



ORANGE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION PROCLAMATION



Honoring the Enduring Legacy of Lorenzo and Josefina Ramirez and their Commitment to Educational Equity – March 2, 2026

WHEREAS, Lorenzo Ramirez, a graduate of El Modena’s Lincoln Grammar School in 1927, demonstrated a lifelong commitment to justice, from defending co-worker rights at Murphy Ranch in the 1930s to testifying before Mexico’s Secretary of Foreign Affairs in 1943 regarding the mistreatment of braceros; and

WHEREAS, upon returning to El Modena in 1944, Lorenzo and Josefina Ramirez were unjustly denied the right to enroll their sons—Ignacio, Jimmy, and Jose—at Roosevelt Grammar School, being instead directed to the segregated and under-resourced Lincoln Grammar School solely based on their ethnicity; and

WHEREAS, the Ramirez family courageously joined four other families as plaintiffs in the landmark 1945 class action lawsuit Mendez, et al. v. Westminster School District, et al., asserting that separate "schools for Mexicans" were unconstitutionally discriminatory; and

WHEREAS, Lorenzo Ramirez’s powerful testimony articulated his conviction that all children should be educated together, a belief upheld by Judge Paul McCormick’s 1946 ruling that integrated schools are "imperative for the perpetuation of American institutions and ideals"; and

WHEREAS, this local victory led directly to the desegregation of all California public schools in 1947 and served as a foundational legal precedent for the United States Supreme Court’s 1954 decision in Brown v. Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, the Orange Unified School District previously honored this legacy on March 10, 2011, by issuing a proclamation and subsequently naming the El Modena High School Library Media Center for Lorenzo Ramirez; and

WHEREAS, the District remains committed to the mandate that this history be taught to all students in grades 5, 8, and 11, ensuring that the next generation understands that the roots of school desegregation were planted in their own community; and

WHEREAS, community leaders and the Board recognize that "the 'et als' are no longer footnotes," and that the specific contributions of Lorenzo and Josefina Ramirez deserve permanent and prominent recognition within our public institutions to ensure their story is never forgotten;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Orange Unified School District Board of Education reaffirms its commitment to keep the legacy of Lorenzo and Josefina Ramirez alive. We pledge to take meaningful action by ensuring equity, uplifting student voices, and pursuing future initiatives—including the potential naming of district facilities—to permanently honor the families who fought for the American dream in El Modena.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the District officially recognizes March 2nd—the anniversary of the 1945 filing of the Mendez case—as a day for all Orange Unified schools to celebrate the courage of Lorenzo Ramirez and the pursuit of educational justice for all.

Dated this 19th day of February, 2026

[Signature of Stephen Glass]
Stephen Glass, Board President

[Signature of Andrea Yamasaki]
Andrea Yamasaki, Vice President

[Signature of Sara Pelly]
Sara Pelly, Board Clerk

[Signature of Kris Erickson]
Kris Erickson, Board Member

[Signature of Ana Martinez Goodlander]
Ana Martinez Goodlander, Board Member

[Signature of Matthew Thomas]
Matthew Thomas, Board Member

[Signature of Sierra Vane]
Sierra Vane, Board Member