

MAYRA LARA

Current Position: English teacher at Maywood Academy High School (Title 1/Title 3 school, 93% free and reduced lunch), Los Angeles Unified School District



Mayra Lara began teaching at Maywood Academy in 2007, while completing a Master's Degree in Social and Cultural Analysis of Education at California State University, Long Beach. She got her first pink slip in March of 2009; the pink slip was rescinded in July and Mayra was able to resume teaching at Maywood in the fall of that year.



Mayra was displaced from her school site in 2010 and briefly taught at another high school before going back to Maywood the following school year. Then, in March of 2011, she got her second pink slip; while that pink slip was also rescinded and Mayra was able to return to Maywood, the experience of being both displaced and laid off left her and her students profoundly shaken. "My leaving was really tough on the kids. One of them started a petition on campus to keep me in school; the petition made it to the local superintendent's desk, unfortunately to no avail. Other students wrote poems about my leaving and the fact that it wasn't fair."

Since 2013, Mayra has not gotten any more pink slips but the experience left its mark. "Sometimes, I feel like I need an infographic of my experiences being displaced and laid off. In my resume, it looks like I don't have stability and can't hold on to a job. Of course, that's not the reality."

Now, Mayra wants policymakers to understand that using something as trivial as a hire date as a sole basis for layoff is not helping teachers or students. "We have to take into consideration the positive impact that a teacher is making on the school and the community. We have to be able to consider qualitative data. The only way change is going to happen is if we all have conversations about this."



Number of years in the teaching profession: 8

Number of layoffs: 3



Mayra got her third pink slip in March of 2012; this time, she was laid off from the district. She found a teaching position at a charter school but her heart was with her students at Maywood. In September 2013, Mayra got a call from LAUSD: her pink slip was rescinded and Maywood was creating a position for her for the 2013-14 academic year. She was thrilled, especially since the seniors she would be teaching were same students she taught as freshmen in the 2009-10 academic year. "There was something really powerful about me being there for their senior year."

"I had so much anxiety about not having a job and not being able to make ends meet that I had to get a roommate. I began to wonder if I should just leave the profession. I felt that I was being pushed out and that it had nothing to do with my ability as an educator."