



A Decade of Innovation

HOW THE LAUSD PILOT SCHOOL MOVEMENT IS ADVANCING EQUITABLE AND PERSONALIZED EDUCATION

MARCH 19, 2018

JEANNE FAUCI & KAREN HUNTER QUARTZ

Center for
**POWERFUL
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS**
A catalyst for
equity, access
and choice

UCLA Center for Community Schooling
Advancing K-12 University-Assisted
Community Schools



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Part 1: History.....	3
Part 2: LAUSD Pilot Schools & Students	3
Part 3: What Makes Pilot Schools Unique?.....	5
Budget Autonomy	6
Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Autonomy.....	7
Professional Development Autonomy.....	10
Governance Autonomy	10
Scheduling Autonomy	12
Staffing Autonomy.....	13
Part 4: Student Outcomes.....	14
Innovative Local Measures.....	15
Biliteracy.....	15
Civic Engagement	17
Graduation by Exhibition.....	18
Comparison Measures	19
Socio-emotional Well-Being and Support	19
Graduation and College-Going	21
Part 5: Advancing and Supporting the Movement.....	23
Acknowledgements	25
Endnotes & References.....	27

Introduction

Ten years ago, the first two LA Unified Pilot Schools opened on the campus of Belmont High School. Today, there are 47 Pilot Schools across the city—representing a powerful community-based, teacher-driven, student-centered reform movement within the nation’s second largest school district. In 2006, LAUSD Local District Superintendent Richard Alonzo explained, “The community could have taken the easier route and turned to charter schools,” but “we want to bring change from inside of the district to improve things in the district, not try to improve it on the outside.”¹ Improving schools from the inside meant granting them local autonomy to get results.

On the whole, this reform strategy is working. Compared with non-Pilot LAUSD public schools, a significantly higher percentage of students in Pilot Schools report that they feel safe, happy, supported, and respected. Graduation rates are 8 percentage points higher than the district average and Pilot School students’ enrollment in 4-year colleges is 7 percentage points higher. Alongside these measures, Pilot Schools are using their assessment autonomy to pioneer alternative measures, including biliteracy, civic engagement, and graduation by exhibition.

To commemorate the 10th anniversary of the movement, longstanding Pilot School partners from Center for Powerful Public Schools and the UCLA Center for Community Schooling joined with the Pilot School Organization to take stock of the collective experience of 47 schools. Together, we crafted a survey that all 47 Pilot School principals completed about their Pilot School experience.² We combined this survey data with graduation and college-going data provided by the district to understand the schools’ progress on these important measures in comparison to the district overall. Several research studies conducted on Pilot Schools further deepened our understanding. Finally, though not exhaustive, we collected stories, examples, photographs, and quotes from schools to help bring the movement to life. Using this information, our collaborative report outlines the history of the Pilot movement, describes the schools and their students, explains what makes them unique, and presents both quantitative and qualitative data on their outcomes. We also offer recommendations for advancing and supporting this promising movement within the current reform landscape.

Part 1: History

As the charter school movement gained momentum in the 1990s, urban school districts responded with reforms designed to keep students within district schools and stem the exodus to charters. In 1995, Boston Public Schools developed a particularly innovative response, through a unique partnership that included the mayor, the office of the school superintendent, the school committee and the teacher’s union. With support from Boston-based non-profit Center for Collaborative Education, they created a set of Pilot Schools that were granted charter-like autonomy, with similar heightened accountability and a school quality review process. In 2005, leaders from the Boston Pilot School movement headed west to

collaborate with Los Angeles educators and community organizers who had been working since 2003 to create small progressive schools as part of a UCLA project called the LA Small Schools Collective (now Center for Powerful Public Schools). Like their Boston colleagues, Los Angeles educators were inspired by the Coalition of Essential Schools, a movement started in the 1980s by Ted Sizer, Deborah Meier and others, that honored the power of students' ideas and the professional autonomy of teachers.

