



Life Learning Academy 2018-19 Evaluation Report

With Over-Time Results Provided for Select Indicators

*A Compilation and Analysis of Data on
Student Achievement and School Effectiveness*

April 2020

Prepared by:



LEARNING *for* **ACTION**

Prepared for:



LIFE LEARNING ACADEMY



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Introduction and Context



On an annual basis, a third-party evaluation team at Learning for Action (LFA) conducts analyses of a range of data sources to assess the extent to which students attending the Life Learning Academy Charter School (LLA) are achieving desired outcomes in the arenas of social-emotional learning, academic achievement, and juvenile justice system involvement.

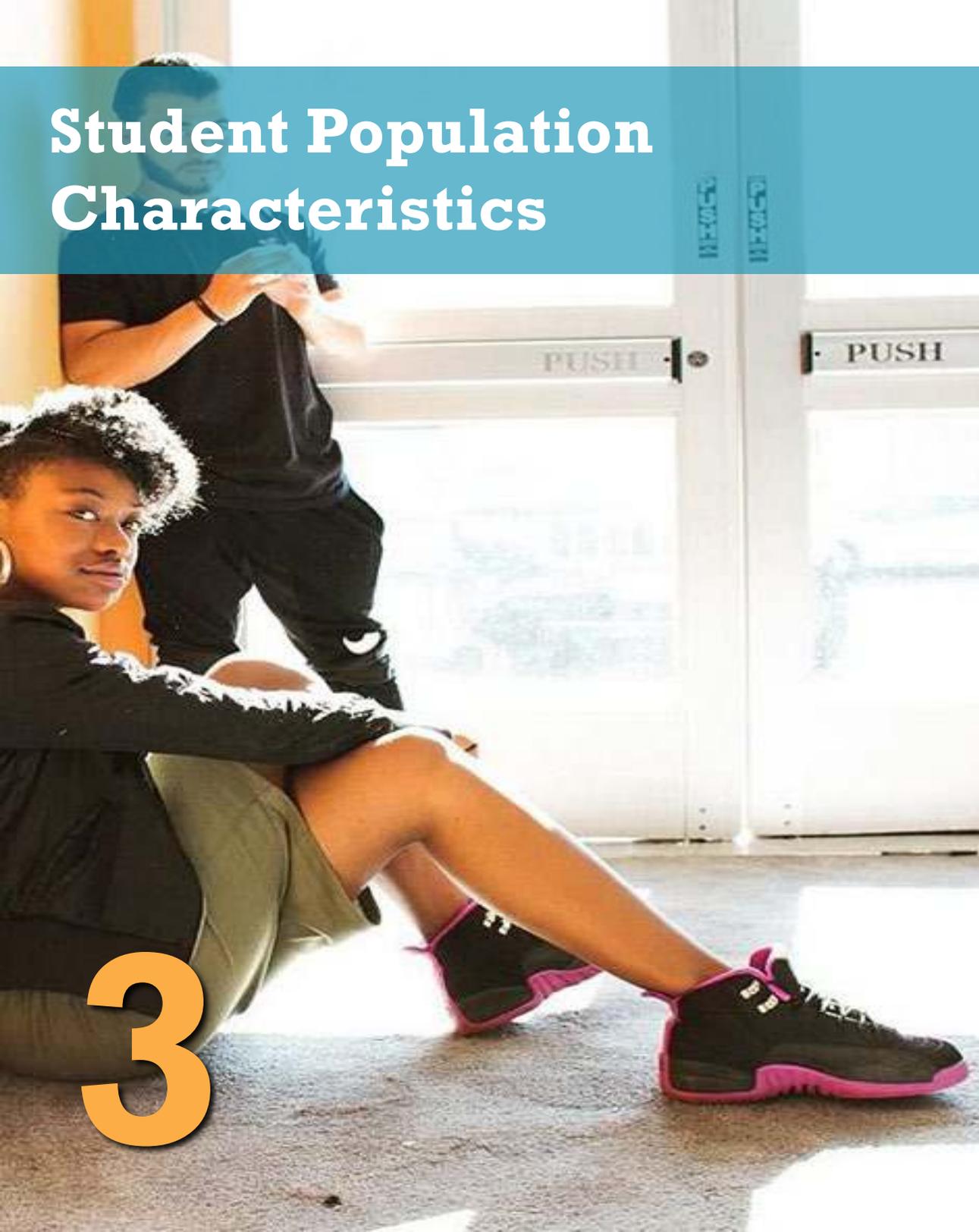
LLA's commitment to significantly altering the life trajectory of the students they serve is reflected in the degree of rigor with which the school engages in ongoing internal evaluation as well as their commitment to commissioning ongoing third-party analysis. Among the data sources drawn on in this report are the results from a three-year quasi-experimental study of LLA conducted at the start of the school in 1998. Remarkably, since the commissioning of this original study – which showed significant effects on all key outcomes in the arenas of academics, juvenile justice system involvement, and social-emotional development – LLA has maintained, and in some cases improved upon, achievement of student outcomes over the course of its twenty-year tenure. LLA has become a national model for re-engaging disconnected, system-involved youth through academic support, workforce training, and membership in a loving and supportive community. LLA has also begun to expand efforts to support housing: LLA broke ground on an on-campus dormitory for unstably housed students during the 2017-18 school year that will open for students in academic year 2019-20. (For an update on the dormitory program as of April 2020, see Pages 17 and 18).



Photo courtesy of the San Francisco Chronicle



Student Population Characteristics



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LLA primarily serves students who face immense opportunity gaps—life conditions, obstacles, and systemic inequities—that contribute to lower educational achievement for certain students. In the 2018-19 academic year, 92% of LLA’s students were youth of color. Additionally, the majority (87% in 2018-19) of LLA’s students are classified as socioeconomically disadvantaged.¹ The majority of LLA students (83% in 2018-19) are considered chronically truant² by the Department of Education at the time they start at LLA, whereas the state-wide chronic absenteeism rate for the 2018-19 school year was just 12.1%.³



LLA Student Population Race/Ethnicity⁴

Race/Ethnicity	2016-17 (n=68)	2017-18 ⁵ (n=56)	2018-19 (n=60)
Black/African American	44.1%	51.8%	55.0%
Hispanic	22.1%	33.9%	33.3%
White/Non-Hispanic	10.3%	12.5%	8.3%
Other Asian	1.5%	1.8%	3.3%
Mixed Ethnicity	2.9%	n/a	n/a
Pacific Islander	2.9%	n/a	n/a
Filipino	2.9%	n/a	n/a
Unknown	13.2%	n/a	n/a
Total Youth of Color	77%	88%	92%

LLA Student Population Characteristics

	2016-17 (n=68)	2017-18 (n=56)	2018-19 (n=60)
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged ⁶	86%	81%	87% (n=30) ⁷
Out of Home Placement	34%	9%	5%
Gender			
Female	49%	52%	48%
Male	52%	48%	52%
Attendance			
Chronically Truant Pre-LLA ⁷	93%	97% (n=36)	83% (n=47)

¹ Socioeconomically Disadvantaged rate includes students who are eligible for free or reduced priced meals; or have parents/guardians who did not receive a high school diploma: <https://www.caschooldashboard.org/reports/38684783830429/2018>

² Truancy. Definition of a Chronic Truant. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ai/tr/>

³ 2018-19 Chronic Absenteeism Rate: <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/DQCensus/AttChrAbsRate.aspx?cde=00&agglevel=State&year=2018-19>.

⁴ The sum of the percentages may be more or less than 100% due to rounding.

⁵ LLA changed the system they used to collect student race/ethnicity data between academic years 2016-17 and 2017-18 in order to align data collection with the race/ethnicity categories that the Department of Education uses for CALPADS reporting. For this reason, several of the race/ethnicity categories are not applicable after 2016-17.

⁶ 2016-17 and 2017-18 data only include students who were eligible for free or reduced priced meals.

⁷ Data is from CALPADS, which only includes students who are enrolled at LLA before October 2018, resulting in a lower n.

⁸ LLA collects the number of unexcused absences a student had during their semester prior to attending LLA. This calculation considers anyone with 10% or more unexcused absences during the 90 days of the semester prior to attending LLA chronically truant. Attendance tracking and data availability vary greatly among schools and thus pre-LLA attendance data are not always available.

Analysis of School Performance Indicators



- ① Improvement in School Attendance
- ② Improvement in School Performance (GPA)
- ③ Students Graduated
- ④ Graduate Preparedness
- ⑤ Post-Graduation Success

This section provides a summary of school performance indicators for LLA students. See Appendix C for a historic summary table of results for the key indicators of attendance, credit completion, and graduation rates.

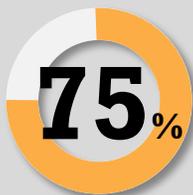
Improvement in School Attendance

Youth come to LLA with truancy and behavioral problems that were not adequately addressed in their previous school environments. LLA provides extensive support to youth and their families to ensure that students attend school regularly. **Students enrolled in the 2018-19 school year were absent an average of 34 days in the semester prior to entering LLA.⁹ In contrast, these same students missed an average of only 11 days during their most recent semester at LLA.**

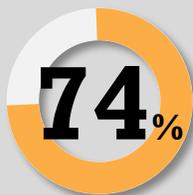
LLA Attendance Rate

LLA tracks attendance as one indicator of school performance and to satisfy the California Department of Education's former Alternative School Accountability Model assessment. LLA students' attendance rate for the 2018-2019 academic year was 81% (the total number of apportionment days claimed for all long-term students¹⁰ was 4,935 out of a possible 6,093).

