ACADEMIA ANTONIA ALONSO
Charter School

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020

4403 Lancaster Pike, Bldg. #26
Wilmington, DE 19805
Phone:(302) 351-8200

I.   OVERVIEW

1.1 School Overview:

Review the following chart with the school's basic information. (Note: This table will be completed by the Charter School Office. Please review for accuracy. _**Any changes identified by the team must be highlighted in red prior to submitting the report. Only changes highlighted in red will be reviewed by the Charter School Office. Should there be no highlighted changes, the data will appear as presented in this draft.**_)

BASIC INFORMATION	
Name of School	Academia Antonia Alonso Charter School
Year School Opened	2014
Enrollment 2019-2020 [1]	612 595
Approved Enrollment	627 600
School Address	4403 Lancaster Pike, Bldg. #26 Wilmington, DE 19805
District(s) of Residence	Red Clay Consolidated School District
Website Address	http://www.academiacharterschool.org/
Name of School Leader	Mercedes Alonso
School Leader Email and Phone Number	Mercedes.Alonso@academia.k12.de.us (302) 351-8200, Ext. 126
Name of Board President	Dr. Maria Alonso
Mission Statement: At Academia Antonia Alonso Charter School, we are driven by our mission to inspire children to become joyful, confident, creative, bilingual learners, by providing our students with a strong bi-literate academic and cultural foundation.	

1.2 School Demographic Data:

Please review the following table for accuracy and complete the second row ("# of Students on Waiting List") for 2019-2020. (Note: The remaining sections of the table will be completed by the Charter School Office. *Any changes identified by the team must be highlighted in red prior to submitting the report. Only changes highlighted in red will be reviewed by the Charter School Office. Should there be no highlighted changes, the data will appear as presented in this draft.*)

ENROLLMENT & DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	
	2019-2020[1]
Total Enrollment	595
# of Students on Waiting List	0
Gender	
% Male	47.23%
% Female	52.77%
Ethnicity/Race	
% African American	15.63%
% American Indian	0.34%
% Asian	0.17%
% Hispanic/Latino	74.12%
% White	9.24%
% Multiracial	0.50%
Special Populations	
%Special Education[2]	8.07% (This was at unit count) 11%
% English Language Learners	56.81%
% Low-Income	48.24% 56.42%

Schools are invited but not required to comment on any aspect of the demographic data above in table 1.2

1.3 Approved Minor and Major Modifications:

The table lists any approved minor and/or major modifications over the course of the school's current charter term.

(Note: This table will be completed by the Charter School Office. Please review the following table for accuracy. *__Any changes identified by the team must be highlighted in red prior to submitting the report. Only changes highlighted in red will be reviewed by the Charter School Office. Should there be no highlighted changes, the data will appear as presented in this draft.__*)

Date	Modification Requested	Outcome
11/1/2017	Minor- to discontinue its partnership with Expeditionary Learning Education (ELE) and replace it with a similar project-based learning framework	Approved
5/30/18	Academia Antonia Alonso's Board of Directors proposes changing the Spanish Language Proficiency assessment, a portion of the Educator Evaluation Process, from LAS Links to the State of Delaware's World Language Immersion Program Assessment Criteria for Spanish.	Approved

Date	Modification Requested	Outcome
December 2014	Major- Enrollment Decrease	Approved
September 2015	Minor-Evaluation Process	Approved
January 2016	Major- Change in Location	Approved
November 2017	Minor- to discontinue its partnership with Expeditionary Learning Education (ELE) and replace it with a Project Based Learning framework	Approved
May 2018	Academia Antonia Alonso Charter School's Board of Directors propose a change in the Spanish Language Proficiency Assessment from LAS Links to the State of Delawre's World Language Immersion Program Assessment Criteria for Spanish	Approved
May 2018	Major- to operate without a Charter Management Organization	Approved

Schools are invited but not required to comment on any aspect of the modification data above in table 1.3

1.4 School Enrollment:

Please review the following chart with the school's enrollment trends during the current term of the charter. (This table will be completed by the Charter School Office. Please review for accuracy. **_Any changes identified by the team must be highlighted in red prior to submitting the report. Only changes highlighted in red will be reviewed by the Charter School Office. Should there be no highlighted changes, the data will appear as presented in this draft._**)

School Enrollment Trends		
Cells highlighted in grey were grade levels not serviced by this school		
	2019-2020	
	Approved Enrollment	30-Sep Enrollment Count
K		102
Grade 1		119
Grade 2		109
Grade 3		100
Grade 4		78
Grade 5		87
Grade 6		
Grade 7		
Grade 8		
Grade 9		
Grade 10		
Grade 11		
Grade 12		
Total		595

Schools are invited but not required to comment on any aspect of the enrollment data above in table 1.4.

While there were many factors that impacted La Academia *meeting* its approved enrollment in SY20, but not increasing its enrollment of 603 from SY19, few were more important than leadership. Since stepping into her role in September 2018, La Academia's Director of Admissions has been a pivotal force behind the school's success in recruiting prospective families. Her hands on approach works. Her vision, drive, passion and depth of program knowledge draws families in. In SY20, however, in the midst of the enrollment window, she went out on Paid Parental Leave. Managing the intermittent leave of such a high profile individual in the organization, in the midst of Unit Count, was challenging to say the least but, despite the challenge, our actual enrollment of 595 students met the target measure for enrollment variance and remained in line with our projection - a testimony to her results oriented mindset, planning ahead, and relentless commitment to the mission and vision of the school.

1.5 Reenrollment:

Reenrollment Rate[2] is the % of students continuously enrolled in the school from one year to the next.

Review the following chart with the school's reenrollment trends during the current charter term. (This table will be completed by the Charter School Office. Please review for accuracy. ***Any changes identified by the team must be highlighted in red prior to submitting the report. Only changes highlighted in red will be reviewed by the Charter School Office. Should there be no highlighted changes, the data will appear as presented in this draft.***)

School Reenrollment Trends		
Cells highlighted in grey were grade levels not serviced by this school		
	Academia Antonia Alonso	
	Number of Students Reenrolled Count	**Percentage of Students Reenrolled %**
K	3	
Grade 1	103	81.75%
Grade 2	101	77.10%
Grade 3	96	84.96%
Grade 4	75	78.13%
Grade 5	86	89.58%
Grade 6		
Grade 7		
Grade 8		
Grade 9		
Grade 10		
Grade 11		
Grade 12		
Total/Avg.	464	82.56%

** School entry grade level. Reenrollment data not collected for this grade level.

Describe the school's plans to monitor and minimize attrition rates. Provide information about why students are choosing to enroll in different schools.

There are multiple factors that contribute to enrollment growth or decline in any school. At La Academia, we are thrilled to report that since SY18, the percentage of students re-enrolled   has steadily increased year to year and across grades. We believe a number of factors contribute to this occurrence including, but not limited to, steady leadership since the fall of 2018, continued advancement in the quality of teaching and instruction, commitment to a balanced program- equal

parts of academics to physical and social-emotional development, a culture where students, faculty and staff thrive, the sustained growth of parent involvement and the offering of a wide-range of extra-curricular activities- extending student learning to outside the classroom- just to name a few.

Acknowledgement of these efforts were reflected in the following awards which La Academia was honored to receive during SY20:

IDEA Awards

The IDEA Awards (Innovation, Dedication, Education, Admiration) recognize the exemplary accomplishments of charter schools across the state of Delaware. In SY20, Academia Antonia Alonso Charter School was nominated for four IDEA awards and won two: *The Inches and Miles Award & The Cornerstone Award.*

Inches & Miles Award: This award recognizes that academic growth is an important measure for student success. Although it is challenging, even for the NWEA, to define what is *good* growth, what this award represented for La Academia is a celebration of the steady growth and performance of its students, reflected in MAP scores over the years and in the Imagine Learning benchmark data in SY20.

Cornerstone Award: This award recognizes an individual parent, or groups of parents, who demonstrates outstanding commitment and excellence in participation in a Delaware public charter school. In SY20, two parent volunteers at La Academia received this prestigious award for, in a myriad of ways, improving the quality of our students' academic experience, enriching our school culture, and demonstrating leadership, innovation and collaboration in creating La Academia's first, and only, PTO & Parent Booster Club.

Lt. Governor's Award for our Compassionate Schools Team

La Academia was also privileged to receive the Lt. Governor's award for our *Compassionate Schools Team.* This award is presented to a school for its commitment to the physical and social-emotional health and well-being of its students, faculty, staff and community at large. The Compassionate Schools Team at La Academia introduced a number of initiatives in SY20 which culminated in winning this award including:

- *Start with Hello -an important social and emotional learning program to introduce students to the power of connecting and helping one another.*

- *Lunch Bunch -to promote social skills, build self-esteem, and allow students to have fun and develop positive relationships with peers.*

- *Biggest Loser Event -to promote the physical health and well-being of La Academia's staff and faculty.*

- *Anti-bullying Events -In SY20, students participated in a social studies lesson in which they explored the concept of bullying, how they can prevent it, and what they should do if they think they, or someone they know, is being bullied. Evolution Karate Academy was invited to compliment the social studies lesson through karate demonstrations- instilling in our students the character building, morality and spirituality contained in the way of Karate.*

- *Unity Day- In October, La Academia celebrated Unity Day- a day in which people unite with acts of kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. On that day students, staff & faculty wore Orange and, at one point during the day, came together to form one giant ORANGE message of hope and support.*

- *Grinch for Good Food Drive- In December 2019, La Academia collected 300 cans of food to donate to our food pantry.*

- *Adopt A Family- An initiative in which our staff and faculty adopted 43 La Academia families and purchased items on their wish list for the winter holiday. elected students/families were identified as in need/ at risk by teachers and staff.*

Reasons students enroll in different schools

In SY20, the most common reasons for La Academia families choosing to enroll in different schools were student transience, deportation and, without a Middle School yet, siblings of graduating fifth graders moving with their graduating brother(s)/sister(s) to a K-8/K-12 school to keep parents from having students in multiple schools.

II. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

2.1 Delaware School Success Framework

Changes in the Academic Framework
From School Year (SY) 2014-15 through SY 2017-18, the academic performance of all charter schools was evaluated using the Delaware School Success Framework that were publishing annually. In December 2015, Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the main federal law governing public education. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). ESSA implementation began in 2017-18 school year.

Overall Academic Ratings

Indicator	Points	Percent Point

Due to COVD-19, all SY 19/20 assessment and accountability requirements have been waived by the U.S. Department of Education.

a)   Since all assessment and accountability requirements for SY 19/20 have been waived due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please describe the school's performance against its remote learning plan and address the following areas (2 pages will suffice):

    i.   **Content mastery;**
    ii.   **Addressing learning gaps (e.g. serving students with disabilities);**
    iii.   **Equity (e.g. measuring and addressing the technology gap, technological literacy)**
    iv.   **Student engagement;**
    v.   **Student wellness (e.g. challenges at home);**
    vi.   **Assessment and measures of success;**
    vii.   **Grade level differences;**
    viii.   **Lessons learned and improvements for school year 2020-2021 (e.g. preparation, content, synchronous vs. asynchronous learning, etc.)**

School Comments:

Introduction
On March 13th, 2020 schools across the state of Delaware fell under Governor Carney's public stay at home order due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This order prevented La Academia's in-person return to school through June 12th, its last student day for SY20.

