

FREE

# EDUCATION

# Guide

**L.A. Parent**<sup>TM</sup>

[www.laparenteducationguide.com](http://www.laparenteducationguide.com)

**2010-11**

With 2010 Test Results

**L.A. Metro**

**Westside**

**San Gabriel Valley**

**San Fernando Valley**

**South Bay**

**Extensive Private School Listings**

**Public School Test Scores**



From the people behind *L.A. Parent*, a publication dedicated exclusively to education, featuring public and private schools, preschools and other local educational resources.

DOMINION MEDIA<sup>®</sup>  
a division of  
**DOMINION**  
ENTERPRISES

©2010 Dominion Enterprises. All rights reserved.

## Waiting for “*Superman*”

A Must-See Film for Every Parent, Actually, Every American

By Vivien Santana Hughes

**I**'m not a movie critic. More of an “escapist fare with happy endings” type. But there I was, hands clenched, stomach flipping, anxious to see if Daisy – an East L.A. fifth grader who dreams of being a doctor – would win the lottery. Not cash. She longed for the ultimate Willy Wonka golden ticket to the high-performing charter school down the street: KIPP LA Prep. Nothing fancy, just admittance to a school that doesn't wallow at the bottom of L.A.'s performance lists, which is where her neighborhood school firmly sits.

Daisy is one of five U.S. students and their families profiled in *Waiting for “Superman,”* a gripping documentary that makes you furious at a public school system that allows bad teachers to stay in the classroom, sad for the children who are victims of adults' skewed priorities and, ultimately, hopeful when you see that there *are* people making real, measurable strides in public education. The kids' stories are woven with those of educator/innovators who are hands-on figuring out how to right the ship: the KIPP founders who now have an 82-strong network of successful charter schools, Michelle Rhee the trail-blazing school chancellor in Washington, D.C., and Geoffrey Canada (who once hoped that the *real* Superman would rescue him from the ghetto) creator of the 97-square-block Harlem Children's Zone, which pioneered a birth-to-college support system.

But before hope, there's sobering reality. “There are so many people with different agendas that it's become about the adults,” said producer Leslie Chilcott at a recent screening. The film takes on teachers' unions and their habit of accepting mediocrity (or worse) and decrying change in the name of tenure. Citing sobering stats, the filmmakers employ appealing animations that make the ugly points. Clearly. “We call everyone out,” says Chilcott. “Even [director/co-writer] Davis [Guggenheim] called himself out for putting his kids in private school even though he believes in public education.”

The filmmakers lay bare the painful issues at hand in a way that lets the subjects lead the story and compels viewers to care. And be optimistic. “The ray of hope is that we now know what works,” says Chilcott. “Without a doubt, far and above, the most important thing is great teachers: finding them, recruiting them, rewarding them, supporting them.”

I may have to wait a bit for that happy ending this time.



**Daisy, one of five students profiled in the documentary *Waiting for “Superman,”* dreams of being a doctor. At Daisy's East L.A. neighborhood school, six out of 10 students don't graduate high school.** PHOTO COURTESY PARAMOUNT PICTURES. © 2010 PARAMOUNT PICTURES. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

But it's within reach. ✍️

*In national release through October, *Waiting for “Superman”* may fly out of theaters – it is a documentary after all – but let's hope the film's impact has legs. Rated PG. Paramount Vantage and Participant Media in association with Walden Media.*

*See how you can make a difference at: <http://www.waitingforsuperman.com/action/>*

Vivien Santana Hughes writes the monthly “Chat Room” column in *L.A. Parent*.

### The Sobering Stats

- Each year, about 1.2 million students in the U.S. fail to graduate from high school. High-school dropouts are more likely to earn low wages, go to jail and even live shorter lives.
- For each year's dropouts, America suffers about \$192 billion in lost income and taxes.
- Among 30 developed countries, the U.S. is ranked 25th in math and 21st in science.
- By the year 2020, 123 million American jobs will be high skill/high pay, but only 50 million Americans will be qualified to fill them.