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Para Los Niños Taps Prominent L.A./Boston Bilingual Education Leader As Superintendent & Vice President of Charter Schools

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Dr. Frances Esparza becomes the first woman and Latina to lead the charter school network

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LOS ANGELES, CA (July 31, 2017) – Para Los Niños, the L.A.-based education and social services agency, announced the selection of Dr. Frances Esparza, Ed.D, as Superintendent & Vice President of Charter Schools overseeing a team of approximately 200 school-site staff across three Downtown L.A. campuses.

With over 25 years of experience, Dr. Esparza becomes the first woman in the organization's history – and the first Latina – to lead the Para Los Niños charter school network, boosting a robust education-centered mission to break the cycle of poverty in the city. Dr. Esparza has led schools across the country as a bilingual educator in both elementary, secondary and higher education and most recently with Boston Public Schools. Her roles have supported the implementation of English Learner (EL) programs such as Standard English Learners (SELs), EL students with disabilities, EL students identified as gifted and talented, and socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Her appointment concludes a nationwide search, which commenced last winter.

"We are proud to welcome Dr. Frances Esparza to lead our charter schools and strengthen our inquiry-driven, project-based learning approach, which integrates wraparound services for the whole-child and families' well-being. Her track record of successful leadership with high and urgent need students fills us with promise of exceptional outcomes for the children we serve," said Dr. Drew Furedi, Para Los Niños President & CEO.

During her post with the Los Angeles Unified School District, Dr. Esparza monitored EL compliance and categorical budgets for over 1,100 schools. As an instructional leader for LAUSD, she provided supports to increase teacher capacity that included the creation of curriculum guides for academic courses which incorporate and align curriculum to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Dr. Esparza also created the accountability system for ELs in LAUSD that is still being used today to monitor EL compliance.

"As a native Angeleno, it is a privilege to join Para Los Niños, a longstanding community lighthouse cultivating hope and success for nearly four decades," said Dr. Frances Esparza. "I am eager to serve our students and families-- and I look forward to working with our schools to implement high quality instruction tailored around our whole-child approach to student achievement."

Dr. Esparza is regarded as an advocate for all students and has served as principal in an alternative setting that supported transitioning youth and the homeless youth of the East Hollywood area. Additionally, Dr. Esparza has previously worked closely with the Federal Department of Justice and the Office of Civil Rights to ensure services for ELs and English Learner Students with Disabilities (ELSWD) were made accessible.

"Dr. Frances Esparza brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to our organization, which will help to better serve our students and communities," said Marjorie E. Lewis, Board Chair of Para Los Niños.

Dr. Esparza holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Southern California (USC), a Teaching Credential from California State University Los Angeles, a USC School Business Management Certification, a M.S. in Educational Leadership & Psychology and an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership Administration Policy from Pepperdine University, and an Executive Leadership Business Certification & Alumni status from Harvard Business School.

About Para Los Niños:

Since 1980, Para Los Niños (PLN) has transformed the lives of impoverished children in Los Angeles through charter schools, early education centers and community-based programs in Skid Row, Westlake-McArthur Park, Pico Union, East L.A. and Hollywood. Each year PLN serves over 6,000 children and families at 13 sites in the high-need neighborhoods of Los Angeles. By combining school-day education with valuable life services, Para Los Niños gives children the opportunities to combat the achievement gap, escape poverty, and achieve success in school and in life. For more than 36 years, Para Los Niños has worked to close the achievement gap and continue to invest in early education and prevention in order to lay the foundation for academic success. Today, Para Los Niños continues to respond to the ever-growing and ever-changing needs of Southern California's most challenging communities. The organization's proven approach helps to build stronger, more stable families and brighter futures for children.

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