Despite this unprecedented occurrence, La Academia stood poised to deliver its K-5, DDOE approved, standards based McGraw Hill curriculum –*Maravillas/Wonders & Mis Matematicas*-online. Fortunately, every print resource in the curriculum was available digitally making the *technical* transition from face to face, in person delivery to online as seamless as it could be.

Also, it happened to be, that in October 2019, prior to the pandemic, La Academia had already improved to a 1:1 technology school. Seeking to eliminate the digital divide, and committed to having La Academia's students technologically literate by 5th grade, in September 2019 La Academia purchased enough iPads and Chromebooks to allow each enrolled student to have assigned their own iPad / Chromebook.   This purchase ensured individualized access for every student to McGraw Hill's digital course materials, as well as to La Academia's supplementary reading, language support and math platforms, *Imagine Language Learning, Imagine Reading & Dreambox*. Individual student accessibility to these platforms was key to our 2020 educational plan. 1:1 technology would enable us to differentiate instruction and, therefore, provide students diverse avenues for acquiring their second language, as well as to their reading and math content depending on student readiness levels. Up until the pandemic, this plan had La Academia experiencing an upswing in student engagement, motivation and performance in the classroom.

Challenges
Our educational plan for SY20 was set, solid and working up until the spring of 2020. We had a vision, created a coordinated direction, secured the organizational and financial resources to accomplish the goals we had set for ourselves as an institution. Then the pandemic hit posing extraordinary challenges for us that we never saw coming. These included, but were not limited to the following:

1. ***Parents, teachers and administrators working & teaching young children from home:***
   From March to June 2020, parents at La Academia faced the daunting task of supporting their students with their learning so they would not fall behind during the remote only period. As a majority of our parents made up a significant portion of the essential workforce, and were overrepresented in industries at the epicenter of COVID-19 outbreaks, they could not telework. Instead, they were made to balance the demands of their work outside the home with no childcare- including our own teachers and administrators with young children. As school leaders, we were challenged to know how to resolve this tension. Overnight we were asking parents, teachers and staff to do what felt was not humanly possible. Clearly, working, parenting, and teaching were three different jobs that could not be done at the same time.   It wasn't hard because parents, teachers and administrators were doing it wrong. It was hard because it was frankly too much, unsustainable and all we could do was the best we could do- and so we did.

2. ***Ensuring Mastery of Content:*** A second challenge was how to ensure our students, who are all second language learners (SLL's), completed and mastered the same amount of material they would have under normal/ face to face/in person circumstances- remotely. Because SLL's have additional hurdles to jump besides having to learn content, La Academia students are used to working in highly engaged, social learning classrooms using Kagan structures -instructional strategies to promote second language acquisition by ensuring cooperation & communication between students. How would these strategies translate in a remote setting? Additionally, in a physical classroom, when students struggle they receive one-to-one and small group instruction depending on language levels (sometimes with the support of a paraprofessional who speaks their L1), and are provided materials expressly designed for their language learning ability, i.e. books that are visually heavy and text light. What would our teachers do for students now-remotely?

In addition, the transition to an entire online curriculum *every day* required significant teacher *training, skill*, and *time* – none of which we had in the spring of 2020.

3. *Attending to the physical, psychological, and social-emotional wellbeing of La Academia's community:*

La Academia serves primarily a Latino and Black community. When you analyze these ethnic and racial groups by culture, values and behaviors, the first thing that is evident is the emphasis on family and community. At La Academia we all feel like a tight knit tribe, all equal, all rowing in the same direction to reach our goals. Each of us- students, parents, teachers and staff alike-contribute to this environment in a unique way. We all make a difference.

In March 2020, this pandemic changed us and changed the world - to say the least. It upended our everyday lives in unimaginable ways- not only how our students learned and our teachers taught, but how we interacted as a community as well. It engendered unprecedented levels of sorrow in our community- profound feelings of loss of normalcy and connection. It hit us hard and we grieved-collectively and individually. We managed issues of teacher, student and family stress, addiction, depression, physical health, abuse, loneliness and isolation while continuing to expect performance, innovation, emotional and physical engagement. This notion was flawed and untenable, imbalanced and illusory to say the least- but we did the best that we could do.

4. *Food Insecurity for our low income familie*s:

With the pandemic, La Academia's low income families were, now more than ever, at risk for access to food and basic needs. Students that normally depended on, and received, free breakfast and lunch at school were deeply affected by the extended school closure, and yet the demands for them and their families to achieve, to accomplish and perform persisted. Despite best efforts to distribute weekly food boxes and personal care items, we were well aware of the impact of the situation on student attention span, ability to study, cognitive function and their social-emotional state. And while La Academia made efforts to provide for its children and families -more always needed to be done.

5. *English Language Learners (ELL's):*

La Academia serves primarily a population of students who faced some of the greatest challenges during the spring months of the pandemic; those in low income households, those with disabilities and those who speak a language other than English at home. Even in-person, with extraordinary levels of support, ELL's face tremendous hurdles. Now remotely, we knew the many barriers that could potentially shut these students out from the learning process as strategies that teachers use with ELL's in the classroom simply do not translate to an online environment.

As such, we knew it was essential to maintain and deepen our personal relationships with our children and families. The more that we could stay connected with them, the more they would stay connected with the school. We, therefore, identified communication with our families as our lever. We ensured all newly created student/family resources were provided in both English and Spanish - from our Distance Learning Portal, https://sites.google.com/academiacharter.org/laacademiadistantlearning/home, to our Parent Hotline, from our weekly Parent Coffees with the Executive Director to our instructional resources. We used phone calls, Google hangouts, FaceTime and Zoom, just to name a few, and it worked- as reflected by 94.5% student participation on school platforms **(See Chart 1 Below)** and parent involvement in virtual school events and coffees with the Executive Director.

6. ***Setting up a school-like environment at home- quiet spaces to work-while distance learning:***
   Connecting with our 22 homeless families and educating our 46 homeless students during the spring of 2020 was especially challenging, and not in a good way. In normal times, when teaching was face to face/in-person, it would be teachers constantly checking in with our Family Crisis Therapist, School Counselor and Dean of Student Support saying, *hey, you know, so-and-so fell asleep in class today,* or, *I'm not sure she's getting enough to eat. You might want to check in.* But during remote learning, much of that connection was lost and that was just the tip of the iceberg. To work remotely, of course we gave *all* of our students in need their assigned devices, however, they still needed some kind of access to the internet. Our homeless parents reported that many of the homeless shelters, like the hotels in which they were staying- didn't have good Wi-Fi, and that was not even the biggest issue. Many of these shelters had a rule that said during the day, if a parent or caregiver left the shelter to go to work, the child(ren) had to leave, too. And because of the state emergency, many of the low-cost child care options that families used to have were closed too. It left these parents/caregivers with impossible choices. The truth was, school was not realistic for these students- bouncing from house to house, motel to motel, shelter to shelter day to day, week to week, month to month.

Meeting the Challenges: La Academia's Performance Against its Remote Learning Plan

i. <u>**Content Mastery**</u>

During the spring of 2020, La Academia stood poised to support its students with **Content Mastery,** despite the school closure. We began by designing a Distance Learning Portal, (https://sites.google.com/academiacharter.org/laacademiadistantlearning/home), to provide students and families a means to connect to La Academia's DDOE approved curriculum- McGraw Hills *Maravillas, Wonders & Mis Matematicas,* as well as other critical resources. This portal facilitated teaching and learning across all subject areas including Social Studies, Science and Expressive Arts, as well as provided a bridge to Special Education Services, including Occupational and Speech Therapy. It served as a repository for daily/ weekly student schedules, assignments, zoom links and much more. It included teacher and staff email addresses, hotline numbers for main office and technology support, as well as ELL, Parent, COVID-19, food distribution, community and mindfulness resources for students, families, teachers and staff alike. And beyond *that,* it built unimaginable capacity in our system, encouraging our students to be independent, enabling them to curate content that was relevant to them and allowing them to communicate and connect with their teachers, other caring adults in the staff at La Academia and, equally as important, their peers- at times across grades.

During the spring of 2020, teachers at La Academia experienced profound stress- whether they were 20-year veterans or first year teachers. They were thrust into the unenviable position of retooling our curricula to support online delivery- literally overnight. They were asked to do things they could have never anticipated to ensure our students mastered content including teaching a minimum of 4/45 minute classes daily, sometimes to 25 or more students at a time, fully online. Synchronously and asynchronously, students worked on E-Book and digital workbook assignments, were provided leveled readers, played skilled based games and were given summative assessments to track student progress and mastery of skills and inform instruction and professional development.

Teaching, however, is not just about content for our students, it was also about tailoring and differentiating instruction for each child to ensure real growth and learning- even remotely. This

meant every teacher was busy creating lessons in multiple formats, and the lessons had to be rich in content and efficient in delivery. It was a process that on a daily basis required:

- Adapting existing resources or finding new ones;
- Revising student work and providing students daily/weekly feedback through the *Wonders, Maravillas & Mis Matematicas* platforms;
- Reviewing and providing feedback to students on student recordings and writing responses regarding progress in their personalized pathways in *Imagine Learning Language & Literacy*;
- Assigning digital coin awards to students to motivate and engage them in the *Imagine Learning Language & Literacy & Imagine Español* blended learning language supplemental programs. (Note: Students in 4th & 5TH grade working above grade level participated in *Imagine Reading*, a project based literacy program which provided cross curriculum articles in Science and Social Studies for students who finished the entire *Imagine Learning Language & Literacy* curriculum. A total of 25 students in these two grades combined participated in this curriculum, an unexpected and much celebrated accomplishment, particularly during a pandemic.)
- Monitored *Dreambox* data weekly to ensure Math Delaware's Common Core Standards were differentiated for students.

Even before this COVID environment, teachers were not ending their day at 4 p.m. Now, they were working well beyond the bedtimes of the children they were teaching and spending weekends refining instructional delivery, contacting parents, and grading schoolwork / reviewing the next day's lessons. Many teachers sacrificed time with their own families to do this experiencing and coping with remarkable amounts of stress and angst. They went above and beyond for the children of La Academia with no playbook for schooling during such a time.

As La Academia staggered into an unprecedented experiment with distance learning, with all of the hiccups and false starts that it entailed, teachers and school administrators alike wrestled with a question deeply at the heart of the learning enterprise: How were we supposed to assign grades/assess content mastery? It was a tough call-especially in a year of *hold harmless.* With students having varying types and intensity of interaction with their teachers, and internet access ranging from decent to nonexistent- given just these disparities alone, not to mention the many challenges described above, La Academia decided that student's end of year Digital Platform Participation Report **(See Appendix A)** would reflect student participation in Zoom, and performance data from McGraw Hill, Imagine Learning & Dreambox platforms. In June parents were sent their student's progress report along with their child's fall/ winter MAP data, Imagine Learning fall/winter/spring literacy, oral & academic vocabulary benchmark data and achievement certificates **(See Appendix B)** for books read, activities completed and vocabulary learned on the platforms.