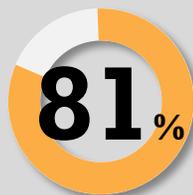
2016-17



2017-18



2018-19



Number of School Days Missed Per Semester

Change from the Semester Prior to Starting at LLA to the Most Recent Semester at LLA

2018-19 School Year

Time Period	Range of Days Missed	Average Number of School Days Missed
Semester Prior to Starting at LLA (n=40)	0-90 days	33.9 days
Most Recent Semester at LLA (n=40)	1-36 days	11.2 days
Average DECREASE in Number of School Days Missed (n=40)		↓ 22.7 days

2017-18 School Year

Time Period	Range of Days Missed	Average Number of School Days Missed
Semester Prior to Starting at LLA (n=29)	11-90 days	33.9 days
Most Recent Semester at LLA (n=29)	1-49 days	13.2 days
Average DECREASE in Number of School Days Missed (n=28)		↓ 26.6 days

2016-17 School Year

Time Period	Range of Days Missed	Average Number of School Days Missed
Semester Prior to Starting at LLA (n=44)	5-74 days	34.3 days
Most Recent Semester at LLA (n=44)	0-51 days	14.1 days
Average DECREASE in Number of School Days Missed (n=44)		↓ 20.2 days

⁹ Pre-LLA attendance data could be obtained for 40 students attending LLA in the 2018-19 school year. Attendance tracking and data availability vary greatly among schools and thus pre-LLA attendance data are not always available.

¹⁰ "Long-term students" is defined by CDE as those with more than 90 days of attendance within a school year. However, for all other purposes, LLA considers a student who has been at the school for 45 days to be a fully enrolled, long-term student.

Improvement in School Performance

LLA students' grade point averages (GPA) increase significantly from their prior school to their most recent semester completed at LLA, indicating they are more consistently applying themselves to schoolwork and have improved their school performance. As shown below, for students enrolled in the 2018-19 school year, **students' average GPA in their most recent semester at LLA is 2.10 points higher than in the semester prior to entry.**



Grade Point Average

Change from the Semester Prior to Starting at LLA
to the Most Recent Semester at LLA

(Scale: 0=Student failed at all courses; 4=Student is receiving all A's)

2018-19 School Year

Time Period	Range in GPA	Average GPA
Semester Prior to Starting at LLA (n=44)	0.00-1.90	0.50
Most Recent Semester at LLA (n=44)	0.20-3.90	2.60
Average INCREASE in GPA (n=44)		+2.10

2017-18 School Year

Time Period	Range in GPA	Average GPA
Semester Prior to Starting at LLA (n=28)	0.00-3.31	0.91
Most Recent Semester at LLA (n=28)	0.50-4.00	2.71
Average INCREASE in GPA (n=31)		+1.80

2016-17 School Year

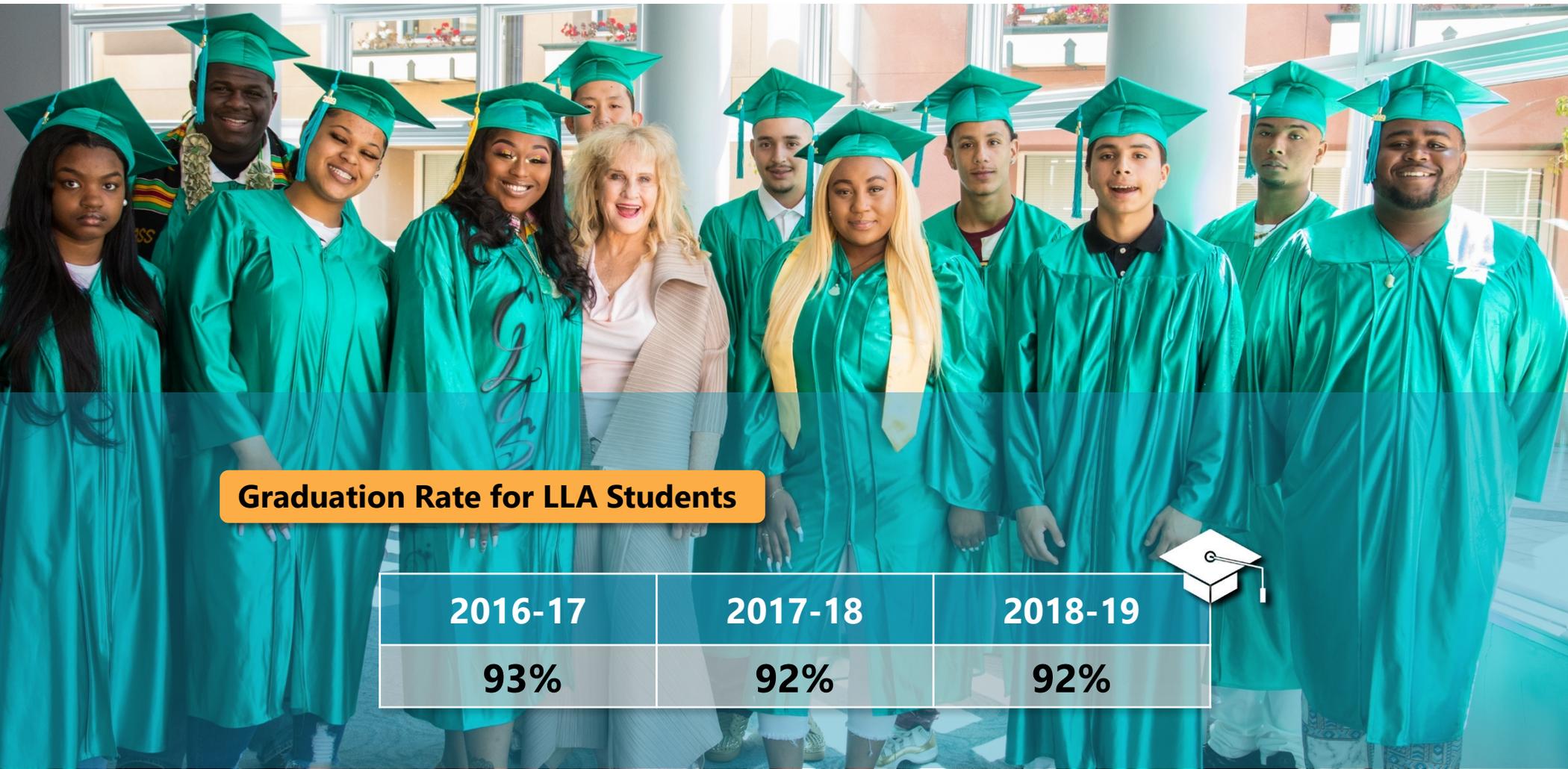
Time Period	Range in GPA	Average GPA
Semester Prior to Starting at LLA (n=49)	0.00-2.97	1.00
Most Recent Semester at LLA (n=49)	0.17-4.00	2.18
Average INCREASE in GPA (n=49)		+1.17

Students Graduated

Since opening its doors in fall 1998, LLA has graduated a total of 223 students, in accordance with all graduation requirements specified by San Francisco Unified School District. In 2018-2019, **the LLA high school graduation rate was 92%, a rate that is substantially higher than statewide graduation rates for students with similar demographics:** homeless students (78%), African American students (79%), socioeconomically disadvantaged students (83%), and Hispanic students (84%).¹¹ In addition, the 2018-19 California statewide graduation rate for all students was just 86%. This difference is quite incredible: LLA students are graduating at higher rates than the average student in California, most of whom have not faced the same obstacles and challenges in their lives that LLA students have overcome.

Life Learning Academy's 20th graduation was held in June 2019 and 11 students graduated. **For each one of these young people, high school graduation never seemed a possibility until they came to LLA, where it became their reality.**

¹¹ California School Dashboard (2019). Graduation Rate. Available at: <https://www.caschooldashboard.org/reports/ca/2019/academic-engagement#graduation-rate>



Graduation Rate for LLA Students

2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
93%	92%	92%

Graduate Preparedness

Life Learning Academy successfully prepares formerly disconnected youth for post-secondary educational experiences and the workforce. According to results from the satisfaction survey that LLA participates in as part of the SF DCYF portfolio, **most LLA students report feeling prepared for life after graduation.**¹²

Student Report of Preparedness for the Future, 2018-19 (n=29)

As a result of this program, I have a better idea of what I want to do in the future



As a result of this program, I understand the steps I need to take to get a job after finishing my education



As a result of this program, I understand the steps I need to take to get into college

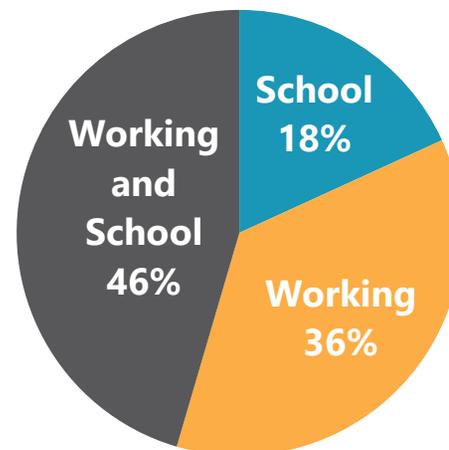


During their senior year at LLA, students work closely with LLA's workforce development director to create an individual post-LLA transition plan, in which each graduating student identifies their plans for work and/or pursuing postsecondary education.

LLA graduates continue to engage meaningfully and productively in school and the workforce after completing high school at LLA.

Post-LLA Transition Plans of 2019 Graduates at Graduation

(n=11)



At graduation, more than 80% of LLA's graduating students are employed, and over 60% go on to college or training schools.



