LOS ALAMITOS UNIFIED

Igniting Unlimited Possibilities

Operations Steering Committee – October 13, 2026

Middle School Academy: Evidence & Impact

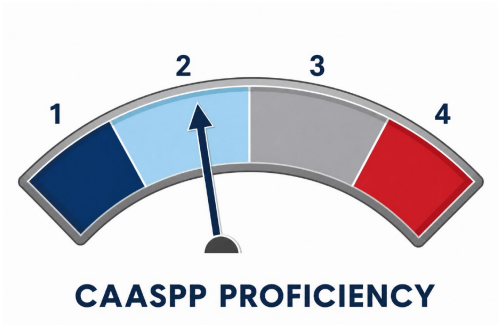
Ondrea Reed, M.Ed. - Deputy Superintendent, Education Services

Why the Academy?

Filling a Gap in Our Continuum of Support

The students we were trying to reach:

- Demonstrated potential to meet grade-level expectations
- Often hovered just below proficiency
- Could benefit from additional exposure, practice, feedback, and/or structure
- Could benefit from support with organization, study skills, self-advocacy, and/or confidence
- Were not students who qualified for intensive intervention



The Academy was designed to provide intentional instruction on grade level standards before academic gaps became more significant.

Academy students were selected because they had potential, with additional support in academics and executive functioning to meet proficiency.

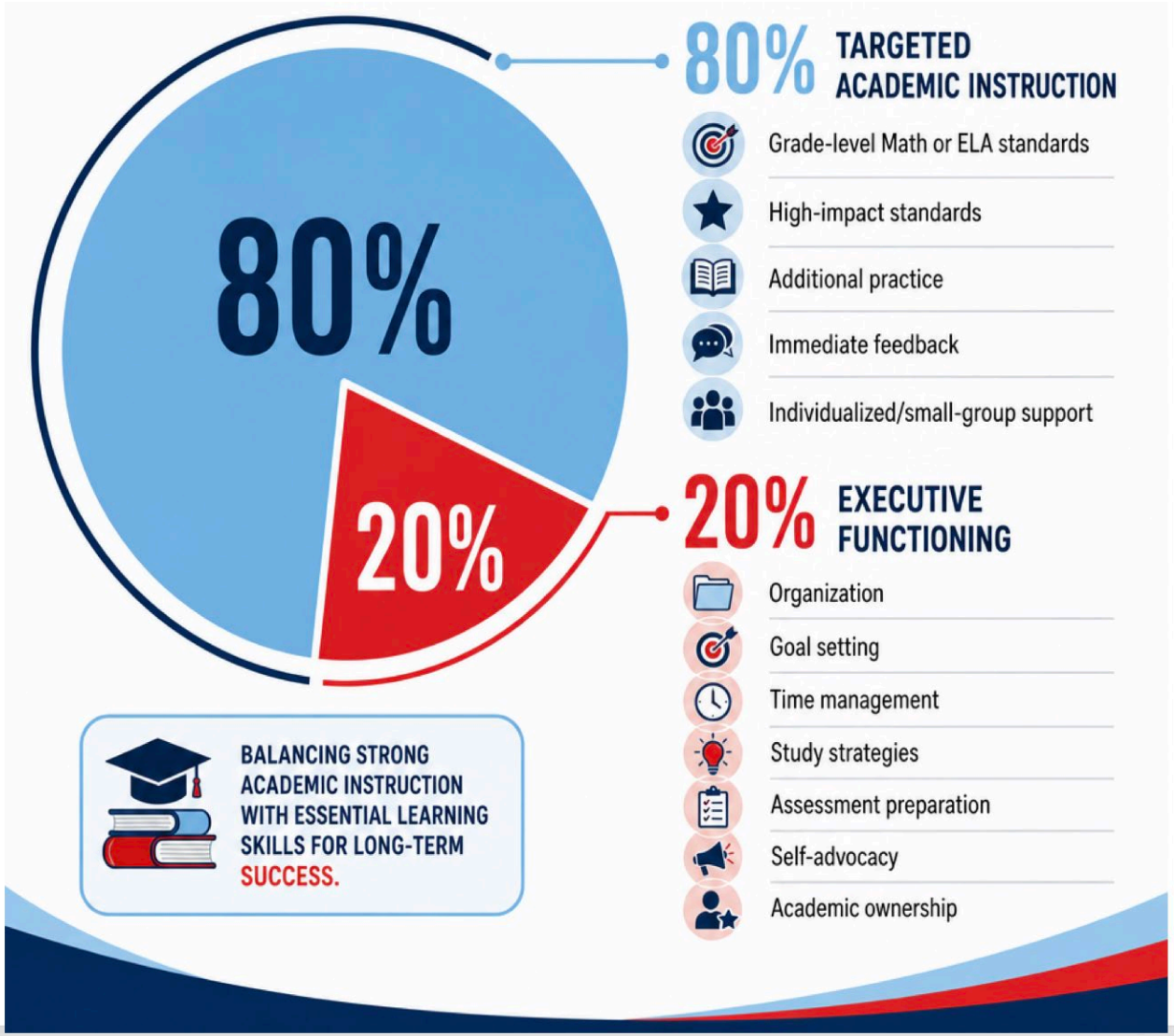
What was the Academy?