In SY20, we also welcomed two **Reading Assist AmeriCorps** members to work with our most seriously challenged, Tier 3 readers - delivering high quality, multisensory reading instruction five days per week/45 minutes per day in person until March 2020 when the pandemic hit, then via Zoom.

Lastly, in the summer of 2020, in an attempt to make up for learning lost, La Academia offered free summer school for students K-4- fully on line. This program intended to help students catch up with important skills in ELA & Math, but was not mandatory. It was simply an expanded offer for our students and an extra income opportunity for our teachers.

ii.   **Addressing learning gaps (e.g. serving students with disabilities)**

Throughout the school closure, La Academia's Special Education students continued to receive the same services they had before going fully remote in the spring of 2020. Students eligible for special education received one to one instruction- virtually. La Academia's remote only model included equitable access to specialized instruction and related services for students with disabilities as they had access to general education standards while continuing to demonstrate progress toward IEP goals.

Special Education staff collaborated creatively with regular classroom teachers to effectively meet the needs of students with IEP's. This included providing distance learning instruction, tele-therapy, and tele-intervention. Special Education personnel met weekly with the Educational Diagnostician to receive professional development and better understand and address the needs of these students.

Regular classroom teachers also provided differentiated instruction, not only to our Special Ed students, but also to our ELL students through the McGraw Hill platform. Our McGraw Hill platform has curricular leveled readers, and skill focused interactive games at four different levels: Above Grade Level, On grade Level, Approaches and ELL. These leveled readers were assigned according to the student's reading level as determined by their fall and winter MAP scores, formative assessments and student performance on ACCESS and Imagine Learning Benchmarks, thus making instruction appropriate to student's needs -even in a remote learning situation. The Imagine Learning Language Support programs provided each of our Special Education & ELL students with a personalized blended pathway according to their needs, regardless of their grade level, while teaching the Common Core Standards. These platforms supported language development – in English and Spanish – across the four domains-listening, speaking, reading & writing. For math we used the blended learning personalized platform *Dreambox*. Through Dreambox, all students, including students with disabilities, engaged in standards based, interactive lessons to ensure mastery in algebraic thinking, conceptual understanding and procedural fluency with adaptive technology.

### iii.   Equity (e.g. measuring and addressing the technology gap, technological literacy)

Across the nation, the messy transition to remote learning in March 2020, was marked by glaring disparities between the poor and the wealthy. Gaps in basic technology access were particularly stark along socioeconomic lines in communities like ours that need quality schooling the most. For example, over two thirds of our student population lacked proper technology devices /access to internet connection at home. As such, La Academia held three drive-up device distribution events for families who, through a school wide survey, indicated a need for computers at home for their children. The devices distributed ranged from iPads for Kindergarteners to Chromebooks for student's grades 1-5. In addition to IPad's and Chromebooks, students were also provided with other basic school materials such as dry erase boards, pencils, crayons, erasers, notecards, and notebooks to facilitate the remote only learning experience.

Learning the ins and outs of the technology that was required of our parents to assist their children dur remote learning was a daunting task for the vast majority, if not all, of our parents. To assist them, teachers and administrators alike created videos and screencastify recordings for how to log in and navigate the school's digital McGraw Hill and La Academia's new Distance Learning Portal. A bilingual technology hotline was also implemented and proved very helpful in supporting and assisting parents develop the new technical understandings the times were demanding. At our weekly Zoom Coffees wit the Executive Director, it was inspiring to see parents exchange contact information to share tips, offer support and help one another become teachers for their children through these difficult times. I am

thrilled to say that as a result of these exchanges, a Facebook Bilingual Parent Support Group emerged and continues to this day (SY21).

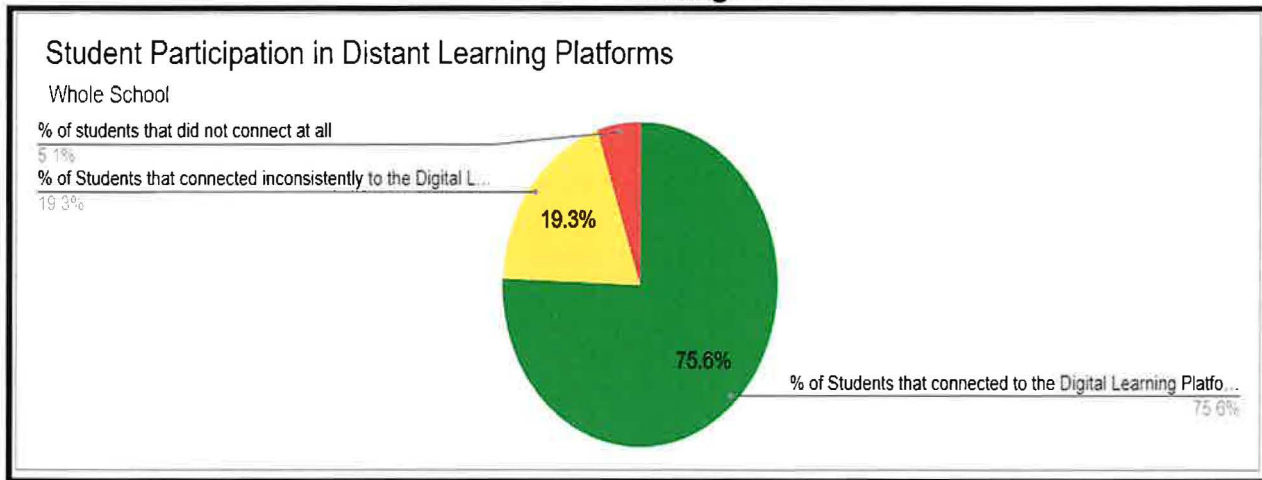### iv. Student Engagement and Participation

CHART 1: Academia Antonia Alonso's Student Participation in SY20 by Grade on Distance Learning Platforms

Student Participation in Distant Learning Platforms
By Grade Level Kindergarten to 5th grade
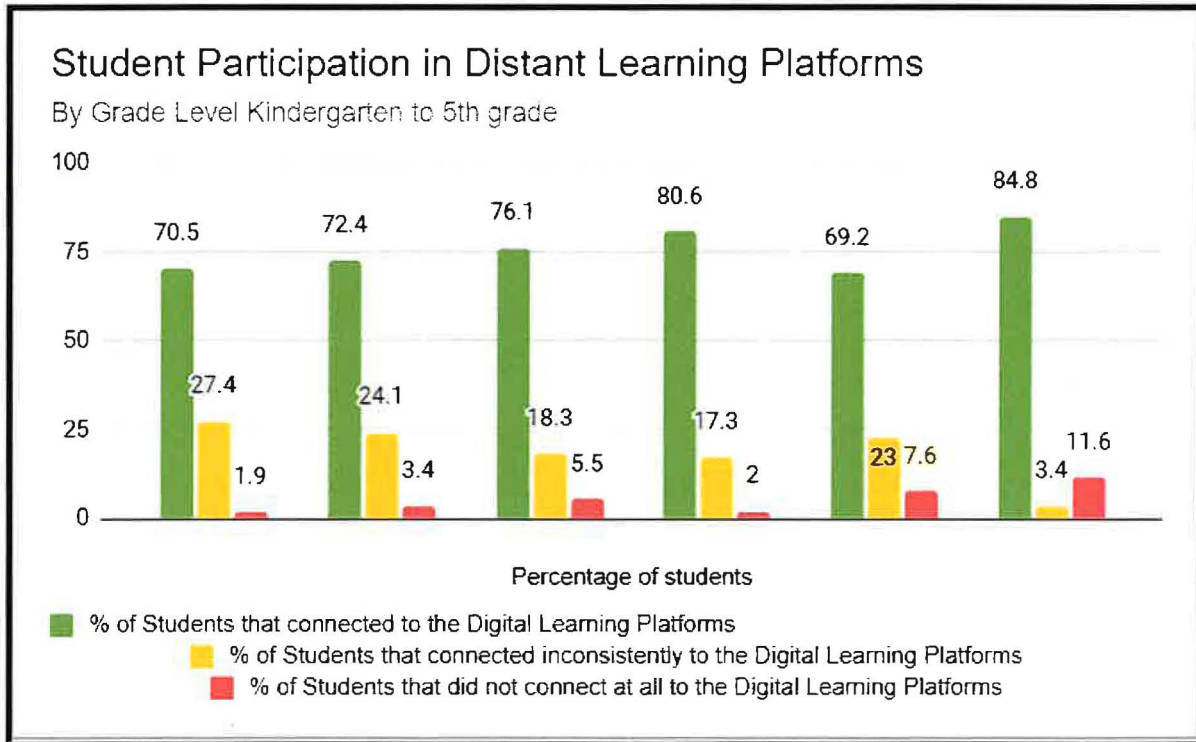
Committed to tracking student participation (See Chart 1 Above) during this remote period between March 30th-June 12,2020, we are encouraged to report that a total 94.5% of students engaged, in one form or another, with our instructional learning platforms from March to June 2020. An average of 75.6 % students across K-5 engaged *consistently* with a fluctuation between 70.5 % and 84.8 % depending on the grade level. An average of 19.3% connected inconsistently with a fluctuation between 1.9% and 11.6% depending on the grade level. An average of 5.1 % students in total did not participate at all on the platforms.

To ensure this level of engagement, La Academia charged a team of non- teaching staff to call parents/caregivers of non-participating students *daily* to encourage, check-in, and trouble shoot issues that were keeping their students from connecting. La Academia is very proud to have had such success and worked around the clock to ensure student participation despite this remote only period.

CHART 2: Academia Antonia Alonso's Student Whole School Participation in SY20 on Distance Learning Platforms

Student Participation in Distant Learning Platforms

Whole School

% of students that did not connect at all
5.1%

% of Students that connected inconsistently to the Digital L...
19.3%

19.3%

75.6%

% of Students that connected to the Digital Learning Platfo...
75.6%

We believe the following may explain the 5.1% students who did not participate at all (See Chart 2 Above):

1. **Access** – Students across the nation were living in homes that did not have access to Wi-Fi, or limited access at best. Although we lent students their assigned devices, without internet, the devices were useless. And although, at the time, the state was working feverishly to expand access, it didn't reach many fast enough.

2. **Taking care of their siblings** - If parents or caregivers were working because they were essential workers, it is possible that our students, particularly our 4th and 5th graders who had the highest percentage of non-participation, were caregiving for their siblings- helping those siblings do their classwork, or keeping siblings fed and safe.

3. **No place to learn.** Given our population of students, few have a bedroom, or space, to themselves. In fact, our students often live in apartments or houses where multiple families live. For many, there wasn't a quiet space where they are able to focus. Perhaps it was just easier to not connect with their teacher at all.

iv. Student Wellness

Ensuring content mastery and student engagement and participation during remote learning was not easy- to say the least- and involved paying attention not only to content and content delivery but equally, if not more importantly, to Student Wellness. We knew the multiple ways our students would be impacted by COVID-19 and the closure of our school, so it was critical that we remained mindful of their physical and social-emotional well-being as well. We knew we had to provide services beyond general academic instruction if our students were going to attain content mastery and La Academia's Student Support Team (SST) composed of the School Psychologist, Educational Diagnostician, School Counselor, Dean of School Culture, Dean of Student Support, and Family Crisis Therapist was poised to respond.

