



Learning Academy REPORT CARD – 2018

The Learning Academy, a BASIC (Basic Assistance for Students in the Community) 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 12, 2018 and continued for four weeks providing over 100 hours of instruction in a small group setting.

Reading Academy began three years ago to provide intensive reading/literacy instruction to 2nd and 3rd 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 this third year 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.

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

2018 Outcomes for All Students

- 31 students enrolled and 31 students completed the 20 day program
- **98.5% overall attendance rate**
- **91% of reading/literacy students** made improvements in **reading comprehension** and **75% achieved grade level** expectations; 83% grew in **reading passage fluency** with **50% achieving grade level** expectations; 100% grew in **word fluency** and **58% achieved grade level**.
- **80% of math students** improved on grade level standards with **30% achieving grade level**. One student moved from 10th percentile to 50th percentile and 3 moved from 10th to 25th percentile.
- **56% of ELD students** made improvements in **reading comprehension** and **22% achieved grade level** expectations; 100% grew in **reading passage fluency** and **11% achieved grade level**. Three students have been reclassified out of the school ELD program based on additional testing in the fall semester. Four of the ELD students (3 of them speaking no English at all) had entered the Borrego school system during the past school year and two of these achieved grade level proficiency in reading comprehension.



Feedback from all audiences has been excellent:

From the students...

- “I actually understand and like math now.”
- “The teachers help a lot, so I get what I am doing.”
- “I like learning things I don’t know.”
- “I will miss this if I pass the ELD class. I’ve had so much fun during summer vacation”
- “I got to learn a lot.”
- “The teachers were so nice.”
- “My favorite thing this year was everything, especially the food.”

From the families...

- “This program changed my daughter’s whole attitude about school and math in particular.”
- “My brother is reading more now and he has found his voice and is more confident speaking in public.”

From their school teachers and administrators...

- “Students in all three classes have entered the school year with confidence and skills they were previously lacking to give them a boost to be successful.”
- “The math program allowed the students who are below grade level a chance to shine in a small group setting ...learning and practicing much needed skills to be successful in their math classes.”
- “The summer program is invaluable to the students of Borrego Springs.”

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.

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 weekly attendance and perfect attendance award of an iPad
- Celebration event with certificates of completion



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(many of these donors also supported other BASIC Programs)

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Learning Academy Teaching Staff

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Tania Fuerte, Teacher Aide
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