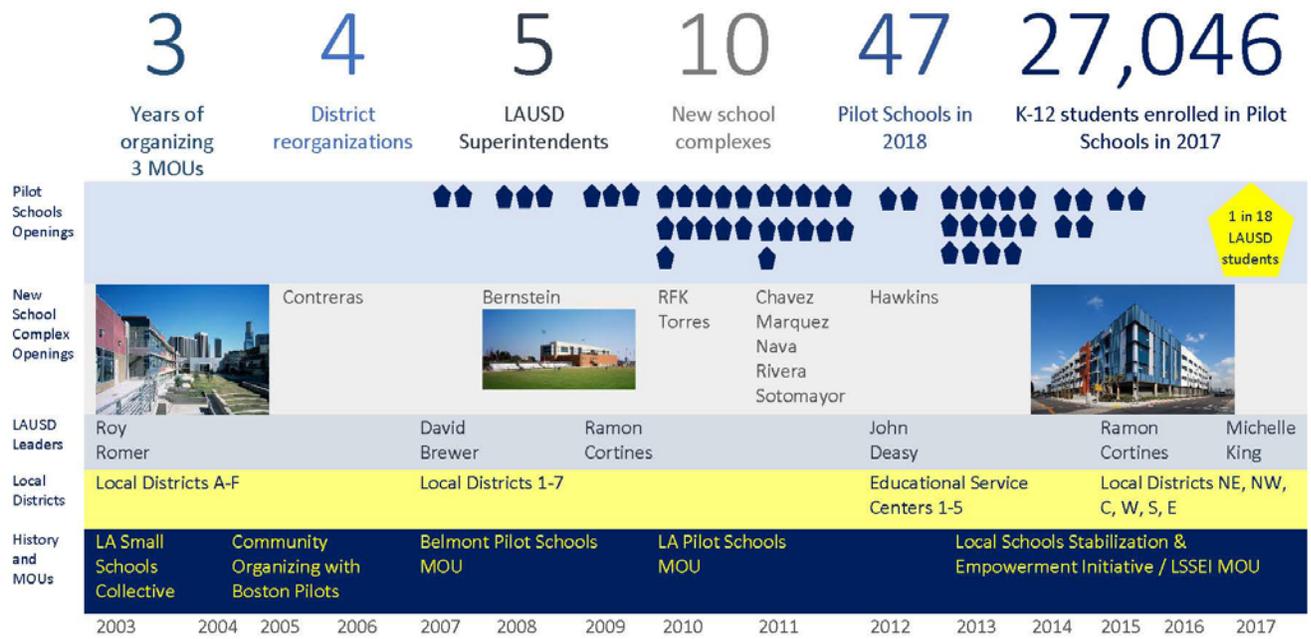
At the time, the Los Angeles Unified School District was in the midst of the nation's largest building campaign. After 30 years of neglect and overcrowded schools, the city passed school construction bond measures in 1997, 2002, 2004 and 2005 and between 1997 and 2017, the district built 131 new schools with 170,000 new seats, at a cost of \$10 billion. Three of these new school complexes—Miguel Contreras, Edward Roybal, and Robert F. Kennedy—rose up within the central city neighborhood of Pico Union to relieve the extreme overcrowding at Belmont High School. At that time, Belmont was one of the largest schools in the nation with over 5,160 students on three year-round tracks. The school had a 65% dropout rate and was labeled by the federal Department of Education as one of America's "dropout factories". As the new schools were being built, Belmont area families demanded that these new campuses not have the same educational program that had historically failed their children.



With the building of these new sites, visionary educator Richard Alonzo embraced the small schools movement as a community-driven response to creating more personalized and powerful teaching and learning for students. As the Local District F Superintendent, Mr. Alonzo worked with the Belmont Education Collaborative—a coalition of 36 community and educational organizations—to develop a portfolio of small school options, including Pilot Schools, across Belmont and the three new complexes.³ In 2007, when the Miguel Contreras Learning Center opened, families and students were given a choice to attend one of a portfolio of neighborhood high schools for the first time. That same year, the district, the teacher's union under the leadership of union visionary A.J. Duffy, and the community signed the Belmont Pilot School Memo of Understanding (MOU) to create ten new small schools within Pico Union.

The story of the next ten years is of a community-based, teacher-driven, student-centered movement to advance equitable public schooling in Los Angeles. As LAUSD became the largest authorizer of district charters in the nation—with 277 independent and affiliated charter schools serving over 154,000 students—the Pilot School movement led the fight for neighborhood schools, professional working conditions, and community control. Demand from teachers led to the second LA Pilot School MOU in 2010, and the creation of ten new pilots. A third wave came as part of the district's Local School Stabilization and Empowerment Initiative, creating an additional 32 Pilot Schools. Two-thirds of Pilot Schools are housed in ten of the new school complexes—extending across every local and board district.