The SST met weekly to assess the social-emotional health, behavior, and academic needs of referred students. As teaching members of the community expressed concerns regarding academics, behavior, attendance, or access to basic needs, the SST designed, monitored, and adjusted intervention plans and/or connected students/families with appropriate resources and services.

In addition, on a bi-weekly basis, La Academia's Culture Team published an electronic newsletter, *The Culture Connection*, and accompanying videos, via Class Dojo & La Academia's Distance Learning Portal, with information and resources for supporting physical and social-emotional well-being while social distancing. *The Culture Connection* also led students/families, teachers/staff, through a series of Guided Breathing Practices to continue the school's commitment to Mindfulness practices while students were learning remotely.

Also, as a Compassionate School using the Responsive Classroom approach, La Academia continued to work to help students develop a language of feelings, needs and wants during this remote learning period. Teachers created scheduled time and safe virtual spaces for practicing compassionate listening, sharing, discussing and processing their experiences during Virtual Morning Meetings. Understanding the importance of fun and play in learning, the Compassionate Schools Team also created a weekly scheduled time during which students were able to gather virtually via Zoom to participate in fun activities, while eating lunch, creating social connections and building climate and community.

Furthermore, the School Counselor hosted weekly, grade level office hours during which students virtually connected and chatted with their peers. The Deans of School and the Social Emotional Learning Specialist also hosted weekly, virtual *Connect with Culture* sessions which were open to students and/or parents looking for resources/ simply wanting to check in and be in community.

Moreover, from October 2019-December 2019, our school counselor and six psychology doctoral externs began running 45-minute weekly skill building groups for students identified by concerned parents/teachers, or for students with a specific skill building goal on their IEP/ 504 Accommodation Plan. A second round of skill building groups met from January 2020-March 2020, right before the pandemic hit. These skill building groups focused on social-emotional skills critical for learning such as responsible decision making, managing strong feelings when triggered, turn taking, relationship skills, empathy and being kind to each other etc.

Sometimes the above mentioned skills are best taught individually rather than in a group setting. During SY20, the Mental Health Department at La Academia worked with 100 individual students on a regular basis. Students were served in either a skill based group setting or through individual sessions. A total of four goals were created to measure student growth. Three goals were created for all of the 100 students served in order to measure their growth. One goal was created specifically for 73 out of the 100 students who were served based on their individual goals as stated in their IEP/504.

 The goals were as follows:

Goal 1: Capacity to articulate feelings and needs both in group and within the classroom.
Goal 2: Capacity to self-regulate in group and within the classroom.
Goal 3: Capacity to tolerate frustration in group and within the classroom.
Goal 4: Other: Some students had individual IEP/504 goals

Summative data (See Chart 3 Below) was then calculated per goal, per student at the conclusion of each cycle of the skill based groups, and at the end of the year for students who were served through one on one counseling. The following graph shows the percentage of students who demonstrated growth towards these goal.

Chart 3: Individual Student Growth Towards Mental Health

Students' Growth Towards Mental Health Goals

Legend: ■ Student Demonstrating Growth   ■ Total Students Served   ■ Percentage Demonstrating Growth
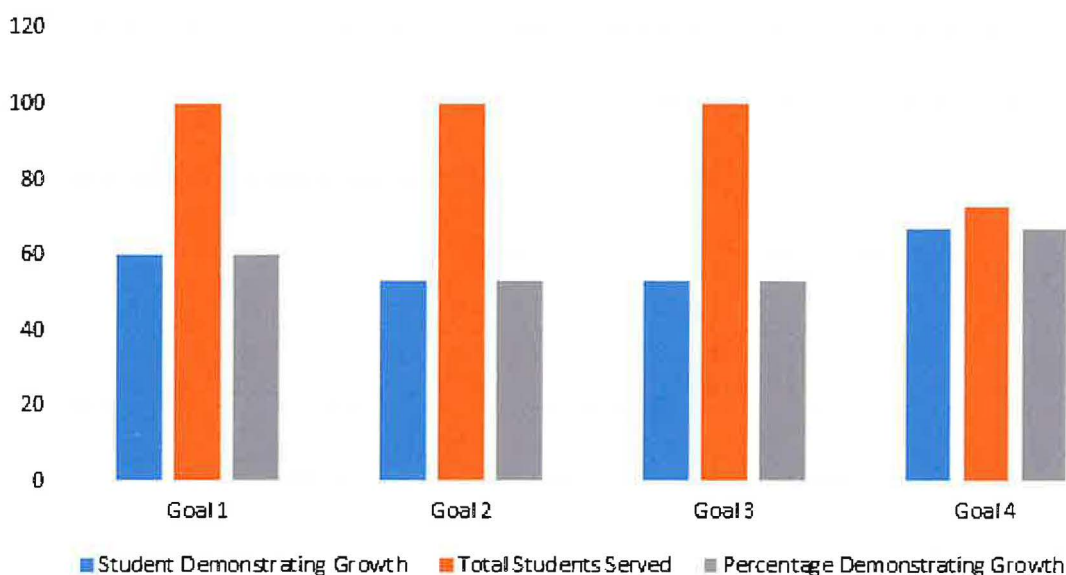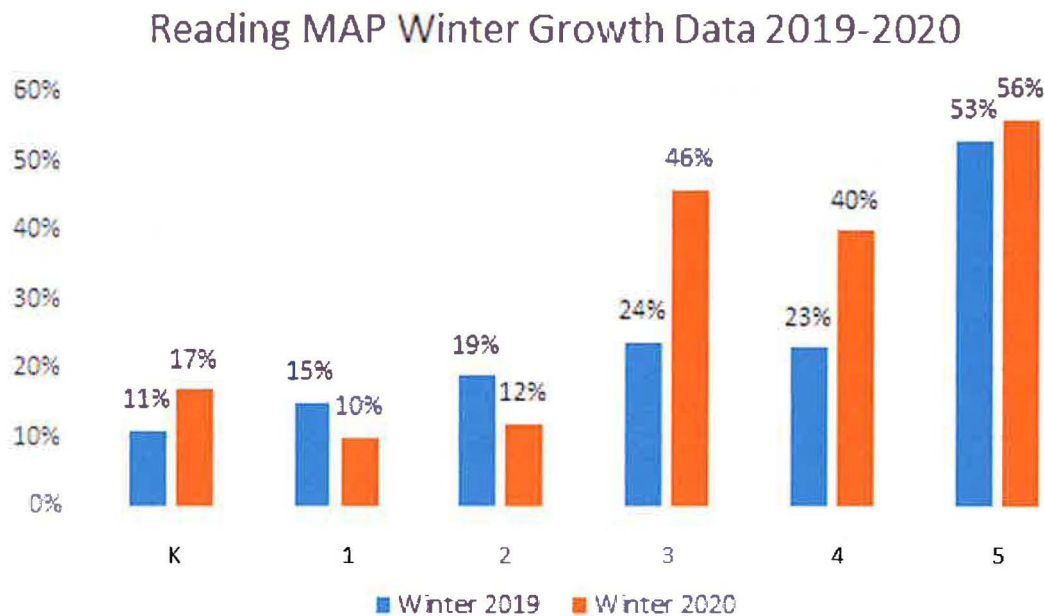
Lastly, La Academia partnered with the University of Delaware and St. Francis Health as part of the Lt. Governor's Health Program to offer services from the Community Health Mobile Van. The van made bi-monthly visits to La Academia's campus to offer free health screenings and services to our community both prior and during the spring of 2020. In the fall of 2020, the van returned on a monthly basis to offer the same free screenings and health services in addition to student physicals, small group programs for health related topics, and health education as part of our Parent University.

v.   Assessment and measures of success & Grade level differences

Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) Data

Every year La Academia students participate in MAP testing - a computer-adaptive skills assessment that provides parents, teachers and administrators with metrics to measure student growth and performance. Normally, this standardized test is administered three times a year for students K-5 in the Fall, Winter and Spring. For SY20, MAP was administered only in Fall and Winter due to the COVID-19 school closing. The results, therefore, shared in the graph below (See Chart 4) reflects only the winter scores of SY19 and SY20 for the purpose of data comparison.

CHART 4: Academia Antonia Alonso's Measure of Academic Progress Reading SY20 Winter Data

Reading MAP Winter Growth Data 2019-2020

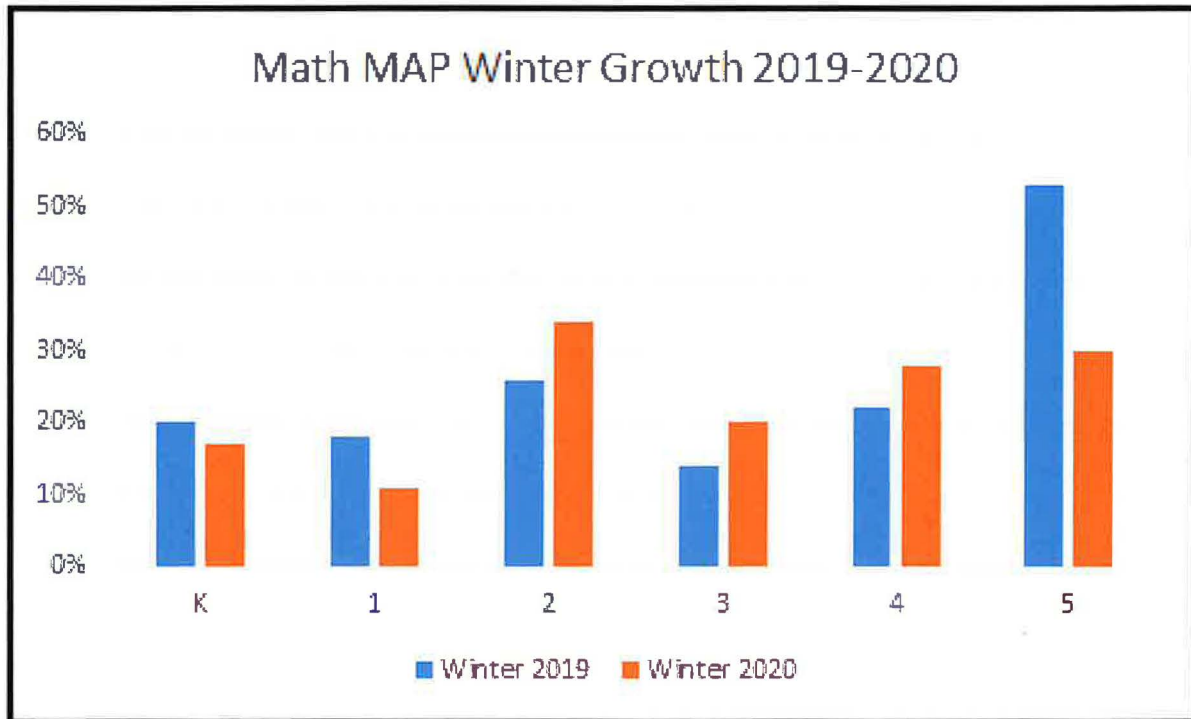| Grade	Winter 2019	Winter 2020
K	11%	17%
1	15%	10%
2	19%	12%
3	24%	46%
4	23%	40%
5	53%	56%

From Winter 2019 to Winter 2020, La Academia showed significant academic growth and performance in Kindergarten by 6%, third grade by 22%, fourth grade by 17%, and fifth grade by 3%. We attribute this growth to several factors.