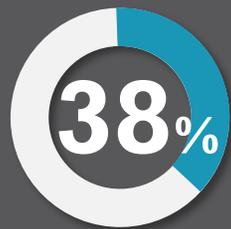
¹² 2018-19 Department of Children, Youth, and Families youth survey results for Life Learning Academy: <https://sfdcyf.shinyapps.io/granteereports1819/>.

Post-Graduation Success

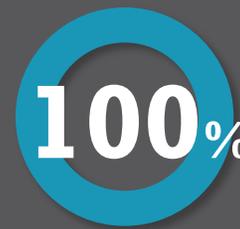
LLA has always stayed connected with many of its graduates. Starting in 2018, LLA piloted an effort to more systematically check in with each of its graduates to learn about what they are up to and how they are doing in their post-LLA lives. The data below include two cohorts of LLA graduates surveyed one year after graduating from LLA: LLA's 2017 graduates were surveyed in Spring 2018 and LLA's 2018 graduates were surveyed in Spring 2019. Moving forward, LLA plans to reconnect with each graduating cohort of students 1 year, 3 years, and 5 years following their graduations.

¹³ This question was added to the graduate survey during the 2018-19 school year and was therefore only asked to 2018 graduates.

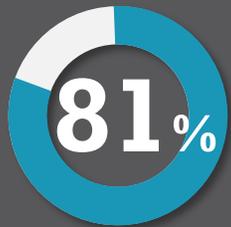
As of 1 year after graduating from LLA...



of youth had pursued or were pursuing postsecondary education (n=21)



of youth reported that their current living situation was safe and stable (n=11) ¹³



of youth had worked or were currently working (n=21)



of youth had been arrested since they graduated (n=21)



"LLA gave me the skills needed to continue in my education. I have learned to stop, think and decide and not let others throw me off the track that I set for myself."



"By going to LLA it gave me time to think and get away from what I was doing before (which wasn't that good) and while at LLA I figured out how to find my way in life."



"LLA helped me improve my grades, changed my attitude toward school and my future, helped me get my first job and even a college scholarship which was a great help to me."



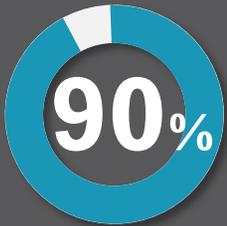
"LLA is one of the best schools I went to. They know how to talk to you about life. And they really helped me get in the mindset for life after high school."

Growth in Social and Emotional Learning

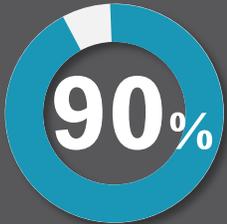


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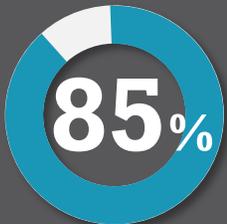
An analysis of results from the annual client satisfaction survey administered by San Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and their Families (DCYF) shows that the majority of LLA students report positive social and emotional development during their time at LLA. LLA has demonstrated success in cultivating social and emotional learning among students in the following ways:¹⁴



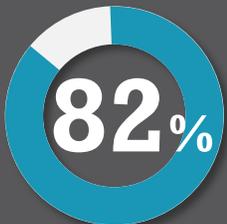
90% of youth reported they want to do better in school/at work.



90% of youth reported they are looking forward to their future because of LLA.



85% of youth reported that they have clearer goals for their future.



82% of youth reported that they learned how to get the help they need to succeed.

(n=29)

Social and emotional growth areas identified by LLA students mirror research-based intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competencies associated with positive academic and life outcomes.¹⁵ For many of the disconnected youth LLA serves, the school becomes the most significant positive attachment and experience in their lives. LLA meaningfully advances students' social and emotional development, enhancing their sense of self-efficacy and worth, providing them with a new sense of possibility for their futures.

¹⁴ 2018-19 Department of Children, Youth, and Families youth survey results for Life Learning Academy: <https://sfdcyf.shinyapps.io/granteereports1819/>

¹⁵ Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Core SEL Competencies: <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>

Reduction in Juvenile Justice System Involvement

- ① Students with a History in the Juvenile Justice System
- ① Reduction in Recidivism Among LLA Students

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In the 2018-19 school year, **24% of all LLA students had been arrested before entering LLA** (including arrests that did not ultimately end in conviction), according to a thorough review of San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department records and LLA student self-reported data at time of entry into LLA.¹⁶ This figure is lower than previous years, mirroring the steady decline in statewide rates of arrests among youth and young adults over the past several decades. Of the students who entered LLA having been previously arrested, only 8% had a petition sustained within one year of starting school at LLA.¹⁷

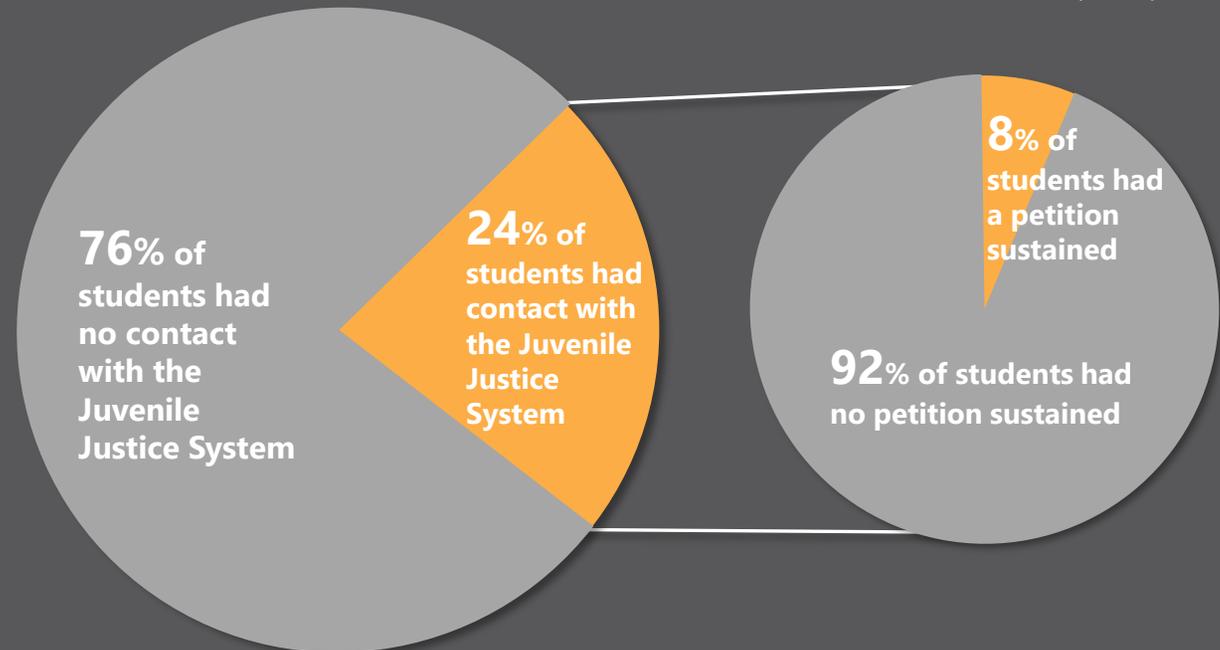
The percentage of juvenile justice-involved youth at LLA is extremely high when compared to the <1% average arrest rate of youth in California.¹⁸

About a quarter of LLA students had been arrested before entering LLA

2018-19 School Year (n=55)

Of the students who had been arrested before entering LLA, only 8% had a petition sustained within one year of starting school at LLA¹⁷

2018-19 School Year (n=12)



¹⁶ LFA relies on all three data sources to acquire the most comprehensive data on juvenile justice involvement since data may exist for students in counties outside San Francisco.

¹⁷ "Petition sustained" means a juvenile was tried and convicted.

¹⁸ Criminal Justice Statistics Center. (2018). Juvenile Justice in California – 2017. Available at <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/downloads/pdfs/jj17.pdf>

Reduction in Recidivism Among LLA Students

We reviewed San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department records to calculate the percentage of students with a prior conviction who recidivate within their first six and 12 months at LLA.¹⁹

Among the students enrolled at LLA between the 2007-08 and 2018-19 school years with a prior conviction, 8% recidivated in the 6-month intervention period, and 16% recidivated while at LLA within the 12-month intervention period.

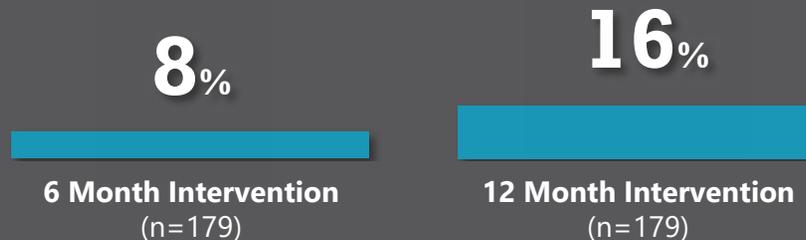
Based on the results from the three-year comparison group study from 1999-2001 (referenced in Appendix D), youth who came to LLA with a history of arrest are less than half as likely as their comparison group counterparts to recidivate while at LLA (19% compared to 51%, respectively) and are almost half as likely to recidivate 18 months after LLA.

The structure, support, and community that LLA provides for its students successfully disrupt the cycle of deeper and ongoing justice system involvement that they may be unable to escape if not for the intervention and support from LLA.



