



# Press Release

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## Award-Winning Author Reyna Grande, Radio Personality Argelia Atilano, Inspire Lynwood Unified Students with Visits for Latino Heritage Month

**Lynwood** – Reyna Grande, author of memoirs “The Distance Between Us” and “A Dream Called Home,” and former K-LOVE 107.5 FM radio host Argelia Atilano, each brought inspiration to Lynwood Unified schools during visits to campuses on Sept. 15 as part of the District’s celebration of Latino Heritage Month.

Will Rogers Elementary School students in grades 2-6 cheered with excitement when Atilano walked into the school library and began interacting with the young scholars while posing for pictures. The library was decorated with flags that represented countries across Latin America, and posters of historical Latino and Latina figures. Atilano’s children’s book “Grandes Dreamers: Twelve Fierce Latina Trailblazers Who Paved the Way in the United States” was proudly displayed on a bookshelf to inspire students to read about the lives, journeys and accomplishments of Sandra Cisneros, Dolores Huerta and more.

“I’m so excited to be here at your beautiful school,” Atilano said. “Today is a beautiful day that reminds us that we should celebrate our colors, heritage, music, food, traditions, schools and communities. I will never forget today at Will Rogers Elementary celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month.”

Grande enchanted an audience of students at Lynwood and Firebaugh high schools with the story of her rise to an author whose books have been adopted as common reading by schools, colleges, and cities throughout the country. Her literary works about immigration, family separation, language trauma, and the American dream, come from personal experience.

Born into meager circumstances in Guerrero, Mexico, Grande endured a complicated relationship with her grandparents and father. At the age of nine, Grande and her father immigrated to the United States – making it only after two previous unsuccessful tries across the border. Grande had a simple response for what motivated her to become a successful writer.

“I didn’t want my future to be as difficult as my past,” she told students.

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The mission of **Lynwood Unified School District**, the model urban school district, is to ensure each student fearlessly achieves their highest academic and personal aspirations while contributing to a diverse, global society through an evolving system. For more information, visit [www.lynwood.k12.ca.us](http://www.lynwood.k12.ca.us).

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Grande encouraged students to champion their heritage, remembering a time when her own Mexico roots were discouraged and condemned as she attempted to adjust to the United States.

Atilano's visit also inspired cultural pride. She rose to fame during a 22-year career as a K-LOVE 107.5 FM co-host with husband and radio co-host Omar Velasco on the station's popular morning show. The duo also co-authored a best-selling book, "Amor Al Aire," and recently started a new morning show on Mega 96.3 FM via La Musica App.

Both guests took questions from eager students following their presentations. Lynwood Unified will celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 to honor the rich traditions, histories and cultures of LUSD communities through special events.

"We are grateful to both Ms. Grande and Ms. Atilano for sharing their powerful stories and giving valuable time to students that will encourage them to make history of their own," LUSD Superintendent Gudiel R. Crosthwaite said. "This was a wonderful way to kick off our Latino Heritage Month celebration and raises the bar on the cultural excellence we will showcase in the coming days."

#### PHOTO CAPTIONS

**LUSD\_LATINOHERITAGE1:** Former K-LOVE 107.5 FM radio host and author Argelia Atilano visited Will Rogers on Sept. 15 to inspire students during the District's Latino Heritage Month celebration.

**LUSD\_LATINOHERITAGE2:** Author Reyna Grande speaks to students at Firebaugh High School during a visit in celebration of Latino Heritage Month.

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The mission of **Lynwood Unified School District**, the cultivator of innovative thinkers, is to ensure each student fearlessly achieves his or her highest academic and personal aspirations while contributing to the greater society through a unique system distinguished by:

- ★ People of great character who inspire and lead by example
- ★ The instilling of courage to be creative
- ★ The transformative uses of technology
- ★ Safe and clean environments
- ★ The honoring of all voices of our community