- Given concerns with the SY18 MAP scores, the school's new Academic Dean adopted the Imagine Learning Language & Literacy Program for La Academia for SY19.
- Research has shown that Imagine Learning usage correlates directly with improvement in student reading skills, especially among English Language Learners.
- Students in the grades that showed growth, may be directly tied to those grade-level teachers who implemented the program with the greatest fidelity and therefore provided more consistent exposure to the curriculum.
- The decreased scored in grade 2 may be tied to students' adjustment to discontinued audio instruction – a necessary transition as students build their reading and literacy skills
- It is noted that MAP Growth testing for grades 2-5, administered in SY20, is a more rigorous and comprehensive test than the MAP Growth module for K-2, administered in SY19.

Chart 5: Academia Antonia Alonso's Measure of Academic Progress

**SY20 Math Winter Data**

Math MAP Winter Growth 2019-2020

From Winter 2019 to Winter 2020, La Academia showed growth in MAP Math in second grade by 10%, third grade by 7%, and fourth grade by 8% (See Chart 5 Above).

- The increase in SY20 is attributed to the adoption of Dreambox, a K-8 digital English/Spanish math program designed to provide rigorous and interactive adapted lessons for each student.
- Due to shipment delays with iPads, which were exclusively used in K-1, the transition to 1:1 technology did not occur in these grades until mid-year minimizing exposure to the curriculum resulting in loss of growth.
- Notable decrease in performance in grade 5 may be due to nearly ¼ of the students in grade 5 were 'dual-tagged' as English Learners and Special Ed – a cluster often challenged with wider achievement gaps.
- While increases in performance were not as significant in Math as in Reading, the good growth in grades 2, 3 & 4 is encouraging.

Imagine Learning Benchmark Data

Chart 6: Imagine Learning Benchmark Data Beginning and End of Year 2019-2020
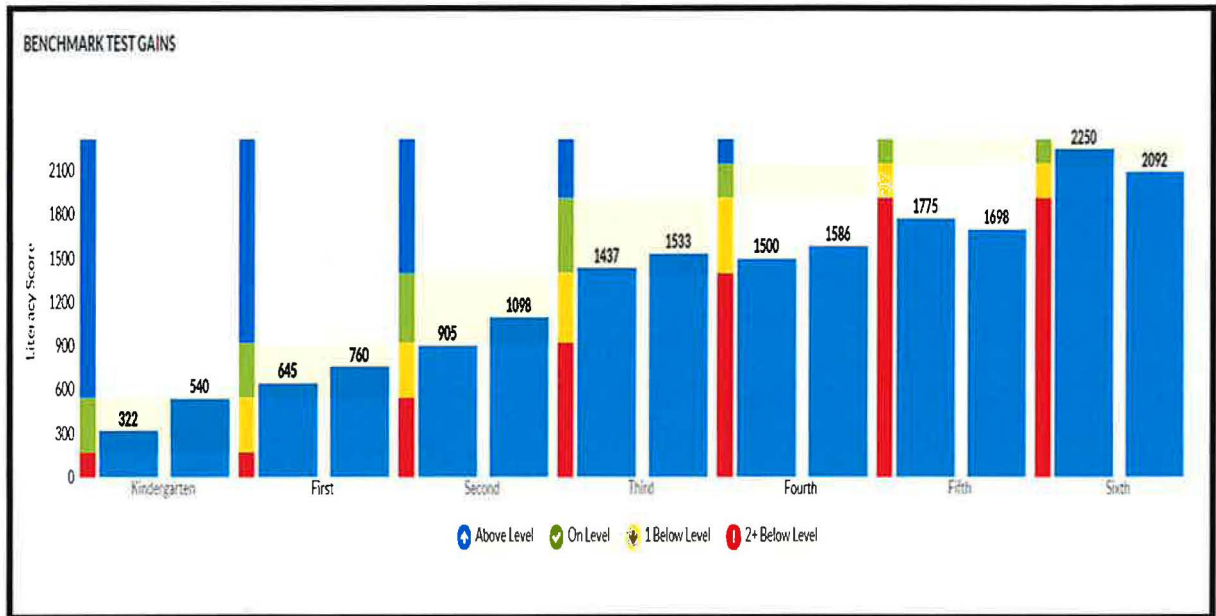
Imagine Language & Literacy is an adaptive learning program that accelerates reading and language proficiency for students in grades PreK–6. It is designed to supplement core literacy instruction and develop academic vocabulary and language skills through personalized pathways. *Imagine Language & Literacy* provides instruction and practice for students in all four domains of literacy—listening, speaking, reading and writing.

La Academia adopted Imagine Language & Literacy for all its students in SY20. When the pandemic interrupted instruction in March 2020, Imagine Learning Spanish was introduced as a pilot program to support Native English speakers who were acquiring Spanish as a second language.

The 2020 End of Year Imagine Learning (IL) Benchmark Data (See Chart 6 Above) indicates:

- La Academia students at the time were below grade level across grade levels. The green line reflects the target proficiency for benchmark by grade.
- Standardized tests that are not created with language proficiency limitations and acculturalization in mind limit students' ability to perform to standards.
- La Academia adopted IL to address students' individual needs and ensure equity and opportunity to assist with mastery of Delaware's Common Core Standards while addressing academic gaps and improving student language proficiency levels.
- Contrary to the limitations created with standardized assessments, IL's benchmark provides a more accurate picture of student performance- especially for students who are performing below grade level.

ACCESS Data

Academia Antonia Alonso had 335 English Language Learners (ELL's) in SY20 which represented 56.81% of our student population. The distribution of our students by proficiency levels is shown in the **Pie Chart 7 (See Below).** Most ELL students fell in the lowest proficiency levels as determined by the standardized **Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners. (ACCESS)** test.

- In SY20, La Academia had 52% of their ELL student population testing at the *Entering* and *Emerging* levels of proficiency meaning these students had very little English skills, or none at all. These students were represented mostly in grades K-2. Students at these levels of proficiency are seriously challenged to understand English instruction and, therefore, need a lot of language support.
- 37% of La Academia students tested in the *Developing* level. Students at this level have reached a proficiency where learning is more comprehensible in the domains of listening and speaking, but continue to struggle in the reading and writing fluency needed to master grade level content. Students who are *Developing*, therefore, need differentiated instruction to address their reading skills.
- No students tested *Fluent* on a level 5 or 6, which is considered proficiency similar to a native English speaker, making the number of students that exited in SY20 that much more remarkable.

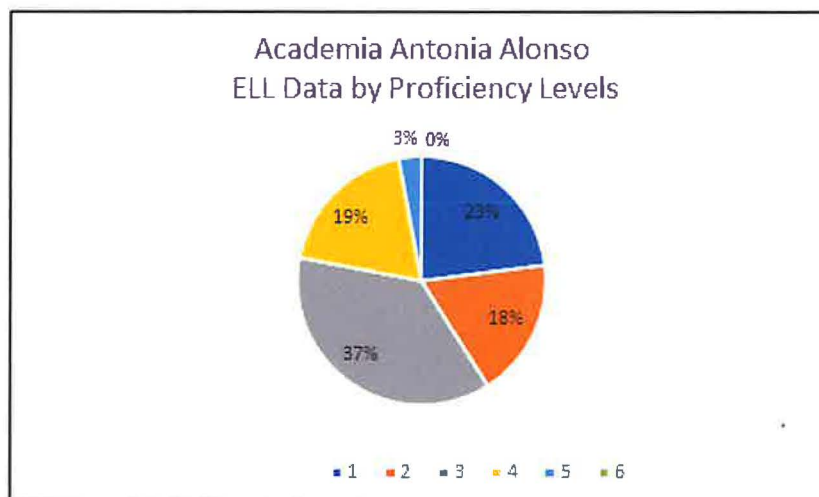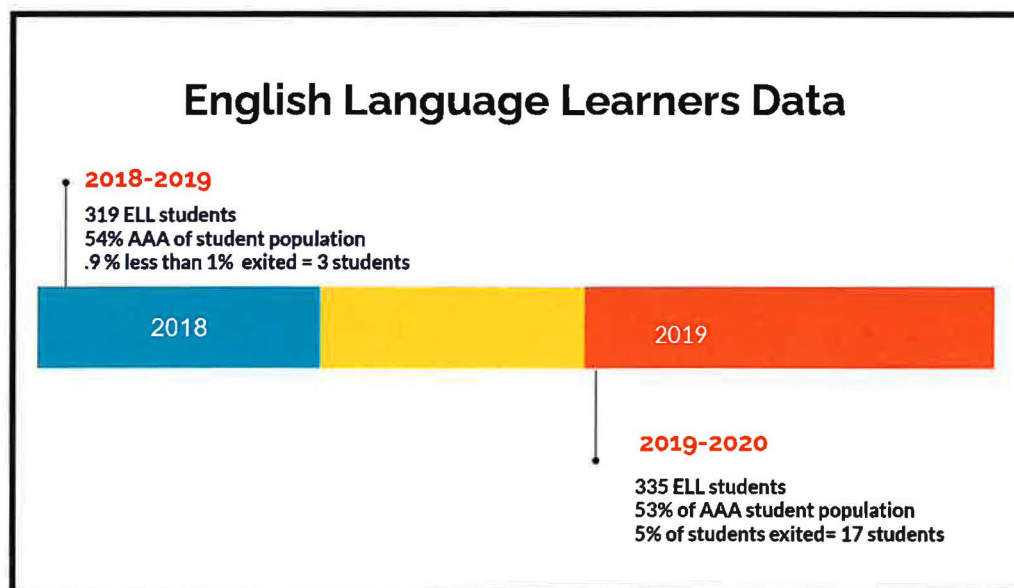**Pie Chart 7: ELL Student Distribution by ACCESS Levels of Proficiency 2019-2020**

Academia Antonia Alonso
ELL Data by Proficiency Levels

3% 0%
19%
23%
18%
37%

■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■ 6

Chart 8: Academia Antonia Alonso English Language Learner Data from SY19 and SY20.

English Language Learners Data

2018-2019

319 ELL students
54% AAA of student population
.9 % less than 1% exited = 3 students

2018		2019

2019-2020

335 ELL students
53% of AAA student population
5% of students exited= 17 students

- La Academia's ELL students showed remarkable growth on the Annual ACCESS Test for SY20 with **17 students** exiting as compared to SY19 with only 3 students exiting (See Chart 8 Above). The number of students exiting **represented a 400% growth from SY19 to SY20**.
- This growth may be attributed to more rigorous fidelity to the core curriculum and the implementation of La Academia's Imagine Learning and Kagan structures.

Lessons learned and improvements for school year 2020-2021 (preparation, content, synchronous vs. asynchronous learning etc.)

School Comments:

The shift to remote and hybrid instruction has given La Academia an opportunity to deepen its commitment to learner-centered approaches and building new strategies that will continue to be applied throughout SY21 and thereafter once all students are able to return to the school building at full capacity.

