



## OFFICE OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to write this letter of recommendation for Dr. Orlando Ramos. Orlando is the Director of Transformation Schools with our organization and he was trusted with multiple important responsibilities. I want to speak to some of his strengths and how his contributions improved our organization. Orlando was charged with going to several communities, school sites, school boards and guiding these entities through the “Transformation” model process.

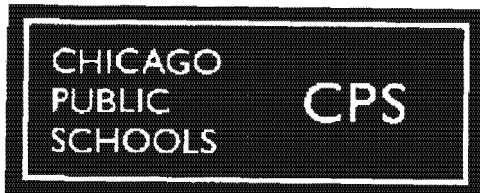
Orlando had to develop school improvement plans in collaboration with school staff, administrators, union reps, school site councils and other community based organizations. He was in the challenging position of having to get approval from all of these entities around a single plan in order to make us competitive for the grants. This required a significant amount of people, organizational and political skills. Most importantly, he built trust in a manner that I have not seen before in my career. At a couple of the sites, the union representatives publicly stated they appreciated Orlando’s transparency in delivering information, no matter how difficult. He brought the different entities together in a respectful manner, being attentive to all stakeholders and allowing all to participate in the decision making process.

We were impressed with Orlando’s ability to bring people together who normally would not or could not work together. During Orlando’s tenure here, his personal characteristics such as patience, consideration, emotional stability and good judgment were great assets to our organization. He created new processes and structures for us and helped to set up our transformation program. He will be greatly missed. Unfortunately, due to severe budget cuts our office was dramatically reduced and Orlando’s position was eliminated, a huge loss to our office and system.

I highly recommend Orlando to you as a dynamic, passionate, and committed educational leader. Do not hesitate to contact with any further questions.

Sincerely,

Donald J Fraynd PhD  
Chief Officer  
djfraynd@cps.edu



Linda A. Pierzchalski  
Acting Principal

Isabel C. Tellez  
Principal

Carol Garai  
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Assistant Principals

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May 18, 2011

To Whom It May Concern,

Mr. Orlando Ramos came to my school, Kelvyn Park High School (KPHS), in mid-October, 2010 as the lead coordinator for the school's School Improvement Grant (SIG) application. This grant represents an important opportunity for KPHS, as it will provide much needed funds and personnel that can significantly improve the learning experiences of our students. If this situation, an inner-city school seeking to secure additional resources through state aid, sounds common, at KPHS it was anything but at that time. The school was undergoing a difficult transition period, with different groups (all with good intentions) in conflict over the proper direction for our school. It was a challenging time for an outsider to come and attempt to help the staff reach consensus on a major reform program. But it was a challenge that Mr. Ramos successfully met.

I have been the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) lead delegate for KPHS since the day Mr. Ramos first visited our school, and have had numerous meetings and conversations with him regarding the SIG. The difficulties at KPHS referred to above thrust the CTU delegate into a very public role, and led to my taking stands (all of which I believed were in defense of the rights of staff and students) on contentious issues of school policy. Often at least one KPHS administrator took a position directly opposite my own on an issue, and usually the opinions of other members of the staff fell in varied degrees between. In such a climate I have seen Mr. Ramos many times address and moderate staff meetings called to discuss and come to decisions on the SIG. Both at these meetings and in his preparation for them he reached out to the many diverse groups and opinions at our school. He would always lay out guidelines and clearly inform us what he could and could not do in regards to how the grant money was to be spent, yet honored his opening pledge that he would remain as flexible as possible and seek diligently to discover if a way could be found to "Do the Not-Doable." When not actually present at KPHS he was promptly available via phone or e-mail, and I and others communicated often with him by these technologies. What Mr. Ramos did most for our school was he listened; listened even when the larger dialogue at the school was characterized by profound disagreement; and by him listening to each of us, we were better able to eventually listen to each other. The outcome was a strategic plan and an SIG application that all the stakeholders at KPHS could agree on. The credit for this achievement goes to Mr. Ramos more than any other individual.

Local School Council

Evangelina Gomez-Tello  
Patricia Morales Héctor M. Basave

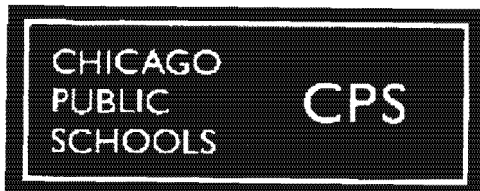
Héctor González  
Guadalupe Rueda

Sean O'Bra  
Isabel Lopez

Leticia Sanchez  
Eduardo Soriano

Emma Valerio  
Jennifer Velazquez

*"A quality education at a neighborhood school"*



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Besides these many group meetings, I met one-on-one with Mr. Ramos 4 or 5 times, situations where we could speak a little louder to each other and in a more direct manner. In all situations, though, he reached out directly to me as a union representative to make sure that I knew personally that he was taking the union's concerns into consideration. In the end, whatever sword I held Mr. Ramos over time beat it into a ploughshare, and someone that could have been his antagonist he turned into his ally.

For his collaboration, his transparency, his energy, his negotiating skills, his ability to learn, and most of all for his respect for the professionals with whom he works, I highly recommend to you Mr. Orlando Ramos. I can be contacted at 773-836-4689.

Sincerely,

Jerry Douglas Skinner  
English Teacher and Chicago Teachers Union Lead Delegate, Kelvyn Park High School

Local School Council

Evangelina Gómez-Tello	Héctor González	Sean O'Bra	Leticia Sanchez	Emma Valerio
Patricia Morales	Héctor M. Basave	Guadalupe Rueda	Isabel Lopez	Eduardo Soriano
				Jennifer Velazquez

*"A quality education at a neighborhood school"*

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to write this letter of recommendation for **Dr. Orlando Ramos**. I have been Dr. Ramos' immediate supervisor in the Chicago Public Schools since his arrival in July 2010 as the Director of Transformation Support. I serve as the Director of High School Strategy & Execution for the Chicago Public Schools Office of School Improvement, which implements the four federal reform models in our lowest performing schools. Dr. Ramos was recruited into CPS by our office based on his deserved reputation in school turnaround efforts as a building administrator.

Dr. Ramos was charged with building a new division in our district as an internal lead partner working with select high schools under the federal transformation reform model. The schools he was charged with working are among the lowest performing of our 119 district high schools. Dr. Ramos has spent the year aligning a historically fractured school community in each school to facilitate development of comprehensive plans for improvement that will be launched in 2011-12. He also build all aspects of the support systems that will be put in place in those schools through this "incubation planning" year.

I was most impressed with the ability Dr. Ramos demonstrated in bring unaligned and disfunctional constituent groups in each building together to fully support an aggressive school reform model. The schools he is engaged with have been broken educational systems for more than a decade with little collaboration or effort to improve. Dr. Ramos utilized his unique skills to not only bring these groups together, but to embrace an aggressive school reform agenda. He empowered the groups to feel ownership, but all was focused to carry-out his prescribed agenda. He was even able to get our entrenched teacher's Union to engage and support his plan.

Though he was an asset to our transformation efforts, Dr. Ramos was also extraordinarily helpful in other areas of our organization. He assumed leadership roles to support turnaround schools as needed and became very involved in our overall school improvement design efforts.

Dr. Ramos will be leaving a grant funded position in the district and would receive a high recommendation from me for a school or district leadership role. I would be happy to discuss Dr. Ramos' many strengths further if you wish to contact me.

Sincerely,



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