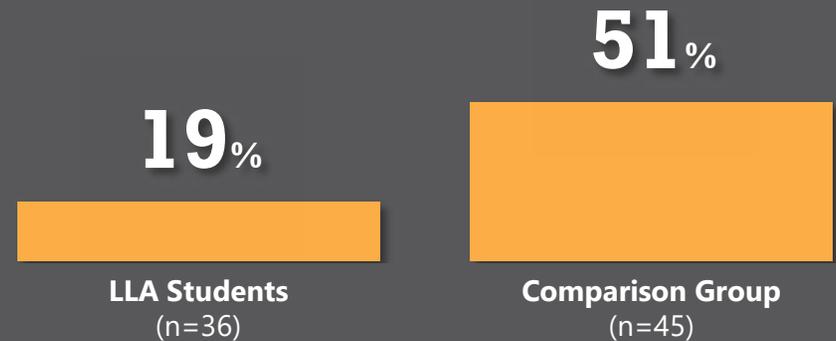
Percent of LLA students who recidivate while at LLA¹⁸

2007-08 to 2018-19



Comparison group study: Percent of students who recidivate

1999-2001



¹⁹ These data include students who had a previous conviction and for whom San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department records were available. Students reported as recidivating in the 6-month intervention period are also included in the 12-month intervention period.

2018-2019 School Year Highlights

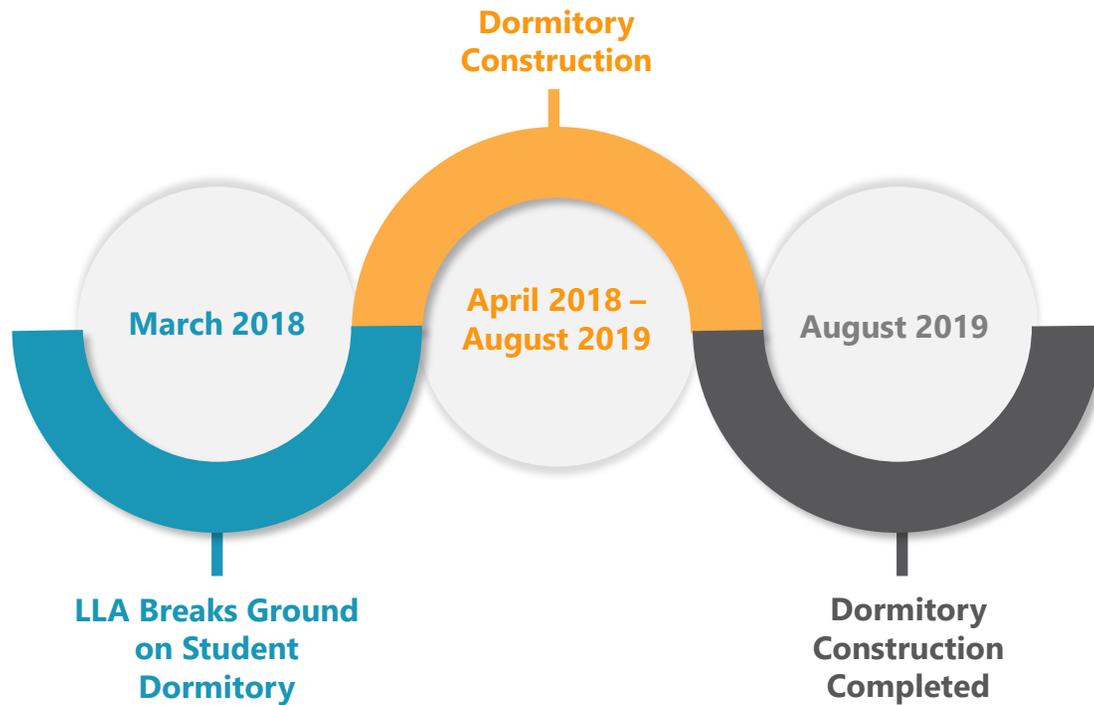
- ① LLA Student Dormitory
- ① 2018-19 Programs, Partnerships, and Achievements
- ① Local and National Recognition of the LLA Model

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Photo courtesy of the San Francisco Chronicle

LLA Student Dormitory

After breaking ground on an on-campus dormitory for students with unstable housing in March 2018, LLA continued construction on the first-of-its-kind public non-fee dormitory during the 2018-19 school year. LLA fundraised more than \$4.4 Million to cover the cost of dorm construction and secured additional operating funds for the dormitory through partnerships with the city of San Francisco's Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families (DCYF) and Tipping Point Community.



LLA completed construction of the student dormitory and opened it to unhoused and unstably housed students in August 2019. San Francisco Mayor London Breed opened the dorm on August 7, 2019 at a ribbon cutting event. The event honored former mayor Willie Brown who facilitated the implementation of Life Learning Academy more than two decades prior. Susan Brown (daughter of former mayor Willie Brown) helped Mayor Breed and Dr. Teri Delane, LLA Principal and Executive Director, open the doors. The ribbon cutting event featured media coverage from the San Francisco Chronicle, the San Francisco Examiner, SF Gate, ABC 7, KTVU, and Telemundo.

As of early 2020, eight students have moved into the dormitory. These students are helping to establish dorm rules, a strong community, and recommended activities for dorm residents.



Life Learning Academy is deeply grateful to supporters at every level who make it possible for LLA students to turn their lives around

The following list includes donors of \$50,000 and more to LLA's three-year, \$8M fundraising campaign to:

- 1) Construct the dorm
- 2) Sustain the school's innovative, individualized programming
- 3) Operate the school and the dorm through the 2021-22 school year

- The City of San Francisco through the Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families
- Anonymous
- Battery Powered
- Bogart Foundation
- EY
- GGS Foundation
- Gutierrez Family Foundation
- Henry Mayo Newhall Foundation
- Herbst Foundation
- JaMel and Tom Perkins
- Jan McAdoo
- Kimball Foundation
- LinkedIn
- Louis R Lurie Foundation
- Lowes
- Margaret A Roberts Foundation
- Miranda Lux Foundation
- Newburger-Schwartz Foundation
- Rodan Family Foundation
- Ronda Gruber Foundation
- Sergey Brin Family Foundation
- Simpson PSB Fund
- Sohn Foundation
- Tipping Point Community
- Toni Ihara and Jake Warner
- The Walther Foundation
- William G Irwin Foundation
- Zellerbach Family Foundation



LLA would also like to thank their contractor, Oliver & Company, for their incredible support and partnership throughout the dormitory construction process.



2018-19 Programs, Partnerships, and Achievements

In addition to the student achievement, school performance, and graduation data described in previous sections, the following provides highlights of innovative programs, partnerships, and achievements at LLA during the 2018-19 school year. These efforts demonstrate LLA's dedication to its mission to create a safe, non-violent community for students who have not been successful in other school settings.

Charter School Renewal

In May 2019, the Life Learning Academy Charter was renewed for five years by a unanimous vote by the San Francisco Board of Education. As part of the renewal process, Superintendent Dr. Vincent Matthews and Board President Stevon Cook toured the LLA campus and the construction progress on the new student dormitory.

Corporate Partnership & Community Service

In Fall 2018, Old Navy invited incoming LLA students to visit their San Francisco store and pick out an outfit for the first day of school, funded by store employees.

In May 2019, 30 staff from Burr Pilger Mayer participated in a community service day at LLA where they put together furniture for the on-campus dormitory. Employees from EY also provided a day of community service putting together furniture and working in the garden.

LLA Leadership

Teri Delane, LLA's Principal and Executive Director, participated in several Bay Area planning and policy groups during the 2018-19 school year, including the Radical Imagination Learning Community and the Mayor's Blue-Ribbon Panel on Juvenile Justice Reform.

Student Activities

The LLA internship program continues to provide LLA students with job skills and future employment opportunities. New placements for students in Spring 2019 included Ghirardelli Chocolate Factory, Rubicon Landscape Group, Treasure Island Sailing Center, Coffman Pool, City Dogs, Ella Hill Hutch Community Center, Collective Impact, and the Beacon Afterschool Program at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School.

Former LLA teacher turned film producer Maida Lynn previewed her film, *Pahoakee*, at LLA for the entire student body. The film was later featured at the San Francisco Film Festival.



Photo courtesy of the San Francisco Chronicle

Graduate Spotlight

Life Learning Academy's graduation was held on June 4, 2019 at the Delancey Street Foundation Town Hall. Eleven seniors completed their graduation requirements. Graduates proved to be very diverse in their career goals, indicating interest in the fields of forensic psychology, computer science, economics, music, construction, sports broadcasting, boxing, social work, business, aviation, and cosmetology.

Many LLA graduates received scholarship awards for college, including:

- **Beyonce Benard:** CCSF's Free City Program
- **Adam Herron:** Skyline Promise Scholars Program
- **In'Spire Hodgson:** Maisin Scholarship, Japanese Community Youth Council Scholarship, Future Superstars Scholarship, and the Howard University Freshman Scholarship
- **Danessa Johnson:** Maisin Scholarship, Skyline Promise Scholars Program, and the Japanese Community Youth Council Scholarship

Local and National Recognition of the LLA Model

As further evidence of its effectiveness, LLA and its staff and students have received significant attention as a model for successfully reintegrating students who have failed in other schools into an academic setting.