When we had to shift to remote, a learner-centered mindset was already there—the mindset of pulling small groups, developing independent learners and making students own their own learning-but it strengthened with the pandemic. This approach is what kept our students engaged in the spring of 2020 and our student participation on platforms high during this remote only period. Our student centered approach pushed us to make our curriculum user friendly through the Distance Learning period and the content easily accessible through our uniquely designed Distance Learning Portal; and through the Imagine Learning Suite, the material differentiated to meet students' individual needs.

Lessons learned from SY20 and continued practices for SY21 include:

1. It is critical for us to continue to **push ourselves to think of the many different ways a student can demonstrate what they know**- a writing assignment, a video, etc. Teaching is a profession where we like to control things, and there's been a lot of letting go of control during remote learning, which is building stronger, more-independent La Academia students.

2. We need to **continue to be creative with technology**. Some of the tools students learned during this remote period, like annotating text on Zoom—you would have never, ever seen in a classroom prior to the pandemic. During this remote only period, we have developed different technology skills in our students and teachers which we will continue to capitalize and build on new ones in 2021.

3. **Targeted support and explicit instruction are key**. Many La Academia teachers started recording themselves modeling tasks /delivering short lessons and posting these video recordings on our Distance Learning Portal / their virtual classrooms for students. Both the virtual classrooms and screencast videos are practices that teachers continued into SY21 remotely and will likely keep when students return to campus in person. Not only do these approaches allow students review instructions/access resources whenever *they* need to, but it helps them work more independently without relying on teachers to find/answer basic questions. Some students just really thrive working on their own, and providing self-directed learning opportunities for these students is key.

4. Other students struggle a bit more and lack the skillset needed for more independent learning. In the spring of 2020, these students needed **extra guidance & support from non-teaching staff who served as advisors/mentors for these more at risk students**. During the spring of 2020, non-teaching staff were assigned students of concern to check-in daily/weekly to play games, check in and say, *how are you? How was your day? What are you doing this weekend? Are you needing anything?* Assigning students of concern with advisors/mentors is an initiative that we remain committed to in SY21 and beyond.

5. **Project Based Learning (PBL) is still possible- virtually, but we're learning**. Making the shift to virtual project-based learning requires a dramatic shift to focusing on soft skills like time management, critical thinking, planning, goal-setting, and persistence. Although challenging, in SY21 we are making gains, in both qualities of work and nurturing student ability to work independently on regular projects -virtually.

6. In the spring of 2020, COVID-19 created a crisis in family well-being. With the school closure, our children, and children around the world, remained home placing a stress factor on parents' capacity for tolerance. In an effort to support La Academia parents, we transitioned our in-person weekly Coffees with the Executive Director- online. These Coffees **allow parents to share their anxieties and fears, their needs and wants** and proved supportive in creating community and helping parents/caregivers cope with this devastating situation/time. As a result, this experience inspired us to begin SY21 with a new initiative we call Parent University, www.academiacharterschool.org.

Parent University is a La Academia community collaborative to help families become full partners in their children's education. We partner with community agencies and organizations to offer free information sessions, family events and activities that equip families with new or

additional skills, knowledge, resources and confidence to work with the many challenges parenting, and a pandemic, bring. Parent University offers free, informative content to parents that aligns to the following four areas:

- **Parenting Awareness** – Workshops in this area explore how parents can support their child's academic opportunities as well as challenges their children are facing during these unprecedented times.
- **Helping Your Child Learn in the 21st Century** – Workshops in this area are designed to empower parents to raise confident, educated children ready for the 21st century.
- **Health and Wellness** – These offerings provide information and activities to help families build healthy lifestyles – physically and emotionally.
- **Personal Growth and Development** – These workshops are designed to help parents/caregivers grow personally and professionally so they can become the most effective advocate for their children.

7. **It is important to take care of your employees.** In the fall of SY19, La Academia launched the first phase of the School Mindfulness Project. During this first phase, a portion of the faculty and staff participated in weekly Mindfulness classes with the goal of increasing work satisfaction and decreasing burn out. Participating staff and faculty reported increased feelings of wellness which in turn helped to support their ability to manage misbehavior before it escalated to a behavior incident requiring a referral. Given the positive qualitative and quantitative data regarding the classes, La Academia is determined to continue to build Mindfulness capacity with the remaining faculty and staff during SY21. Given the overwhelming levels of stress and anxiety the faculty/staff are experiencing due to the pandemic, it is of the utmost importance that teachers have continued opportunities for personal care, mental health resources and support.
8. **Some students work better with/need hard copy material.** During the spring of 2020, we learned that many parents and students worked better/preferred hard copy materials to completing work online. As such, in SY21 we ordered hard copy workbooks of our *Wonders/Maravillas* & *Mis Matematicas* curriculum for students K-5. Workbooks were distributed, along with student devices in the Fall of 21SY. However, expensive this was in terms of budget, it was well worth it as far as the increase in participation we have experienced in remote this year.

There is no question this pandemic has been a hardship, but it has come with creative opportunities. If La Academia misses these opportunities to learn and innovate it would be devastating for us as educational institution. Our children, now more than ever, need bold and creative solutions to the ever-growing challenges this pandemic will continue to present for years to come.

Performance Agreement

Academic Performance Expectations

Academia Antonia Alonso Charter School's 2016-17 overall academic ratings are: Approaching Standard

- Academic Achievement: Needs Improvement
- Growth: N/A
- On Track to Graduation: Exceeds Standard
- College and Career: N/A

By September 2022, our expectation is to achieve overall ratings of "Meets" or "Exceeds" standard as measured by the Delaware School Success Framework. Each year, we will show growth within our overall rating putting us on track to achieve our academic performance expectations. This progress will be monitored through our annual performance review.

a) Discuss the school's academic performance based on its approved Performance Agreement (see above).

School Comments
In SY19, Academia Antonia Alonso was rated *Well Below Expectations* in the area of academic achievement- according to Smarter Balanced (SB) scores. Our scores in Reading decreased from 23% in SY18 to 16% proficiency in ELA in SY19. In Academic Progress, our percentage also decreased from 71% to 52%. On the other hand, we still met expectations in Progress Toward English Language Proficiency with 74%.

Again, we believe, the lack of stable leadership - with the transition to its 7th leader at the start of SY19 - greatly impacted these results. SY19 was fraught with competing needs ranging from improving organizational effectiveness to hiring, from professional development to truancy - just to name a few.

With the 2020 pandemic La Academia, and schools around the world, are certainly concerned with learning loss and how it will affect student achievement in SY21- no question. La Academia's leadership will continue, however, to focus on building capacity- i.e. focus on initiatives to improve and strengthen responsive classroom and core teaching practices, strengthening the organizational and learning climate, engaging students and parents, and increase community involvement.

2.2 Academic Achievement

Metric	Value	Points	Points Earned

Due to COVD-19, all SY 19/20 assessment and accountability requirements have been waived by the U.S. Department of Education.

Respond to the following questions.

a) Based on the school's Academic Achievement ratings over the course of the school year, discuss the school's current performance and provide explanations/root causes (positive and negative) for the results. Please include local assessment data if applicable.

School Comments

b) Looking ahead, what are your expected outcomes for Academic Achievement and what steps will you take to achieve them?

School Comments

c) Describe how you will measure progress to determine whether you are on track to meet your expected Academic Achievement outcomes?

School Comments

2.3 Academic Progress

Metric	Value	Points	Points Earned

Due to COVD-19, all SY 19/20 assessment and accountability requirements have been waived by the U.S. Department of Education.

Respond to the following questions.

a) Based on the school's Academic Progress for all students over the course of the school year, discuss the school's current performance and provide at least three explanations/root causes for the results (Note: We invite the school to provide information about all students including those below, at and above proficiency.)

School Comments

b) Looking ahead, what are your expected outcomes for Academic Progress for all students and what steps will you take to achieve them?

School Comments

c) Describe how you will measure progress to determine whether you are on track to meet your expected Academic Progress outcomes for all students.

School Comments

2.4 School Quality/ Student Success

Metric	Value	Points	Points Earned

Due to COVD-19, all SY 19/20 assessment and accountability requirements have been waived by the U.S. Department of Education.

Respond to the following questions.

a) Based on the school's School Quality/ Student Success ratings over the course of the school year, discuss the school's current performance and provide explanations/root causes (positive and negative) for the results.

School Comments

b) Looking ahead, what are your expected outcomes for School Quality/ Student Success and what steps will you take to achieve them?

School Comments

c) Describe how you will measure progress to determine whether you are on track to meet your expected School Quality/ Student Success outcomes.

School Comments

2.5 Progress toward English language proficiency (ELP) * new

Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, every school was measured on student "Progress toward English language proficiency (ELP)" This metric is an index calculation that measures the percentage of all current ELs who make annual progress toward ELP as measured by the statewide ELP assessment. ELP is defined as scoring a PL of 5.0 on the statewide ELP assessment. Attainment has been defined in Delaware as a PL of 5.0 and a level in which a student is considered to have met a proficiency level comparable to their native English speaking peers. <u>Therefore, a PL of 5.0 is considered a student's Attainment Target (AT).</u>

Metric	Value	Points	Points Earned
Due to COVD-19, all SY 19/20 assessment and accountability requirements have been waived by the U.S. Department of Education.			

Respond to the following questions.

a)   Based on your Progress toward English language proficiency (ELP) ratings over the course of the school year, discuss the school's current performance and provide explanations/root causes for the results. Please include local assessment data if applicable.

School Comments

b)   Looking ahead, what are your expected outcomes for Progress Toward English language proficiency (ELP) and what steps will you take to achieve them?

School Comments

c)   Describe how you will measure progress to determine whether you are on track to meet your expected Progress toward English language proficiency (ELP) outcomes.

School Comments

III. ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

The Organizational Performance Framework reflects expectations the charter school is required to meet through state and federal law and the charter performance agreement, and seeks to provide information regarding these key questions:

- Is the school organizationally sound and well operated?
- Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations and sound public stewardship?
- Is the school meeting its obligations and expectations for appropriate access, education, support services, and outcomes for students with disabilities?

3.1 Mission Specific Goal(s)

Is the school faithful to its mission as defined in its current charter, including approved mission-specific academic goals if applicable?

Mission Specific Goal Reflection 2019-2020SY
Academia Antonia Alonso Charter School (AAACS)
Submitted: July 15, 2020

Mission: *Inspiring children to become joyful, confident, creative, bilingual learners, helping them develop a strong bi-literate academic and cultural foundation.*

Measure: Students will develop into fully bi-literate students by the end of fifth grade.

Meets Standard: 100% of learning expeditions/case studies each year will include at least one element of Hispanic culture (field trip, culture study, expert, music, writing, project etc.), 95% of the students will demonstrate their learnings and increased understand of culture at their Celebration of Learning in both English and Spanish.

Self-Rating: MET

a) Rate the school's performance according to the criteria established by the school for its 2019-2020 mission specific goal(s).

