



Learning Academy REPORT CARD – 2021

After 16 long months of almost no in-the-classroom learning and 24 months of waiting to hold it, **BASIC held its FIFTH Learning Academy this summer!**

The energy and enthusiasm were palpable, and it made a difference in the lives of the students, their families and even the teachers.

History of Learning Academy BASIC's Learning Academy is a community-embedded "school without walls" summer program held at the Steele-Burnand Anza-Borrego Desert Research Center. This year, full-day classes began July 8, 2021 and continued for four weeks, providing over 100 hours of instruction in four small group settings. Because COVID has severely affect learning, especially for disadvantaged students such as ours, this year Learning Academy expanded and enrolled 44 students, a 33% increase over the past three years.

- This is the FIFTH year for Reading Academy, providing intensive reading/literacy instruction to 2nd and 3rd graders who needed a boost to achieve grade level proficiency.
- This is the Fourth year for English Language Development (ELD) and Third year for MATH classes for middle school students. Middle School is when where students falter, influencing their life-long learning and earning trajectories. Adding these classes in 2017 led to a change in name from Reading Academy to Learning Academy.
- This is the First year for having a writing class for middle school students.

Program Objectives

All students will:

- improve their performance measured by pre- and post-testing and standardized tests. 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.

2021 Outcomes: 44 students enrolled and **38 students completed** the 20-day program

- **3rd Grade Class:** 100% of 3rd grade reading/literacy students **grew** in passage fluency and **92% grew** in word fluency (passage fluency = ability to read accurately, smoothly and with expression)
- **Math Class:** 58% of math students **grew** on grade level Common Core assessment; there was **50% improvement** in Expression and Equation problems.
- **ELD Class:** 33% of the English Language Development students improved reading comprehension; 33% **improved scores** on writing a complete sentence; **50% improved** on writing a paragraph.
- **Writing Class:** 90% of writing students increased the number of sentences in an argumentative writing prompt response, **82% reduced punctuation** errors or had none, **72% decreased spelling** errors or had none. **82% increased** the 5pt rubric score

Feedback...

From the students...

- “I am proud that I have gotten better at things.”
- “The reading class helps you pronounce stuff you can't pronounce good (well).”
- “I had a lot of fun and I've grown a lot too.”
- *Universally the students said the food was the best.*
- “It taught me to be brave and strong.”
- *Universally the students said they are better prepared for going back to school next month.*
- “I am going to read more.”
- “I wish this was our real school. I hope I come back next year.”

From their school teachers and administrators...

- “Unique and amazing experience.”
- “...the kids reestablished a solid base which they needed after the last year and a half.”
- “Students' parents are clamoring to get their children on the Academy selection list.”

From a parent...

- “I have never looked at them so happy and at the same time sad because classes are ending.”

Why BASIC holds Learning Academy

40 – 60% of Borrego's third graders do not read at grade level. 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. 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. Many are long-term English Language Learners who need to increase vocabulary, gain fluency, understand composition structure, and improve writing.

Structure

A trained teacher and instructional aide lead each of the small classes (10-11 students/class). Testing data and best teaching practices are used to individualize instruction. Classes are intensive but fun, purposely not replicating the regular school setting. Students are given the opportunity to shine in a small group setting while increasing skills and developing a love of learning. A headmaster is also present to manage all administrative issues including, this year, repetitive Covid testing.

2021 Learning Academy was the first in-the-classroom setting for these students in over a year. Covid protocols, including wearing masks and physical separation, were effective. When a teacher tested positive and left the Academy, all other staff and students remained Covid free.

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

BASIC's Learning Academy 2021 Donor Honor Roll

BASIC thanks our many donors, especially these exceptional Learning Academy contributors –

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