



# Learning Academy REPORT CARD – 2019

The Learning Academy, a BASIC program, is a community-embedded “school without walls” summer program held at the Steele-Burnand Anza-Borrego Desert Research Center. Full-day classes began July 10, 2019 and continued for four weeks providing over 100 hours of instruction in a small group setting.

Reading Academy began four years ago to provide intensive reading/literacy instruction to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders who needed a boost to achieve grade level proficiency. In year two an English Language Development (ELD) class was added to help middle/high school students achieve English proficiency. In year three Reading Academy became Learning Academy when a math classes was added for middle school students who needed a boost to grade level proficiency. The reading and math classes occur at critical points where students falter, influencing their life-long learning trajectory. In this fourth year of BASIC’s Learning Academy, a total of 33 students attended these three classes.

## Program Objectives

All students will:

- improve their performance measured by pre- and post-testing and standardized tests and 35 – 50% of our students will reach their grade equivalent on a standardized test
- develop positive attitudes toward reading or math or English and a love of learning
- demonstrate greater than 95% daily attendance

## 2019 Outcomes for All Students

- 33 students enrolled and **33 students completed** the 20-day program
- **97.4 % overall attendance** rate
- **100% of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade** reading/literacy students are **at or about grade level** for passage and word fluency; 50% of all reading/literacy students grew in passage fluency and 41% grew in reading comprehension; one student moved from 25<sup>th</sup> to 75<sup>th</sup> percentile; in fall school testing **75% grew in language usage** and **58% in reading** over spring testing. (passage fluency = ability to read accurately, smoothly and with expression)
- **2 math students achieved grade level** and 1 maintained grade level; 63% grew on grade level Common Core assessment; 40% changed percentile bands.
- **100% of the English Language Development** students grew in passage fluency averaging a 23.6 words per minute increase; 50% of level 1 students grew in reading comprehension; one level 1 student who could not read the passage fluency at all ended the class reading sentences clearly and sounding out words.

## **Feedback from all audiences has been excellent:**

### ***From the students...***

- “I am proud that I have gotten better at things.”
- “I became a better person by working with my math buddies.”
- “I had a lot of fun and I’ve grown a lot too.”
- “When I read I was nervous but now I’m comfortable reading in front of people.”
- “My favorite experience is almost everything, because I got to have fun and at the same time learn a lot.”
- “I feel a little more confident for high school.”
- “This stuff is going to be very useful for me in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade.”
- “I’ve gotten better at understanding English and writing words in English.”
- “Academy is the angel school and I have to leave here and go to the other school.”

### ***From their school teachers and administrators...***

- “I can tell the students who went to the Learning Academy.”
- “Extremely quiet students are now participating in class and their test scores are among the highest in the class.”
- “Building the confidence of the students is the biggest outcome of the Learning Academy.”
- “Students’ parents are clamoring to get their children on the Academy selection list.”

### **Background**

Historically 40 – 60% of Borrego’s third graders do not read at grade level. Research indicates that children spend their early school years (grades 1 to 3) learning basic literacy skills. After grade 3 they use those literacy skills to learn everything else. Statistically, children who do not read at grade level by the end of grade 3 get further and further behind in subsequent grades. They rarely close the gap and are at high risk for dropping out of school. The same is true for math in the middle school years. English is not the first language for 89% of Borrego’s students, therefore many are long-term English Language Learners who need to increase vocabulary and gain fluency.

### **Structure**

A trained teacher and instructional aide lead each of the three small classes. Testing data and best teaching practices were used to individualize instruction. Classes were intensive but fun; purposely not replicating the regular school setting. Students were given the opportunity to shine in a small group setting while increasing skills and developing a love of learning.

A headmaster was also present to manage all administrative issues.

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Other key features that define the Learning Academy include:

- Door-to-door bus service
- Free hot breakfast and lunch every day
- Free books for the students' personal home libraries
- Free T-shirts and backpacks to build identity and pride
- Incentives for perfect attendance including award of an iPad
- Celebration event with certificates of completion

## BASIC Learning Academy 2019 Donor Honor Roll

BASIC thanks our many donors and wishes to note these exceptional Learning Academy contributors –

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Jim Dice  
Sue Vescera

### BASIC's Learning Academy Committee

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