School Comments
Academia Antonia Alonso Charter School is a Dual Language school whose mission is to *inspire children to become joyful, confident, creative, bilingual learners, helping them to develop a strong bilingual academic and cultural foundation.*

Based on the criteria mentioned above, we rate our school's performance during SY20 at a *Meets Standards* for the following reasons:

1. La Academia continues the use of two languages, English & Spanish, for instruction through its Reading series, *Maravillas/ Wonders* and Math series *Mis Matematicas/My Math*. Through these curricula, students are taught literacy and academic content in English and Spanish, while achieving academic growth and linking culture and learning. As such, La Academia classrooms reflect a wonderful diversity of cultures. This diversity is reflected in text selections, multicultural libraries in classrooms, pen pal programs and through the celebration

of cultures with other dual language schools like Odyssey Charter. These efforts our teachers put forth to ensure multicultural understanding creates mutual respect among students, positive working environments in classrooms and prepares students for a multitude of roles in the diverse world we live in.

2. La Academia engages students in Social Studies/Science project based units in which they research, produce content-specific writings and present for authentic audiences in both English and Spanish. For example, every year for Hispanic Heritage Celebration and Black History Month, La Academia adds a new multicultural element to these events. Events like these bring our community together and unify us through learning and celebration reminding us of the wonderful diverse community which is La Academia.

3. La Academia's ongoing and proven commitment to giving students a true multicultural education through its Expressive Arts Program including Art, Music, and Capoeira- also helps us honor, celebrate and promote learning of other cultures and languages. For example, La Academia's yearly holiday concert, and mostly all La Academia celebrations, feature student performances in English, Spanish and Portuguese, as well as typical dances/martial arts from Central and South America- most specifically Brazil.

(**NOTE**: It is important to mention that La Academia shifted its focus away from Expeditionary Learning in the fall of 2017. As a result, the learning expeditions and case studies mentioned in the Mission Reflection Goals Section above were replaced with Project Based Learning student centered pedagogy. -Modification Approved November 2017.)

b) Provide as **Appendix 1** the results (data source) of the school's mission specific goal(s). Remember not to include any personally identifiable information (PII).

V. INNOVATION

Describe the school's innovative practices that could be replicated at other schools in Delaware. Please include the data that supports the success of these practices.

Creating and sustaining a culture of innovation is a difficult challenge in any organization. It takes valuing continuous learning, risking and being willing to make mistakes, owning and learning from them, and then planning and executing a new way forward.   Innovation requires remaining malleable, curious, open to being constantly challenged- and a willingness to step into the unknown for the sake of what you believe in. At La Academia we believe in children. Children make us courageous and push us to overcome our fears of change and inspire us to think out of the proverbial box. Making innovation and continuous learning part of La Academia's culture hasn't been immediate or easy, but it has been dramatic.

I.   School Mindfulness Project (SMP)

The 2019-2020SY for La Academia was a year of invention and advancement. It started with bringing a vision to life **- the implementation of the School Mindfulness Project (SMP).** The SMP is an education based initiative based in Philadelphia for underserved schools. Its programing provides students and teachers with greater physical and emotional well-being by providing a foundation in mindfulness and movement to promote student academic success and teacher well-being.

The dream to bring a mindfulness curriculum to La Academia was born the day La Academia first opened its doors. On that day, it became abundantly clear that La Academia was not only going to be a place of growing and learning for students, but a refuge from hunger, abuse and trauma. Understanding this, its founding members began a quest to discover a resource to address the psychological and social- emotional needs of its students while, simultaneously, supporting and caring for the well-being of its teachers.

Having learned about the SMP through a network of colleagues, the current Board President applied to bring the five-year Project to La Academia. In 2017, La Academia was honored to be chosen as one of three schools in the Tri-State region to participate in the Project.

The Aim of the Project:

The Project has five phases with two sets of goals in mind- one for teachers, and the other for students. Through participation in the Project, at the end of the five years:

1. **Teachers** will be able to use their mindful skill set to enhance student life and success, and experience:

    - More receptive classroom climates
    - Improved rapport with their students
    - Ease of classroom management
    - Improved ability to reduce their own stress
    - Greater job satisfaction

- Improved self-awareness
- Increased student engagement

2. Student-related behavioral outcomes include improved ability to focus, self-regulate, and make skillful choices, as well as:

- Improved attendance
- Improved mental health
- Greater empathy
- Improved academic performance
- Fewer reported "serious behavioral incidents"
- Fewer behavioral and medical referrals

About Round 1, Phase 1 of the Project: The Mindful Teacher Immersion

In October 2019 during the 2020SY, during round one Phase 1 of the SMP, a combination of 19 teachers & staff at La Academia partook in a 6-week program of yoga sessions where they were introduced to and learned yoga and mindfulness techniques. Sessions were held at the end of the school day, on either a Wednesday or Friday, for 75 minutes. Each week was focused on a specific Practice of the Week (POW) and a specific Technique of the Week (TOW).

NOTE: Prior to the launch of round 1, Phase 1, introductory meetings were held with teachers/staff, parents/guardians in both English & Spanish to introduce the SMP to La Academia's Community.			
Week: Lesson	**POW**	**TOW**	**TOW**
One: Sitting Made Simple	**Sitting Meditation**	**Phrase -4- Focus**	**Breath Counting**
Two: Sitting With Sense	**Sitting Meditation**	**Sensory Meditation: Sight (visual)**	**Sensory Meditation: Sound (auditory)**
Three: Engaging With Sense	**Resting Meditation/Eating Meditation**	**Sensory Meditation: Tactile Breath**	**Sensory Meditation: Tasting and Sourcing**
Four: One, Two, Three...Walk With Me	**Walking Meditation**	**Counting Steps**	**Breath-Step**
Five/Six: From Here To There or Anywhere/ Cultivating Kindness	**Walking Meditation/ Compassion Meditation**	**Sensory/ Tactile**	**Phrase-4-Focus**

Participants in the first round were also given homework assignments to practice what they learned each week which were reviewed at the beginning of the following session. After 5 sessions of training, a survey was sent out to all teachers and staff in the building.

Participation in the SMP Research

At the end of the first round of Phase 1, classroom teachers and staff were invited to complete an electronic survey to assess burnout, self-regulation, self-efficacy, mindful attention awareness, thoughts about mindfulness, and perceived stress constructs.

The survey was a compilation of 6 different surveys including the *Self-Regulation Questionnaire*, *Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale*, *Teacher Burnout Scale*, *Mindful Attention Awareness Scale* and the *Thoughts About Mindfulness Questionnaire*.

Survey-Quantitative Data

Quantitative data was collected to evaluate the extent to which related constructs such as student behavior and teacher classroom management differed between two groups-those teachers who participated in the first round of SMPs Phase 1, and those who did not. Preliminary results showed a significant positive correlation between burnout and perceived stress. Teachers with a higher likelihood of burnout had higher perceived stress. Results also showed a significant negative correlation between burnout and mindful attention awareness. The more mindfulness recorded, the less teacher burnout was found. There was also a significant negative correlation between perceived stress and mindful attention awareness.

Through both qualitative and quantitative data, both La Academia and the SMP were able to conclude that at the end of round one Phase 1, *classroom teachers that participated in SMP programming experienced less stress and less teacher burnout when compared with non-participating teachers.*

Encouraged by the positive results, La Academia and the SMP looked to implement round two of Phase 1 for teachers as well as Phase 2 of the Project, The Mindful Student Training, during the second half of the 2020SY. Due to COVID- 19 pandemic, however, and the transition to remote only learning for the remainder of the 2020SY, round two of Phase 1 nor Phase 2 could be implemented.

2021SY A New Beginning: Where are we now?

La Academia's Dean of School Culture and SMP's CEO, Gail Silver, remain committed to the completion of round two Phase 1 and implementation of Phase 2 of the Project- even if in a remote only setting this year. As such, we are scheduled to begin round two Phase 1 in January 2021, and looking to implement Phase 2, The Mindful Student Training, starting March 2021.

II.   Social Connections

La Academia's Culture Team is committed to empowering its teachers and staff in creating safe, joyful, and engaging learning classrooms where students, irrespective of race, ethnic background or sexual orientation, have a sense of belonging and a feeling of significance. As such, during La Academia's fully remote period during the 2020SY, the Deans of Culture, in collaboration with the School Counselor, worked in partnership to create *Social Connections*- a mental health initiative to support students psychological and social-emotional well-being.

In order to identify students who, during this time of Remote Only learning, were requiring a higher level of support, each grade level team leader was asked to collaborate with their grade level teams to submit a list of students of concern- whether it be academically, behaviorally or emotionally related. Their lists were then cross referenced with the Student Support Team's (La Academia's MTSS) list and then cross-referenced with the Culture Team's list of students who were struggling in any, or all, of these areas. This list was then cross referenced with students served by our Mental Health Department in an effort to ensure as many students as possible were identified. This finalized list was then translated into a Virtual Mental Health (VMH) Spreadsheet which then became a 'live list' from which the Deans, the School Counselor, Doctoral Externs, Paraprofessionals, Social Emotional Learning Specialists (SESs), and Special Education Case Manager documented their weekly interactions with their assigned students.

For the purpose of these interactions, these staff members were referred to as mentors and the students as mentees. Each staff member, regardless of their role within the organization, became the caring adult needed by an individual child. Provided with training, scripts for initial consent/contact with parents & /or guardians, and weekly touch base meetings with the Culture and Mental Health Teams, in April of 2020, the mentors began checking in on a weekly basis with their mentees. Daily telephone calls and weekly check ins quickly transitioned to weekly Zoom meetings between mentors and the mentees.   They read books together, played Bingo online, and even created their own interactive games which they managed to play remotely. The success of this program was measured by the consistency of connection. Relationships were built and trust flourished.

Mentors documented their conversations with their mentees in the VMH Spreadsheet. The VMH Spreadsheet became a tool through which both quantitative and qualitative data were used for team planning, and served as a measure of the programs efficacy. The following chart is a summary of the data provided by the VMH Spreadsheet.