During 2018-19, LLA was featured in several media outlets:

- Community Vision, "A place to call home – Life Learning Academy." 25 Sept. 2018. Accessed at: <https://communityvisionca.org/a-place-to-call-home-life-learning-academy/>.
- Phillips, Mark, "Marin Voice: Charter schools – a quick guide to a complex topic." Marin Independent Journal, 13 Jan 2019. Accessed at: <https://www.marinij.com/2019/01/13/marin-voice-charter-schools-a-quick-guide-to-a-complex-topic/>.
- Tucker, Jill and Palomino, Joaquin, "Vanishing Violence." San Francisco Chronicle, 21 Mar. 2019. Accessed at: <https://projects.sfchronicle.com/2019/vanishing-violence/>.
- Tucker, Jill, "SF's Treasure Island school dorm ready for students in need: 'They're saving kids'." San Francisco Chronicle, 26 Jul. 2019. Accessed at: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/education/article/SF-s-Treasure-Island-school-dorm-ready-for-14152929.php>.



Conclusions

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LLA students continue to make remarkable strides in their development, both personally and academically, since enrolling in the school. Students' Grade Point Averages (GPAs) and attendance records consistently improve when compared to their records prior to entering the school. In addition, LLA students are completing nearly all of the credits that are required of SFUSD students (85% credit completion rate), and the graduation rate for the 2018-2019 school year was 92%. **Students who never thought they would graduate are successfully completing high school and then continuing on to productive employment, post-secondary education, or both.**

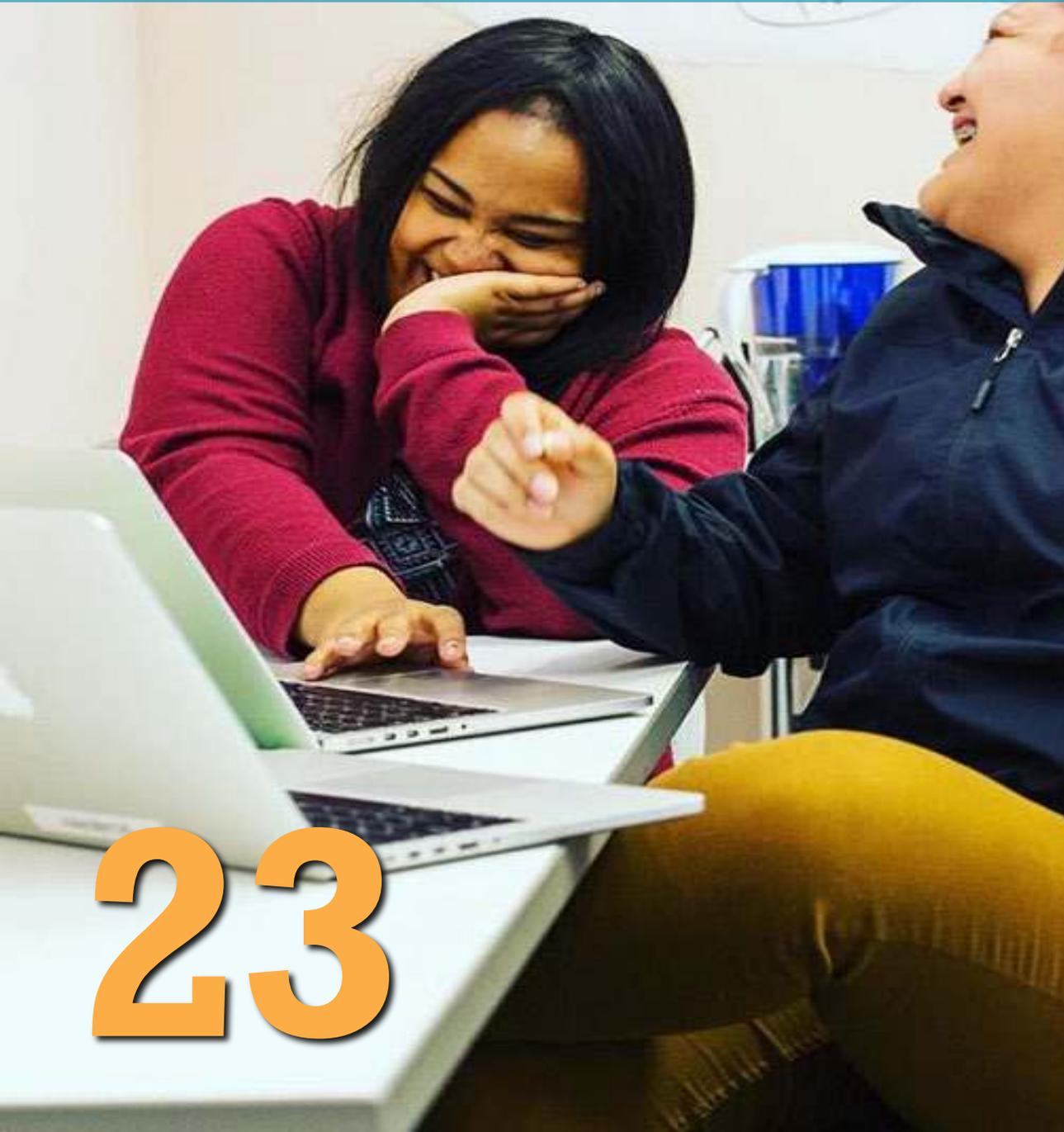
True to its name, Life Learning Academy educates the whole child: students at LLA not only learn academics, but also learn about themselves, their communities, and the larger world around them. They grow in their beliefs about what they are capable of and what the possibilities are for their futures. They stay out of involvement in the juvenile justice system and remain productively engaged in their learning and development.

LLA also has long prioritized dissemination and knowledge sharing of their model, so that other organizations may learn from their experience and replicate their work. As a result, the project-based model that LLA drives forward is gaining significant traction and recognition in the field. The numerous site visits that the school hosts along with the positive student achievements are strong indicators that LLA is supporting successful engagement in learning and creating positive impact for its students.



Photos courtesy of the San Francisco Chronicle

Appendices



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- ① **Appendix A:** Historical LLA Highlights
- ① **Appendix B:** Western Accreditation of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Review: Addressing Learning Differences
- ① **Appendix C:** Improvement in Academic Performance among Special Education Students
- ① **Appendix D:** A Snapshot of Alumni Success
- ① **Appendix E:** LLA's Effects on Juvenile Justice Outcomes: Results from the 1999-2001 Comparison Group Study
- ① **Appendix F:** Summary of LLA School Performance Indicator Results

In addition to the achievements described in a previous section for School Year 2018-19, the following section lists highlights and recognition of LLA's innovative programs throughout its 20-year history. These highlights demonstrate LLA's dedication to its mission to create a safe, non-violent community for students who have not been successful in other school settings.

- In 2018, as a part of efforts to achieve the Life Learning Academy mission, and in partnership with the Northern California Carpenters Union (NCCU) as well as various local construction and building companies, LLA began to provide students with the training and preparation needed to qualify for direct access into the NCCU apprenticeship program.
- Corporations and organizations continued to provide community service days throughout the 2017-18 year, including youth from St. Michael's & All Angels Episcopal Church in Portland, Ore., Pacific Foundation Services, Ernst & Young, and LinkedIn.
- At the Summer 2018 Commission meeting, LLA received a 6 year-maximum accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), the official academic body responsible for accreditation of public and private universities, colleges, secondary and elementary schools in California.
- LLA broke ground on the first-of-its-kind public non-fee on-campus dormitory for unstably housed students on Friday, March 9, 2018 on the Treasure Island campus. The dormitory will provide safe, stable housing for 24 Life Learning Academy students.
- LLA was selected as a presenter for the 2018 Institute for Children, Poverty and Homelessness (ICPH) *Beyond Housing Conference* in January in NYC.
- During 2016 and 2017, LLA was featured in the media:
 - The LLA program and upcoming plans to build safe, stable housing for homeless youth were featured in two news segments on KTVU by journalist Monte Francis.
 - The Chronicle for Social Change featured a story about LLA.
 - The *Stories Behind the Fog* blog series on Medium featured LLA students' and alumni's stories about homelessness in San Francisco.
- LLA was a Louis R. Lurie legacy award recipient in 2014.
- In 2013-2014, LLA received an award from the San Francisco Department of the Environment for school-wide efforts to reduce waste, recycle, cultivate organic produce, and teach sustainable and environmentally sensible practices in its Ecology and Garden classes.
- In 2012, LLA was one of five model programs in California that the Corrections Standards Authority highlighted in the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) report to the State Legislature. The Corrections Standards Authority submits an annual JJCPA evaluation to the State Legislature demonstrating the need for ongoing State funding for programs serving youth in the juvenile justice system.
- In 2012, The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Accrediting Commission for Schools granted LLA a six-year term accreditation until June 30, 2018. This was LLA's second consecutive 6-year accreditation award.
- LLA teachers have received national recognition for academic programming. Wayne Brock was a recipient of the Voya Unsung Hero award, and Diana Gradstein was selected to participate in a fellowship with the Federal Reserve.
- In 2012, Life Learning Academy partnered with Instructables.com / AutoDesk to pilot the use of the Instructables online publishing platform, www.instructables.com. Instructables showcases how-to projects by engineers, makers, creatives, and other community members for an engaged audience network of over one million active users. In total, seven LLA classes engaged in Instructables projects, generating more than 30 published Instructables.
- In 2012, LLA expanded their existing partnership with UCSF National Center for Excellence in Women's Health. LLA became a new site for the UCSF Innovators in Young Women's Health program, a leadership development program that gives SFUSD young women the opportunity to impact the health and wellness of their high school communities.