Figure 1: Pilot School Timeline



As the timeline above describes, the Pilot School Movement has weathered many changes in the district, including four major re-organizations, with a shift from local districts to a centralized Intensive Support and Innovation Center (ISIC) that housed the Pilots for three years. With the latest reorganization, Pilot Schools are back in local districts, supported by the Local Options Oversight Committee (LOOC) office in LAUSD. To advance the movement, the schools created, with the support of Pilot School sponsor Linda del Cuato, the Pilot School Organization (PSO), run by an executive board of busy principals working hard to provide support to one another. Unlike other reform alliances, such as the Partnership for LA Schools, Pilot Schools are not supported by a coordinated philanthropy effort. Given this context, the 10th anniversary of this teacher-led, community-based reform movement is nothing short of remarkable. Today, one in 18 non-charter LAUSD students attend a Pilot School. Overall, teachers, students, and parents love their schools and are working hard to sustain the vision they created together.

Part 2: LAUSD Pilot Schools & Students

Pilot Schools serve K-12 students from every local district in LAUSD. Of the 52 Pilot Schools created over the past decade, 30 were started from the ground up, most by teams of teachers as was the case at Huntington Park Institute of Applied Medicine. Principal Jonathan Chaikittirattana recalls, “A group of teachers from a large comprehensive high school wanted to create something more special and personalized to student needs.” One new high school sprang from parents at two new middle schools, Business and Technology School and School of Arts and Culture that share the Nava Learning Academies campus advocating for a high school, Nava College Preparatory Academy. Gustavo Barrientos of Nava College Prep shared, “The idea was to provide the community with another option for parents to enroll

their kids in a high school.” Several other Pilots were conversions from existing small learning communities and career academies because, as Dr. Letitia Johnson-Davis of Baldwin Hills Elementary said, “We wanted to have more autonomies locally for we know what our community needs best.” Four of the 52 have closed, and two are consolidating. Each closure story is heartbreaking, both for the students as well as the educators who worked hard to make their dream a reality. Undergirding these school closures and renewal decisions is a Pilot School Quality Review (SQR) process conducted by a collaborative group of stakeholders, including the district, teachers’ and administrators’ unions, and community-based organizations. The review team then makes a recommendation to the Pilot Schools Steering Committee—the group charged with making decisions to recommend to LAUSD and the School Board schools for Pilot status, Pilot renewal or revocation of Pilot status. This process is outlined in the Pilot Schools Manual and was recently featured as an example of democratic school reform by Deborah Meier and Emily Gasoi.⁴ Commenting on the expansion of local autonomy initiatives including the Pilot Schools, Meier and Gasoi write, “At this time, Los Angeles is perhaps the only unified district in the United States to provide all public schools the option of becoming an autonomous school.”⁵

PILOT SCHOOLS ARE LOCATED ACROSS LA UNIFIED:

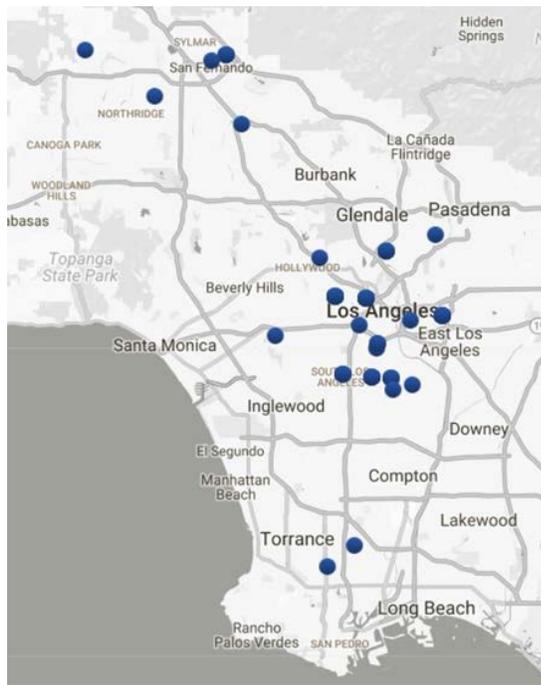


Figure 2: Map of Pilot Schools (by Complex)

