



Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School

ORIGINS

In the 1970s, Puerto Rican youth exhibited a shocking 70% dropout/pushout rate. Yet contrary to dominant discourses that portrayed Puerto Rican students as lazy, slow, and culturally unprepared for academic learning, this statistic reflected a social context of racism, discrimination and marginalization. Moreover, classroom curriculum and the operations of public schools were designed and delivered without considering the complex realities of Puerto Rican youth. Feeling alienated and frustrated by this condition, many of these students “dropped out” of school thinking that education was not for them.

In response to this bleak situation, the community organized a campaign to bring relevant curricula in Puerto Rican history and culture to Tuley High School (prior to the establishment of Roberto Clemente High School). Chicago’s then conservative school board refused to hear the call for change, and out of the struggle that followed, parents, students, teachers, and activists would unite to establish an independent school that would teach pride in Puerto Rican culture, history and language: The Puerto Rican High School.

The school shortly after was named Rafael Cancel Miranda, in honor of imprisoned Puerto Rican nationalist and political prisoner. Though deeply grateful, Rafael Cancel Miranda expressed through correspondence that the school’s name should reflect the highest expression of Puerto Rican national affirmation. As a result, the school took on its current name, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School.

The naming of Pedro Albizu Campos (1891-1965) linked the school to a long history of Puerto Rican struggle and resistance both on the island and in the Diaspora against colonial domination. Albizu Campos – the first Puerto Rican to graduate from Harvard – was a WWI veteran, labor leader, President of the Nationalist Party, and political prisoner. He is widely considered a beacon of Puerto Rican consciousness and national pride.

CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS

As the push-out rate among Puerto Ricans in the Chicago Public School system has not improved much since the 70s, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS) remains an important alternative educational site. The mission of PACHS aims to “provide a quality educational experience needed to empower students to engage in critical thinking and social transformation, from the classroom to the Puerto Rican community, based on the philosophical foundation of self-determination, a methodology of self-actualization and an ethics of self-reliance.” In the spirit of the school’s founding, PACHS adopted the motto that “*La educación rompe las cadenas*”-Education breaks chains.

Different from conventional schools, PACHS encourages a “family-like” environment with intimate interaction and mentorship between students and staff, something necessary for real learning to take place with our students. To ensure this PACHS offers the following: a small student population of 162 students; a teacher to student ratio of 1:15; after school programs in photography, art, skate boarding, journalism, online radio station, graphic design, theater and

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martial arts; and outside of class events and activities linked to the Puerto Rican community. Other distinguishing characteristics of PACHS include: courses in Puerto Rican Studies, two years of Spanish language, Black and Latina/o Literature, dual enrollment (college credit) classes at the Wilbur Wright Humboldt Park Vocational Educational Center, the space for a staff learning community with departmental planning time where teachers and staff take the time to intellectualize their work, and community resources that can help make classroom content meaningful for teachers and students.

At the cutting edge of pedagogical innovation, our classroom instruction replaces rote memorization with an emphasis on developing higher order thinking skills of inquiry and analysis, primarily through project and problem based learning. In the years to come, our curriculum will have social ecology as a conceptual centerpiece, which stresses the interconnectedness of people to one another, their community and world.

As an example of critical education based on social ecology, our math and science classes have taken a close look at a recent study that found Humboldt Park to be a “Food Desert,” an area lacking in fresh fruits and vegetables. While learning their respective content area skills sets, the students have created a community development plan that includes multiple state-of-the-art hydroponically-based rooftop greenhouses, a conservatory, and the effective use of community gardens in and around Paseo Boricua. All of these components contribute to the community farmer’s market, of which the first produce will include all of the ingredients of the Puerto Rican seasoning called *sofrito*.

SATELLITE PROGRAM

The Lolita Lebrón Family Learning Center (FLC) focuses primarily on women-headed families in the Humboldt Park community. In addition to a full-fledged high school curriculum, the young mothers have access to the following: women’s studies, health and nutrition workshops, life skills workshops, childcare and parenting courses, parent and child activities, community-building events coordination, and support services. Thus, while students are working towards their high school diploma, they are also receiving information on how to maintain a literacy-rich and healthy living environment in the home. *El Rinconcito del Niño*/The Children’s Corner, the FLC’s bilingual book and game library, contains children’s books and resources for a variety of age levels, from infant to primary; special collections include books focusing on family and culture.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

PACHS is a community-based institution. As a result, it is of the utmost importance that our staff and faculty make the effort to link their lives and experiences to the last standing Puerto Rican community in Chicago. For over 50 years, Puerto Ricans have called Humboldt Park home in the face of discriminatory housing, educational and healthcare policies. Examples of Puerto Rican resilience can be seen through the incitement of two “riots” in 1966 and 1977 and the current social, cultural and economic renaissance on Division Street. By entering PACHS, staff and faculty are joining the dynamic experiment to build a community based on the motto, “live and help to live.”

Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School is a campus of the Youth Connection Charter Schools (YCCS) and a member of the Alternative Schools Network (ASN).

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Application

Numbers 4-6 listed below should be submitted to the school no later than Friday, July 11th. Please send all completed application information to:

- Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School, 2739-41 W. Division St., Chicago IL, 60622
- Phone: 773.342.8022, Fax: 773.342.6609

A completed application includes the following:

1. **Certification:** Include social security number in your resume so we can locate your ISBE certifications and testing history;
2. **Background Check:** go to 320 N. Elizabeth St., bring a picture ID with you and indicate PACHS as the school you are applying for;
3. **Transcripts:** have them sent to our school using the address listed above;
4. **Philosophy of Education:** typed, 1-2 pages, double spaced, describe how you see learning, teaching and engagement in the world of education. Also include why you are interested specifically in working at Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School;
5. **Resume/CV:** please include reference contact information;
6. **Personal information:** complete the form below.

APPLICANT INFORMATION			
Last Name	First	M.I.	Date
Street Address		Apartment/Unit #	
City	State	ZIP	
Phone	E-mail Address		
Have experience with the Humboldt Park Community?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Desired Salary
Position Applied for			
Have you ever worked for an alternative high school before?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	If so, where?/when?
Have you ever been convicted of a felony?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	If yes, explain
BRIEF STATEMENT			
In space provided, please outline any hobbies or major interests that you have.			
DISCLAIMER AND SIGNATURE			
I certify that my answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.			
If this application leads to employment, I understand that false or misleading information in my application or interview may result in my release.			
Signature			Date