- In 2012, five students in LLA's Advanced Digital Storytelling class completed media projects for submission to Adobe Youth Voices (AYV). One project was selected as a finalist in the Animation category of the Aspire Awards, the Adobe Foundation's first annual international juried competition of youth media. AYV supports the creation and exhibition of student projects in digital media.
- In 2012, LLA began offering college tuition assistance to all LLA graduates, so that cost does not become an insurmountable barrier to higher education for their graduates. Tuition assistance is entirely funded by individual donations to LLA.
- In 2011, the San Francisco Giants selected LLA as one of the AT&T/Giants Community All Stars grant winners because of LLA's demonstrated and proven ability to address community violence in San Francisco. This award included a recognition dinner at AT&T Park hosted by the Giants that was attended by current and past Giants players, coaches, season ticket holders, and team ownership. Additionally, at the September 3, 2012 Giants home game, LLA was recognized during an on-field pregame ceremony as part of *Strike Out the Violence Day*. LLA staff and students participated in this event.
- In 2011, San Francisco District Attorney George Gascón; San Francisco Police Chief Greg Suhr; and State Senator Mark Leno (D-San Francisco) visited LLA for a first-hand look at how the school impacts public safety and makes a difference in the lives of students who have failed in traditional education settings. District Attorney Gascón and Chief Suhr are members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California, a national anti-crime organization of police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys and violence survivors, with over 400 members in California and over 5,000 members nationwide. Fight Crime: Invest in Kids "urges investment in programs proven effective by research." Fight Crime organized this visit as part of their ongoing efforts to advocate for the state's Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA).
- In 2010, LLA was selected as a finalist for the UCSF Excellence in Partnership Award. LLA staff attended the Annual Partnership Celebration hosted by the Office of University Community Partnerships (UCP). The Mission of UCP is to build collaborative relationships between UCSF and the community, promoting civic engagement, fostering community health and well-being, and enhancing the environment for education, patient care, research, and employment at UCSF. LLA currently has multiple internship partnerships with UCSF such as the Science and Health Education Partnership, the Center for Excellence in Women's Health, the Laurel Heights Child Care Center, the Kirkham Child Care Center, and Mission Bay Bright Horizons.
- In May 2010, LLA digital media students participated in a screening event that showcased their multimedia projects at Adobe's San Francisco headquarters. During the semester, a dozen LLA students created and submitted nine finished multimedia projects to Adobe Youth Voices (AYV). Among the over one hundred projects created by students from AYV school sites across San Francisco, two LLA's student AYV projects were selected to be shown in the AYV Main Theater before a city-wide audience of over one hundred educators, media professionals, and students.
- In March 2010, the California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) recognized Life Learning Academy by awarding the 2010 Hart Vision Charter School of the Year Award. The Hart Vision Award recognizes and honors schools that demonstrate outstanding leadership and excellence, model best practices, and impact educational issues and policies.
- In February 2010, LLA hosted a group of 25 visitors from Eastern Europe who were participating in the Young Leaders Dialogue with America Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. The theme of the visit was Tolerance and Diversity. Participants included journalists, Ph.D. candidates, staff from philanthropic organizations and community agencies, and community leaders representing a variety of nations including Lithuania, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Latvia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Austria, and Germany. The group members met with student leaders to share experiences around tolerance and conflict resolution, toured the school, joined students and staff for lunch, and had a Q&A session with school leaders.
- In March 2009, and again in 2010, LLA offered dissemination workshops to 60 participants in the Excellence in Government Fellow Program in Washington, D.C. The Excellence in Government program is a year-long leadership development program for federal government employees. This intensive program examines best practices in the public and private sector to inspire practical, creative techniques for solving some of the biggest challenges facing government.

- In March 2009, the San Francisco Board of Education unanimously approved the renewal of the Life Learning Academy Charter Petition for another five years. At the final Board of Education meeting, the commissioners recognized the outstanding accomplishments of the school over the past 10 years.
- In November 2008, LLA students and staff were invited to meet with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in Washington, DC. The Speaker offered students praise and encouragement for their commitment to nonviolence and positive change in their community. Through this exchange with Speaker Pelosi and her staff, LLA students sought to personalize some of the issues that San Francisco youth face and emphasize their need for solutions at both national and local levels.
- In May 2008, LLA students and staff presented nonviolence curricula and discussed LLA's school-wide commitment to nonviolence at an event sponsored by the EdFund, an organization that awarded a 'teacher learning' grant to LLA in 2007 to support teachers' ability to explore nonviolence themes.
- In April 2008, LLA's principal and a group of students presented at a hearing before the California Legislature Assembly Select Committee on Youth Violence Prevention. The hearing, *Developing Youth Leadership: A Key to Building Safer Communities*, was convened to identify successful community intervention programs in order to build a "toolkit" that could be distributed to communities statewide to reduce youth violence and to generate policy recommendations for the legislature as it works to combat youth violence.
- In May 2007, Fight Crime Invest in Kids, a bipartisan, anti-crime organization, held a press conference at LLA to announce the release of their report, "On the Right Track to Safe Communities: Steering California's Juvenile Offenders Away from Lives of Crime." LLA staff and students participated in the presentation and one LLA graduate was featured in the press release as an example of someone who successfully turned their life around after attending LLA.
- During Black History Month 2007, LLA students exhibited a group show titled "Living Black: Stitching Together Time, Place and Spirit" at the Building 1 Gallery on Treasure Island.
- As a participant in the 2006 Fulbright U.S.-Brazil School Principal's Exchange Program, LLA's Academic Director Joanne da Luz visited 16 winning schools in two states, and participated in panel discussions where she had the opportunity to share the history of LLA and its program while sharing her impressions of the Brazilian schools.
- In 2006, LLA was named a Mentor School by the national Coalition of Essential Schools (CES), which seeks to replicate educational best practices across the country. Additionally, LLA's principal presented the school model at the national CES conference in Miami in July 2007.
- LLA staff and Student Council presented on the student governance model for one full day at the California Charter School Conference in Pasadena in January 2005 and trained students and adult educators from around the state.
- The artwork of four LLA students created as part of their US History civil rights and photography curriculum during the 2005-2006 school year was selected to be part of the *Facing History and Ourselves* exhibit in partnership with the San Francisco Public Library.
- LLA's Academic Director was recognized by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and State School Superintendent Jack O'Connell for her selection by ING as a 2005 Unsung Hero for the innovative project-based math and art curriculum she developed.
- LLA staff and students were one of the recipients of the 2005 Golden Apple Awards from the San Francisco Education Fund for a newly piloted curriculum on addressing multi-cultural issues in education.
- As a finalist in the 2004 Innovations in American Government Award, Harvard University's Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation awarded LLA a grant to disseminate its innovation to other government jurisdictions and the public.

Review: Addressing Learning Differences

In the spring of 2009, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Accrediting Committee completed a midterm review of Life Learning Academy’s progress toward addressing recommendations made by the committee in 2006. One key recommendation was for LLA to focus on addressing learning differences among specific subsets of students. As part of the WASC Accrediting Committee’s ongoing review process, LLA provides current information regarding the school’s progress toward addressing learning differences.

Since the 2009 WASC Midterm review, LLA has continued to work to address and close the gap in learning differences among three key student groups: probation students, English Language Learners, and Special Education students. The following summary provides the most current analysis for these student subgroups.

The tables and charts below provide analysis of student academic data comparing baseline results (those submitted by LLA in the 2005-06 WASC report) and all findings through the most recent 2018-19 school year. For the three student populations of interest—probation students, English Language Learners, and Special Education students—the analysis examines two questions regarding academic performance:

1. Have students in each of these groups improved their academic performance over time?
2. Have the differences between subgroups narrowed over time (i.e., the gap in achievement between the subgroup and the rest of the student population)?

To answer these questions, longitudinal analysis has been conducted for two indicators: grade point average and school attendance.

Grade Point Average

The tables below show students’ average change in grade point average (GPA) from the semester prior to starting at LLA to the most recent semester at LLA within the three population subgroups. In the most recent school year (2018-19), students from each of the three subgroups are showing a higher change in GPA than students did during the first year of WASC analysis (2005-06): +1.8 increase in grade points for probation students, +1.0 increase for English Language Learners, and +1.6 grade point increase for Special Education students between the two time periods. This change indicates that LLA has improved its ability to successfully serve diverse student populations.

Probation Students

	Average Change in GPA											
	2005-06	2006-07 & 2007-08	2008-09 & 2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Probation students	+0.6 (n=31)	+1.2 (n=40)	+1.6 (n=29)	+1.8 (n=6)	+1.5 (n=17)	+1.3 (n=16)	+1.2 (n=14)	+1.7 (n=3)	+0.9 (n=4)	+1.0 (n=7)	+1.7 (n=8)	+2.4 (n=6)
Non-probation students	+1.4 (n=61)	+1.8 (n=73)	+1.9 (n=75)	+2.2 (n=42)	+1.7 (n=37)	+1.5 (n=35)	+1.3 (n=35)	+1.7 (n=42)	+1.6 (n=50)	+1.2 (n=42)	+1.8 (n=20)	+2.0 (n=38)
Difference	-0.8	-0.6	-0.3	-0.4	-0.2	-0.2	-0.1	0.0	-0.7	-0.2	-0.1	0.4

Review: Addressing Learning Differences

English Language Learners

	Average Change in GPA											
	2005-06	2006-07 & 2007-08	2008-09 & 2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
English Language Learners	+1.1 (n=16)	+1.5 (n=6)	+1.4 (n=14)	+1.6 (n=6)	+2.1 (n=5)	+1.7 (n=4)	+0.9 (n=5)	+1.5 (n=3)	+1.8 (n=4)	+1.3 (n=6)	+2.0 (n=6)	+2.1 (n=7)
Non-English Language Learners	+1.2 (n=76)	+1.6 (n=107)	+1.9 (n=90)	+2.2 (n=42)	+1.6 (n=49)	+1.4 (n=47)	+1.3 (n=44)	+1.7 (n=42)	+1.5 (n=50)	+1.1 (n=43)	+1.7 (n=22)	+2.1 (n=37)
Difference	-0.1	-0.1	-0.5	-0.6	0.5	0.3	-0.4	-0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.0