Academic Skills + Learning Skills



Morning Huddle A daily check-in focused on organization, goal setting, upcoming assignments and assessments, study strategies, and student reflection, helping students begin the day with a clear plan and greater ownership of their learning.

Students consistently identified Morning Huddle as one of the most valuable components of the Academy because it helped them feel more prepared, organized, and confident throughout the school day.



How We Evaluated the Pilot?

Multiple Measures of Impact

The (1-Semester, 2025-26) Academy pilot was evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative measures to provide a more complete picture of student growth and program impact.

- **Quantitative Measures**
  - MAP Growth, CAASPP Performance Levels, Course grades, Attendance
  - Comparison to the broader Math 6 and English 6 peer cohorts
- **Qualitative Measures**
  - Student pre- and post-surveys: Academic confidence, Executive functioning, Goal setting, Self-advocacy, Assessment readiness, Student engagement, and perceptions of the Academy experience

The evaluation examined not only whether students grew academically, but also whether they developed the skills, confidence, and learning behaviors that support long-term success.

2025-26

Middle School Academy		
	Oak Students	McAuliffe Students
Math 6 Academy	24	27
ELA 6 Academy	22	24
Total	**46**	**51**

Math Academy vs. Math 6

Mathematics: Evidence of Accelerated Growth

Measure - EOY	Academy Students (Oak + McA)	College Prep Students (Oak + McA)
Increased MAP RIT	**80%**	71%
Above Avg. Math 6 RIT	**59%**	48.0%
Above National MAP Norm	**74%**	62.6%
Exceeded Expected Growth*	**60%**	48%
Increased CAASPP Level	**46%**	—

8/10 Academy math students grew on MAP, approximately NINE percentage points more than the traditional Math 6 cohort.

***Changing Trajectories:** 60% of Academy students exceeded their expected MAP growth compared with 48% of College Prep students, a 12-point advantage. Exceeding expected growth is significant because the goal of the Academy is not simply to help students make progress, but to accelerate learning beyond what was predicted and alter their academic trajectory.

ELA Academy vs. English 6

English: Growth Comparable to the Peer Cohort

Measure - EOY	Academy Students (Oak + McA)	College Prep Students (Oak + McA)
Increased MAP RIT	**62%**	64%
Above Avg. Reading 6 RIT	**34%**	53%
Above National MAP Norm	**60%**	68%
Exceeded Expected Growth*	**60%**	57%
Increased CAASPP Level	**27%**	—

***Changing Trajectories:** 60% of Academy students exceeded their expected MAP growth compared with 57% of College Prep students, a 3-point advantage. Exceeding expected growth is significant because the goal of the Academy is not simply to help students make progress, but to accelerate learning beyond what was predicted and alter their academic trajectory.