Social Connections: Emotional Wellbeing Support - Final results as of June 16, 2020

Grade	Total Students	Students Contacted	Parent/Student Contacted	% of Students Contacted	% of Parents Contacted
Kinder	18	15	17	83%	94%

First	28	24	24	86%	86%
Second	30	25	30	83%	100%
Third	21	20	21	95%	100%
Fourth	24	21	23	88%	96%
Fifth	28	26	27	93%	96%
Totals	149	131	142	88%	95%

III.   Adoption of the Imagine Learning Suite

English Language Learners (ELLs) constitute the most rapidly growing segment of our student population. ELL's have the additional task of learning a new language at the same time as they learn new content- and considering that La Academia is a Dual Language School, all students- native English and Spanish speakers- are met with this very daunting task. This task is recognizably a stress on both the student and the teacher and for years La Academia looked to find the best solution to this challenge.
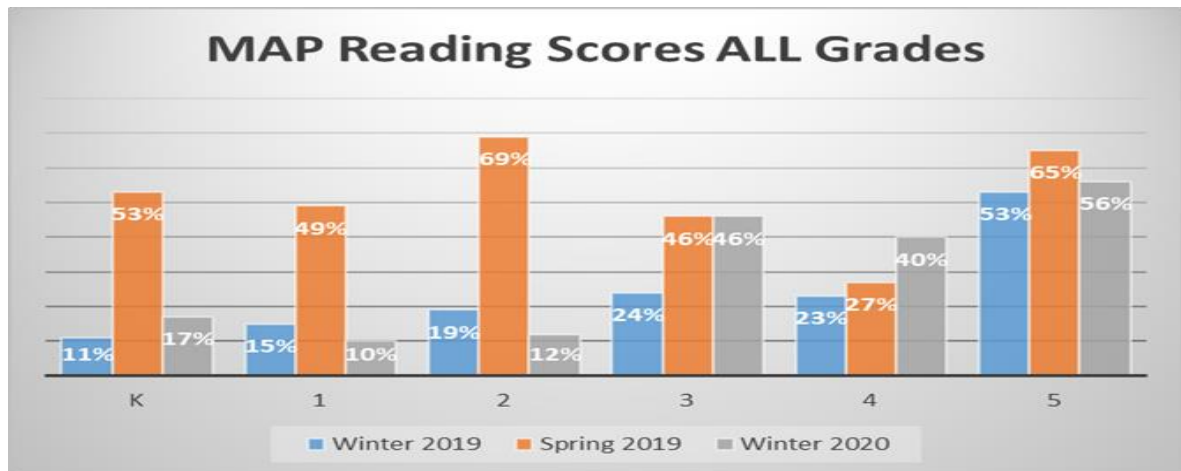
With the onboarding of our new Academic Dean, a champion and expert on the Imagine Learning Suite, in September 2019/2020SY, however, came the answer to this challenge. At her recommendation, La Academia immediately adopted Imagine Learnings Language Literacy Program. This remarkable program teaches language and literacy to students through individualized language/literacy software with actionable data. It differentiates lessons, for the individual needs of each student, teaching skills that are critical to achieving reading proficiency. By mastering essential reading and language skills, students then accelerate their rate of learning across all subject areas.

The bonus was, *the children LOVED it*!   They couldn't get enough of it and, faster than our Academic Dean had ever experienced, a significant number of students completed the program by end of November leaving us with the question of *what next?* In December of 2019/2020SY, we found ourselves adopting the Imagine Reading Program, a supplemental reading program that supports students in grades 3–8 who have completed the Imagine Learning Literacy Program.   Also following a blended learning model, Imagine Reading includes teacher-led instruction, online student practice, facilitated classroom discussion, and group projects.

In March 2020, again considering La Academia is a Dual Language School, we also adopted Imagine Español - to help accelerate grade-level reading and language proficiency in Spanish. Also designed to address the diverse instructional needs of native speakers, Imagine Español teaches foundational literacy skills in an engaging, game-like way that celebrates the many rich cultures of the Spanish-speaking world.

Data supporting the many benefits of the adoption of *Imagine Learning Literacy, Imagine Reading and Imagine Español* includes, but is not limited to:

1. In comparison to the 2019SY when La Academia had 3 students exit the ESL program, the 2020SY had **17 students** exit the program according to ACCESS. This 466.6% jump represents an outstanding increase and significant academic accomplishment for La Academia students.
2. In comparing the 2019SY & 2020SY Winter MAP Data below, one can see a percentage increase of anywhere between 6%-22% in MAP reading scores in grades K, 3, 4 & 5- those grades with the highest Imagine Learning student usage in 2020. **Please Note:** For grades 3 and 4, this spike in the 2020SY Winter MAP percentage was either equal or significantly higher than the EOY spring score of the 2019SY. We believe that this growth would have continued had we remained teaching in person during the spring of 2020.

MAP Reading Scores ALL Grades

Grade	Winter 2019	Spring 2019	Winter 2020
K	11%	53%	17%
1	15%	49%	10%
2	19%	69%	12%
3	24%	46%	46%
4	23%	27%	40%
5	53%	65%	56%

IV. La Academia TV - YouTube Channel
(https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7g_LY5xG5IS0bOALldvkyg)

In the wake of Covid-19 restrictions that kept children across our nation out of their classrooms for weeks and months at a time, La Academia launched **La Academia TV in April 2020**. We knew that social media was poised then, more than ever before, to help us stay connected with our parents and keep our community informed and UNIDOS. **La Academia TV** was used for reminders about school events, to share news of the day and volunteer needs, as well as to share photographs of virtual school wide activities and more. **La Academia TV** featured themed videos including, but not limited to:

- Weekly workout challenges with Mr. Alverio, Physical Education Teacher, to promote physical health and wellness- for students, parents, faculty and staff of all ages.
- Teacher/Staff Appreciation videos to celebrate and say thank you to our teachers and staff for the work they were doing in an extremely difficult situation. It built good will, climate and culture while inspiring teachers and staff to go the extra mile because they knew we cared.

- Celebrating school recognitions like the *Compassionate School Award* awarded to La Academia in the Spring of 2020. This award recognized La Academia as a school that had taken steps toward providing services to students in a manner consistent with trauma-informed care criteria in the Delaware Developmental Framework for Trauma Informed Care.
- A variety of school device tutorials- including but not limited to topics such as *How to Take Care of Your Chromebook & IPad at Home; How to Access La Academia's Digital Platforms; COVID 19 Protocols for Hybrid Model Students; and How to Navigate La Academia's Digital Curriculum, McGraw Hills Wonders, Maraviallas & Mis Mathematica's*
- Fun and engaging music classes with Mr. McCall, La Academia's Music teacher
- Videos explaining and illustrating our 2020-2021SY Welcome Back to School Health and Safety Protocols

It is important to note, that La Academia TV was, and continues to be, especially helpful and empowering for our significant number of illiterate parents who, during a time of written information overload, could easily miss out on important information if solely provided in written form. Parent participation alone, in school events and parent-teacher conferences-has doubled since the launching of this, and other pre-recorded, initiatives.

V.   Technology Hotline

With the onset the Covid-19 pandemic, education at La Academia, and throughout the nation, changed dramatically and overnight. Teaching went from historically face to face in person to solely remote and digital platforms over a weekend. This jump posed extreme challenges for La Academia's community. With parents, and many teachers, with little to no education in using technology in meaningful ways, we found ourselves in trouble- but not for long. This hurdle did not deter us, but rather inspired us to create a Technology Hotline to provide live answers to parent's technology questions. The Hotline served, and continues to serve, as a live source of information and assistance to help parents navigate our Distance Learning Portal and Platforms, as well as an opportunity to set up face to face consultations with our technology experts for programming and technology-care issues. It played, and continues to play, a crucial role in ensuring our students remain connected and learning, our parents informed and resourced and our teachers teaching and improving student outcomes.

VI.   Portals

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic pushed La Academia to abruptly and comprehensively adopt the online feature of its McGraw Hill Curriculum, *Maravillas & Wonders,* to keep students learning through e-learning and remote work**.** To access the curriculum, La Academia designed a Distance Learning Portal, https://sites.google.com/academiacharter.org/laacademiadistantlearning/home, that became a gateway and repository for teaching and learning materials, as well as family/community resources and mental/emotional supports.

In addition, knowing we were going to be unable to meet face to face with potential parents and students, La Academia also designed a site for Admissions & Enrollment, https://sites.google.com/academiacharter.org/laacademiaenrollment/home.
The site represented a complete overhaul of the registration process at La Academia and was key in helping us attain our enrollment goal for the 2020SY. It enabled families to readily find information about our mission, vision, academic programming and more. A self-service portal, parents were able to electronically complete and submit registration forms and connect with our Enrollment Support Team for assistance when needed. And despite the Pandemic, this Portal enabled La Academia to attain its highest enrollment number in the history of the school.

2018-2019 SY	2019-2020 SY	2020-2021 SY
603	595	612

Finally, with the hiring season upon us at the peak of the pandemic, La Academia also designed a **human resource portal**, or **HR portal**, https://sites.google.com/academiacharter.org/welcometolaacademia/home, as an entree point for outside job applicants and potential applicants to access HR-related and other information about La Academia. As a result, La Academia, and again for the first time in its history, was fully staffed by late May 2020. This said, there is no questions that although COVID – 19 continues to test all educational systems across the world, it has revealed for La Academia how resourced and able she is to stand up to any challenge that comes her way.

   VII.   **Community Partnerships**
Partnerships are essential for helping students achieve at their maximum potential and, while parent and community involvement has only recently, in the last two years, become a cornerstone of La Academia, recognition of the importance of these partnerships, or collaborative efforts, is alive and well.
3.   *YMCA* - In October 2019 (2020SY), La Academia partnered with the YMCA in Wilmington to offer swim lessons to our students through the **Water Smart Program**. This program had our students attend 4 lessons at the YMCA where they learned how to swim and how to be safe around water.

   Why swimming? Because the research supports the many benefits that swimming lessons have on school-aged children**.** It's well known that swimming lessons for kids have many benefits including water safety, decreased risk of drowning, and physical development (both physically and mentally) but it also, apparently, benefits children in school –and more than we ever thought of *before* doing the research.

   Better Swimmer, Better Math Student Studies have shown that kids in swim lessons on average score higher in subjects such as math. It is shown that children who swim have a higher sense of achievement, which translates to their academic life by motivating

them to do well in their studies. Swimming is also great for burning energy, and in turn gives swimmer a better night's rest. Being well-rested before tackling a day of learning has positive effects for kids to learn and retain information, and in turn, earn better grades. Swimming has other benefits to academics such as:

- Increased concentration and mental stamina
- Learn to focus and follow directions
- Learn that meeting goals yields positive results

Swimming and Social Skills

School-aged swimmers also experience a camaraderie with fellow swim students. They learn the importance of good sportsmanship, how to work in a team, and how to act in an appropriate manner. Swimming also increases a child's self-esteem and confidence. As a result, swimmers learn that, with effort, goals can be set and met. By achieving these goals and gaining confidence, children are more likely to come out of their shell and learn how to develop relationships and sustain friendships.

Being enrolled in swim lessons also allows our kids the opportunity work independently and in groups to work through challenges. It ultimately teaches team dynamics. Encouraging our kids to work together in games or group activities in swimming lessons is a great way to teach appropriate social behavior when group tasks in school arise. The social benefits of swimming don't stop there – here are other ways being enrolled in swimming lessons puts our children at a social advantage:

- They learn to respect authority figures
- Polite and appropriate behavior, such as turn-taking and sharing
- Environmental awareness by learning to pay attention to peers and adults

Physical Benefits of Swimming

It's no secret that swimming is also a beneficial form of exercise for children. It is low-impact and easy on the joints. The water provides resistance, making it both a great cardiovascular activity as well as helping to build strong muscles. These benefits enhance our children's self-esteem, which aids in their studies and their ability to build meaningful friendships with their peers. The benefits of swim lessons truly do come full circle with academics.

4. *Adopt a Cop Program:* In September 2019, the Parent Booster Club at La Academia invited the Wilmington Police Department to run a K-9 demonstration for our students k-5. The student's response was remarkable and it inspired us to look into the *Adopt a Cop Program*. Serving primarily minority children, we believed this program would provide a structured pathway for partnership between our La Academia students/families and law enforcement. We wanted, early on, to establish a culture of human contact/connection between our

diverse population of parents/students and police officers considering the widespread racial disparities in policing within the communities our families live. As such, the Wilmington Police officers interacted with students and parents at our 2020 Hispanic Heritage Celebration, lunched on Fridays to build relationship between the officers and our students, and invited the officers for storybook reading in the classrooms.