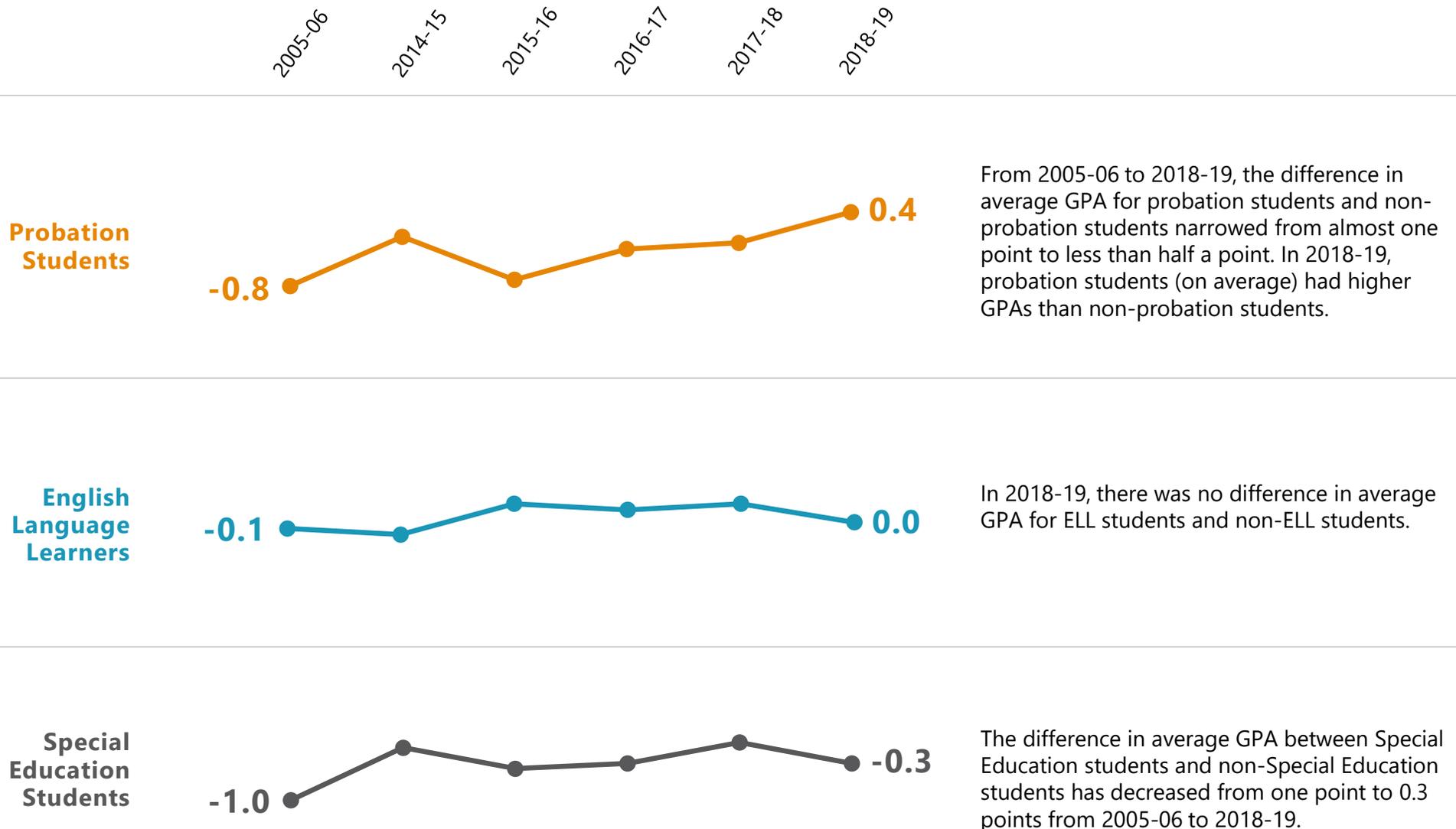
Special Education Students

	Average Change in GPA											
	2005-06	2006-07 & 2007-08	2008-09 & 2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Special Education students	+0.3 (n=9)	+2.6 (n=4)	+1.3 (n=7)	+2.6 (n=4)	+2.1 (n=6)	+1.8 (n=2)	+1.1 (n=6)	+1.7 (n=10)	+1.2 (n=9)	+0.9 (n=8)	+1.9 (n=4)	+1.9 (n=7)
Non-Special Education students	+1.3 (n=83)	+1.5 (n=109)	+1.8 (n=97)	+2.1 (n=44)	+1.6 (n=48)	+1.4 (n=49)	+1.3 (n=43)	+1.7 (n=35)	+1.6 (n=45)	+1.2 (n=41)	+1.8 (n=26)	+2.1 (n=37)
Difference	-1.0	1.1	-0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	-0.2	0.0	-0.4	-0.3	0.1	-0.3

Review: Addressing Learning Differences

As shown in the chart below, with few outlier-type exceptions, LLA has significantly narrowed the gap in GPA increase for all subgroups over the past five most recent years as compared to baseline results (in 2005-06). Moreover, the trend in reducing – nearly eliminating – subgroup differences in GPA increase has held relatively steady (noting an outlier year for probation students in 2015-16).

**Difference in Average GPA Increase for Student Subgroups:
Baseline and five most recent school years**



Review: Addressing Learning Differences

School Attendance

Analysis of school attendance reveals that all student populations experienced dramatic improvements in their attendance from before the time they entered LLA to their most recent semester at LLA. In 2018-19, notable increases in attendance compared to their most recent semester prior to attending LLA are seen for all three student subgroups: probation students are attending 25 more school days on average, English Language Learners 23 days, and Special Education students 16 days.

Probation Students

	Average Change in Attendance Days											
	2005-06	2006-07 & 2007-08	2008-09 & 2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Probation students	+40 (n=11)	+32 (n=28)	+39 (n=25)	+27 (n=7)	+18 (n=13)	+16 (n=10)	+8 (n=6)	-3 (n=6)	+29 (n=7)	+29 (n=5)	+28 (n=7)	+25 (n=4)
Non-probation students	+35 (n=26)	+31 (n=37)	+29 (n=51)	+30 (n=31)	+25 (n=28)	+18 (n=16)	+21 (n=16)	+15 (n=35)	+20 (n=43)	+19 (n=39)	+26 (n=23)	+23 (n=36)
Difference	5 days	1 day	10 days	-3 days	-7 days	-2 days	-13 days	-18 days	9 days	10 days	2 days	2 days

English Language Learners

	Average Change in Attendance Days											
	2005-06	2006-07 & 2007-08	2008-09 & 2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
English Language Learners	+51 (n=7)	+27 (n=5)	+32 (n=12)	+31 (n=6)	+28 (n=6)	+14 (n=2)	+5 (n=4)	+19 (n=3)	+16 (n=5)	+28 (n=6)	+29 (n=6)	+23 (n=7)
Non-English Language Learners	+33 (n=30)	+32 (n=60)	+32 (n=64)	+29 (n=32)	+22 (n=36)	+18 (n=24)	+20 (n=18)	+12 (n=38)	+22 (n=45)	+19 (n=38)	+26 (n=23)	+23 (n=33)
Difference	18 days	-5 days	0 days	2 days	6 days	-4 days	-15 days	7 days	-6 days	9 days	3 days	0 days

