldwin Hills Elementary continues to argue that New LA's co-location has caused a security risk on campus. In fact, New LA takes campus security very seriously. While the Baldwin Hills campus as a whole has 3 entrance gates, New LA uses only one. It is the gate at the back of the campus where our office and classrooms are also clustered. We've outlined here the steps we take maintain a safe and secure campus:

Arrival: Our gate opens at 7:15AM and there are two staff members monitoring the gate, it is not left open unless there is a staff member there. Parents are permitted to escort their children in the gate to the enclosed assembly area (just a few feet away) and wait with them there until students go to the classrooms at 7:50AM. At that time parents are expected to exit the gate directly, they do not go to the classrooms and they certainly don't wander the campus. New LA staff members continue to monitor the gate for late arrivals and throughout the Baldwin Hills arrival time while the gate is open. After 7:50 however we do not allow parents to enter with their students.

During the School Day and During the After School Program: The gate on our campus is equipped with a buzzer, intercom and video monitor. When someone wants to enter the campus they ring the

bell. If they are not a known person they will be asked for information regarding their visit. After being buzzed in, all visitors are expected to go directly to the office to sign in and visitors and volunteers receive a badge to wear during their time on campus. In the event the visitor is not for our campus or we do not know the person is, they will not be buzzed in. This can sometimes be frustrating for a visitor to the other campus but we feel it is important to maintain this safety protocol. We came to this agreement jointly with the leadership of Baldwin Hills Elementary.

Dismissal: Our students are dismissed at 2:20PM most days. At 2:20 a staff member opens the gate and allows parents to go to the classrooms to pick up their students. Parents, baby sitters etc. are identified by a New LA key tag which has been issued to every family. This is how we know an adult is cleared to access campus as they are part of our school community. At the start of the year everyone is expected to show their tag at the gate, after a few months the staff know almost everyone by face, those who they don't know will be asked to show their key tag. In order to minimize disruption, students in classrooms that are further from the gate are escorted to the gate so parents are not walking extensively through campus. On early release days (12:35 dismissal) when Baldwin Hills students are in recess during our dismissal period, we likewise walk children to the gate to minimize disruption.

To be clear, at no point do we open the doors to the general public, nor do we allow visitors to roam the campus at their leisure. Additionally, during the after school hours the Baldwin Hills after school programs leave the gate on Ridgeley open and unmonitored into the evening. This is wide open to the general public and is a threat to both New LA and Baldwin Hills students.

New LA is the Community

The document the Baldwin Hills Governing Council submitted repeatedly refers to New LA as "privately invested" and "operated by corporate investors." New LA is a public school funded by public money. Our revenue comes from the state of California and is based on our Average Daily Attendance (ADA) just like Baldwin Hills Elementary and all other LAUSD schools. Our founders, board of directors and leadership are educators and members of the community.

The document also states that New LA is "occupying," "encroaching," "taking over" the Baldwin Hills community. It is important to note that the students who attend New LA are firmly from the community, and have expressed interest and desire for New LA to continue to operate in their community.

We do not intend to stay at Baldwin Hills permanently. We are in search of a permanent location for our school that is not on an LAUSD campus. It is imperative that we find a location that is within a reasonable distance of our current location, and our middle school location so that we can continue to serve our existing community. Finding a building is easier said than done, and we appeal to the West Adams Neighborhood Council and community members at large to assist us in the search and procurement of a permanent site.