CAASPP: Did Students Move Toward Proficiency?

State Assessment Evidence of Acceleration

CAASPP Growth	Academy
Math: Increased ≥1 Level	**46.5%**
ELA: Increased ≥1 Level	**26.8%**
Math: Increased 2 Levels	**8 students**
ELA: Increased 2 Levels	**1 student**

Although Grade 6 peer-cohort data are not yet available for direct comparison, the CAASPP results are encouraging when viewed within the District's historical patterns.

Historical Context: Mathematics proficiency has typically declined from Grade 6 to Grade 7 on CAASPP, for example, from 65% in Grade 6 to 60% in Grade 7 in 2025. ELA proficiency has generally remained relatively stable, for example, 76% in both Grade 6 and Grade 7 in 2024.

What Changed that We Cannot See on a Test?

Students Report Becoming Stronger Learners

Measure	Growth
Assessment Readiness	+7.3%
Self-Advocacy	+7.2%
Goal Setting	+6.2%
Growth Mindset	+2.8%
Academic Confidence	+2.6%
Student Engagement	+2.5%

Academy students completed the same pre- and post-program survey to measure changes in academic confidence, growth mindset, engagement, self-advocacy, goal setting, and assessment readiness. A total of 88 students completed both surveys, allowing the District to measure changes in the same students over the course of the pilot. Students reported positive growth in every area measured.

A meta-analysis of 299 studies involving more than 65,000 students found consistent relationships between executive functioning and academic achievement, while broader learning research indicates that goal setting, reflection, confidence, and student ownership support persistence, independence, and improved performance.

Beyond Testing…

Celebrating Growth & Expanding Possibilities

After state testing concluded, Academy shifted from targeted academic support to a culminating experience that recognized students' commitment and connected their current effort to future opportunities.

Celebrate Commitment

Students participated in a "Donuts & Swag" Academy celebration and received official Academy sweatshirts in recognition of the perseverance required to arrive at school an hour early throughout the pilot. The celebration reinforced belonging, pride, and a positive identity around academic effort.



Explore College Opportunities

Students visited Long Beach City College to experience campus life and learn about academic programs, student support services, career technical education, and postsecondary pathways.



Beyond Testing…

Celebrating Growth & Expanding Possibilities

Envision High School & Career Pathways

Students visited the LAHS College & Career Center and Griffin Center, participated in a high school student panel, explored personalized CTE pathway options, and learned about leadership, athletics, involvement, career planning, and job readiness.





Why These Experiences Matter

- Connect present academic effort to future goals
- Develop college- and career-going mindsets
- Build confidence and self-efficacy
- Strengthen belonging and connection to Los Al Unified
- See a clear pathway from middle school to high school, college, careers, and future success





What We Learned…

Evidence, Learning & Next Steps

THE EVIDENCE

- Math Academy demonstrated particularly strong acceleration relative to Math 6 peers.
- ELA students demonstrated growth comparable to peers despite greater starting needs.
- Meaningful numbers of students moved toward, and in some cases beyond, proficiency.
- Students improved across every measured executive functioning domain.

WHAT WE LEARNED

- Additional time matters when it is targeted and provides support with grade level standards.
- Executive functioning should remain part of the academic intervention, not be treated as separate.
- Morning Huddles and individualized teacher support were high-value components.
- ELA instruction warrants continued refinement.

What Comes Next?

Evidence, Learning & Next Steps

WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW

- Continue the Academy model for 2026-27
  - (3) Year-Long Sections at McAuliffe
    - Integrated Math/ELA for Gr.6-7-8
  - (2) Semester-Only Sections of ELA for Fall
    - Gr.6-7
- Preserves core structures.
- Refining ELA/literacy instruction.
- Continue comparing Academy outcomes to the peer cohort.



Questions