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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Empower Charter School's 5th grade students' fitness scores are among the highest in the state**

*School focuses on health and nutrition*

SAN DIEGO – Empower Charter School, a local public charter school in Linda Vista, had some of the highest fitness scores in the state for fifth graders according to California Physical Fitness Test results released in December 2016.

The report released information about six separate fitness standards, which included aerobic capacity, body composition, abdominal strength, trunk extension strength, upper body strength, and flexibility. In four of those standards, 91% of 5th grade Empower students met the standards, compared to 71% of fifth graders across San Diego county, and 68% in San Diego Unified School District.

These results come at a time when California has seen a statewide decline in fitness scores. In a recent press release about the statewide decline in fitness scores, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, said “There is a direct correlation between good nutrition, exercise, student wellness, and the ability of our students to learn well.”

According to Executive Director, Demi Brown, Empower was founded on the principle of providing a holistic, well-rounded approach to education, inclusive of a fitness program. As part of the fitness program, students participate in a CrossFit Kids class twice per week for 40 minutes each session. Classroom teachers also teach 100 minutes of standards-based physical education. Students take a gardening class every week and health education is infused into the school's inquiry-based thematic units. The school has created a healthy nutritional environment in a fun and positive way.

The school's vision is to empower students to be healthy global leaders and creative thinkers. The school serves the Linda Vista neighborhood and offers an innovative Spanish Immersion program and a unique focus on fitness and health. Approximately seventy percent (70%) of students qualify for free or reduced lunch, fifty-six percent (56%) are English Learners, and ten percent (10%) qualify for special education.

The Executive Director, Demi Brown, states, “There are years of research to demonstrate that exercise has a positive effect on academic performance. With most of our students entering our program with significant learning gaps, we work hard to catch them up and have been able to move most of our students to nearly meeting the standards on

the state standardized test. And when we look at more growth-oriented assessment data, like the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) assessment, our students are achieving between 20% to 67% higher growth in Reading, Math, and Language than national averages. It's exciting to see our students make extraordinary growth in both the academic and physical fitness arenas."

Empower Charter School aims to be a leader in inspiring a love for fitness and sharing best practices with others who want to expand their fitness offerings. Empower Charter is currently enrolling Grades TK-6 for the 2017-18 school year. Interested parents can visit <http://www.empowercharter.org> and click on the Enroll tab.

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