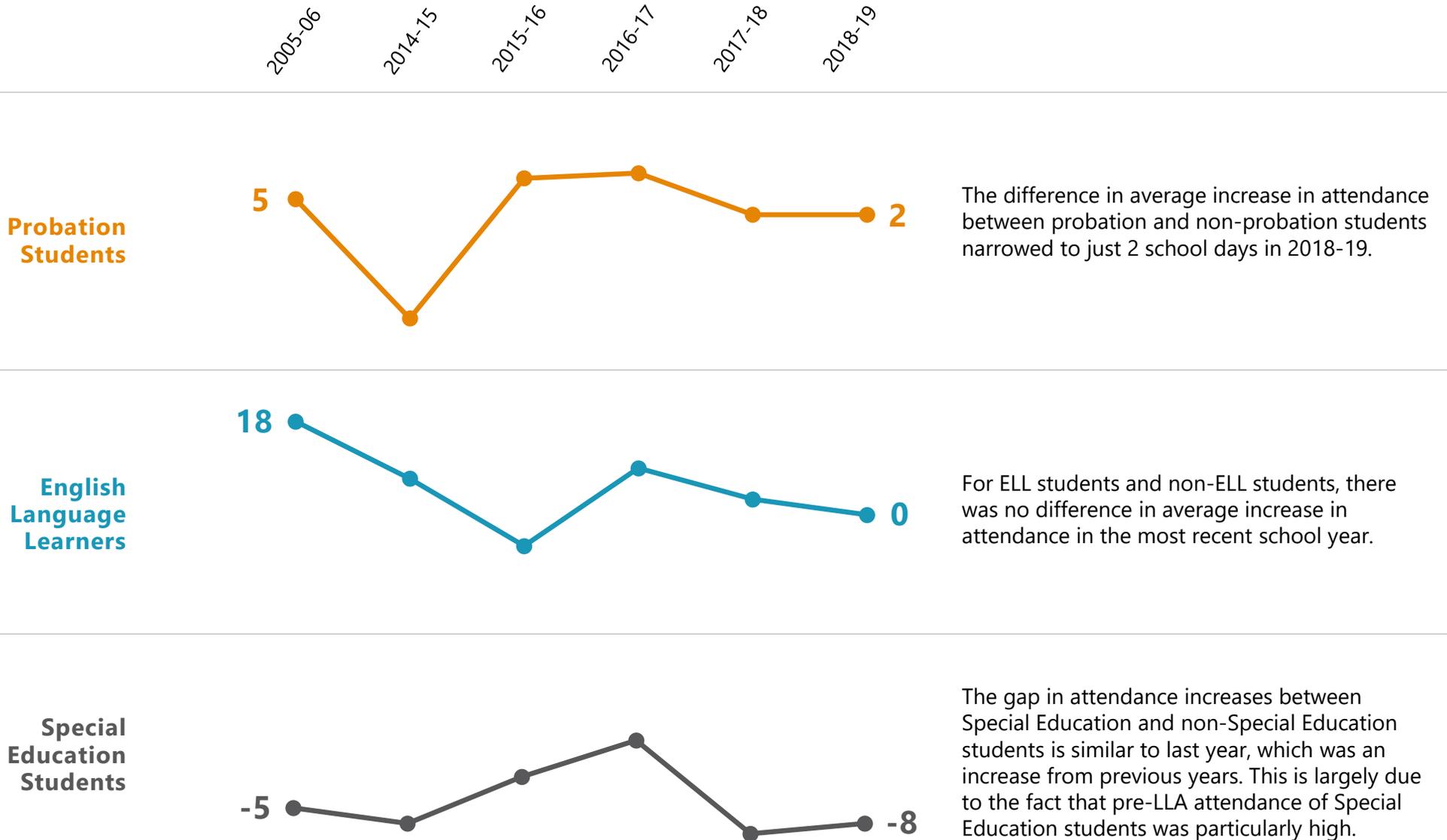
Special Education Students

	Average Change in Attendance Days											
	2005-06	2006-07 & 2007-08	2008-09 & 2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	
Special Education students	+32 (n=5)	+27 (n=2)	+35 (n=6)	+36 (n=3)	+31 (n=2)	+5 (n=1)	+19 (n=4)	+6 (n=10)	+22 (n=9)	+26 (n=9)	+17 (n=2)	+16 (n=6)
Non-Special Education students	+37 (n=32)	+32 (n=63)	+32 (n=70)	+29 (n=35)	+23 (n=39)	+18 (n=25)	+17 (n=18)	+14 (n=31)	+21 (n=41)	+18 (n=35)	+27 (n=27)	+24 (n=34)
Difference	-5 days	-5 days	3 days	7 days	8 days	-13 days	2 days	-8 days	1 day	8 days	-10 days	-8 days

Review: Addressing Learning Differences

Analysis of school attendance reveals that all student populations experienced dramatic improvements in their attendance from before the time they entered LLA to their most recent semester at LLA. In 2018-19, notable increases in attendance compared to their most recent semester prior to attending LLA are seen for all three student subgroups: probation students are attending 25 more school days on average, English Language Learners 23 days, and Special Education students 16 days.

Difference in Average Increase in Attendance for Student Subgroups: Baseline and five most recent school years



Identified special education students receive appropriate services based on the goals articulated in each student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Services are provided to students in small class settings, using a modified core curriculum (when appropriate) and individual adaptations defined in the students’ IEPs. Teachers and students receive consultation services from a Special Education Resource Consultant. Special Education program support is focused on promoting students’ understanding of individual learning styles and developing the skills to take charge of their learning and school success. Student achievement and progress toward meeting IEP goals are monitored quarterly and assessed annually. Based on these evaluations, IEPs are written each year, with targeted goals identified for student achievement.

Assessment tools used with Special Education students include the Woodcock Johnson Test of Individual Achievement III, individual reading inventories and content-based criterion-referenced tests. LLA also administers surveys to determine each student’s individual learning style. Students referred for an initial psycho-educational evaluation are assessed by a SFUSD school psychologist and Life Learning Academy’s Special Education resource staff.

For the 2018-2019 academic year, eight students enrolled at Life Learning Academy had Individualized Education Plans with a non-severe specific learning disability designation. All designated Special Education students were placed in 100% general education classes and received instructional accommodations and curricular modifications in accordance with their IEPs. LLA’s special education resource staff consulted with general education teachers regularly to support the achievement and success of identified students. Transcript analysis documents significant gains in the academic achievement of identified students. All students’ IEPs and assessments were updated during the 2018-19 school year.

As part of the Special Education consultant duties, School Success Team meetings and follow-up interventions were conducted on eight LLA students during the 2018-19 school year. These interventions were monitored by a Special Education consultant in collaboration with general education teachers and various community-based agencies serving these students.

LLA Special Education Students, 2018-19

Special Education Student	Average GPA Pre-LLA	Average GPA at LLA 2018-2019	GPA Change
Student A	1.75	3.33	+1.58
Student B	1.00	2.67	+1.67
Student C	1.33	3.17	+1.84
Student D	0.50	0.75	+0.25
Student E	0.00	1.83	+1.83
Student F	0.50	3.20	+2.70
Student G	No data available	3.36	n/a
Student H	0.40	3.50	+3.10

In 2018 and 2019, LLA staff reached out to all of LLA's alumni (graduation years ranging from 2000 to 2019) to conduct brief phone interviews in order to learn more about what they are doing now and how their experiences at LLA have impacted their lives. The staff was able to contact 43 former LLA students. The alumni who participated in the interviews overwhelmingly reported positive post-graduation success. 100% reported having a safe and stable place to live, and 93% reported that they were currently working. Additionally, the majority of interviewees reported that they were either currently enrolled in or had completed college or vocational training. LLA students who had previously been completely disengaged from their education experienced a radical shift in their view of its value, choosing to pursue higher education after graduating from LLA.

In addition to their post-graduation success, 100% of interviewees reported that they use the skills they learned at LLA in their everyday lives. When asked for examples of what types of things they learned at LLA, the alumni shared a broad range of responses, including economics and financial management, leadership skills, how to work with others, perseverance, patience, kindness, and respect. Most notably, however, was the deep love and appreciation that the alumni expressed for LLA. It is clear that the former students continue to value and appreciate the experience and education they received at LLA.

In future years, LLA's graduate outreach will be conducted systematically with *all* alumni at 1-, 3-, and 5-years following their graduation from LLA.



I had an up and down experience at LLA but no matter how much I gave them trouble, **they never gave up on me...**Best school I've ever been to.

- LLA Graduate

The point at which a young person becomes involved with the juvenile justice system marks a profound shift in how they are viewed and treated by society. Access to healthy and positive developmental pathways for these youth instantly becomes severely restricted. The critical role LLA plays is to reengage youth involved in the juvenile justice system in a pathway to productive adulthood, using education and a school community as the vehicle.

The effects of enrollment in LLA on juvenile justice outcomes were studied for the period 1999-2001. The study compared LLA students with comparison group counterparts and found that enrollment in LLA had significant positive effects on juvenile justice outcomes. The findings are summarized below.

- **Reduced involvement with the juvenile justice system.** LLA youth, relative to their comparison group counterparts, had lower rates of recidivism and first arrests. Even among LLA youth who are arrested while in the school, the number of times they were arrested was much lower than comparison group youth who were arrested during this same time period.
- **Youth who came to LLA with a history of arrest were more than half as likely as their comparison group counterparts to recidivate in the intervention period and are also half as likely to recidivate in the 18-month follow-up period.** Of LLA youth who were arrested during the intervention period, only one youth (14.3%) was arrested more than once, which compares favorably to the 12 of 25 (48.0%) of comparison group youth who were arrested more than once in the same time period. However, what is not significantly different between LLA youth and comparison group youth who get re-arrested is the severity of their offenses.
- LLA youth who were wards of the court had a three times greater likelihood relative to comparison group youth to terminate their wardship status during the time they were at LLA and during the follow-up period. These **youth successfully left the juvenile justice system.**
- **LLA youth who never had contact with the juvenile justice system were successfully prevented from ever becoming involved in the juvenile justice system or their involvement was significantly delayed.** None of these youth committed their first crime during the time they were at LLA. And in the 18-month follow-up period, these youth were half as likely as their comparison group counterparts to commit their first crime.
- Regarding institutional commitments and out-of-home placements, the path for a number of LLA youth might have been an out-of-home placement or a commitment to a detention facility. However, relative to comparison group youth, **LLA youth were eight times less likely to be placed out of home and about ten times less likely to be placed in a detention facility** such as Youth Guidance Center (YGC), Log Cabin Ranch School (LCRS), and California Youth Authority (CYA).

Since this study was completed, LLA has continued to receive data on students' involvement with the juvenile justice system. The findings demonstrate that enrollment at LLA continues to have positive effects on students with respect to a number of juvenile justice outcomes.

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Attendance Rate	90%	85%	85%	93%	91%	85%	89%	87%	86%	84%	82%	78%	73%	75%	74%	75%	74%	81%
Credit Completion	99%	93%	95%	91%	98%	93%	95%	96%	92%	88%	87%	84%	86%	92%	96%	92%	83%	85%
High School Graduation Rate	*	*	92%	91%	90%	86%	91%	100%	83%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	93%	92%	92%

* The California Department of Education did not ask LLA to report graduation rate in school years 2001-02 and 2002-03.