LOCAL DISTRICT NORTHWEST

- Balboa Gifted/High Ability Magnet
- Porter Ranch Community School

LOCAL DISTRICT NORTHEAST

CESAR E. CHAVEZ LEARNING ACADEMIES

- Academy of Scientific Exploration
- ArTES Magnet
- Social Justice Humanitas Academy
- John H. Francis Polytechnic HS
- San Fernando Institute of Applied Media

LOCAL DISTRICT WEST

AUGUSTUS HAWKINS HIGH SCHOOLS

- Community Health Advocates School
- Critical Design & Gaming School
- The Responsible Indigenous Social Entrepreneurship School
- Baldwin Hills Elementary & Gifted High Ability Magnet

HELEN BERNSTEIN CAMPUS

- STEM Academy of Hollywood

LOCAL DISTRICT CENTRAL

DR. JULIAN NAVA LEARNING ACADEMIES

- School of Arts and Culture
- School of Business and Technology
- Early College Academy
- Garvanza Elementary School
- Gratts Learning Academy for Young Scholars

MIGUEL CONTRERAS LEARNING COMPLEX

- Academic Leadership Community
- School of Business and Tourism
- School of Social Justice
- Nava College Preparatory Academy

ROBERT F. KENNEDY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

- Ambassador School of Global Education
- Ambassador School of Global Leadership
- Los Angeles High School of the Arts
- New Open World Academy
- School for the Visual Arts & Humanities
- UCLA Community School

SONIA SOTOMAYOR LEARNING ACADEMIES

- Los Angeles River School/School of History & Dramatic Arts
- Studio School

LOCAL DISTRICT EAST

STEM Academy of Boyle Heights

ESTEBAN TORRES HIGH SCHOOL

- East Los Angeles Performing Arts Magnet
- East Los Angeles Renaissance Academy
- Engineering & Technology Academy
- Humanitas Academy of Art and Technology
- Social Justice Leadership Academy

LINDA ESPERANZA MARQUEZ HIGH SCHOOL

- Huntington Park Institute of Applied Medicine
- Libra Academy
- School of Social Justice

- Walnut Park Middle School–STEM Academy

LOCAL DISTRICT SOUTH

CARSON HIGH SCHOOL

- Academies of Education & Empowerment
- Academy of Medical Arts

DIEGO RIVERA LEARNING COMPLEX

- Communication and Technology School
- Green Design Community School
- Performing Arts Community School
- Public Service Community School
- HArts Academy of Los Angeles
- Lucille Roybal-Allard Elementary School

Although all local districts have Pilot Schools, as Figure 2 illustrates, there is a higher concentration (16/47 or 34%) in Local District Central. This may be due to the fact that the movement originated with the Belmont Zone of Choice located within Local District Central. With the exception of two magnets, all Pilot Schools are non-selective and serve as local neighborhood schools, welcoming all students.

Pilot Schools serve a higher proportion of Latino/a students than the district as a whole (83% vs. 74%), in part due to their geographic locations. In addition, these schools serve a higher proportion of students who are economically disadvantaged (84% vs. 79%). Overall, Pilot Schools serve a lower proportion of English Learners than the district (21% vs. 25%), but this may be explained by the fact that most Pilot Schools serve secondary students, a group with a lower proportion of English Learners.⁶

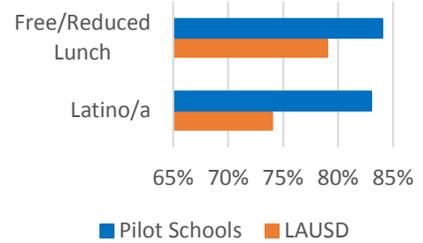
While most Pilot Schools are able to serve all students in their neighborhoods, a handful of Pilots have waiting lists and admit students based on a lottery. Although there has been no systematic effort to collect and analyze Pilot School admissions data, several principals report that they admit a significant number of students who have left charter schools to re-enroll in the district.

Part 3: What Makes Pilot Schools Unique?

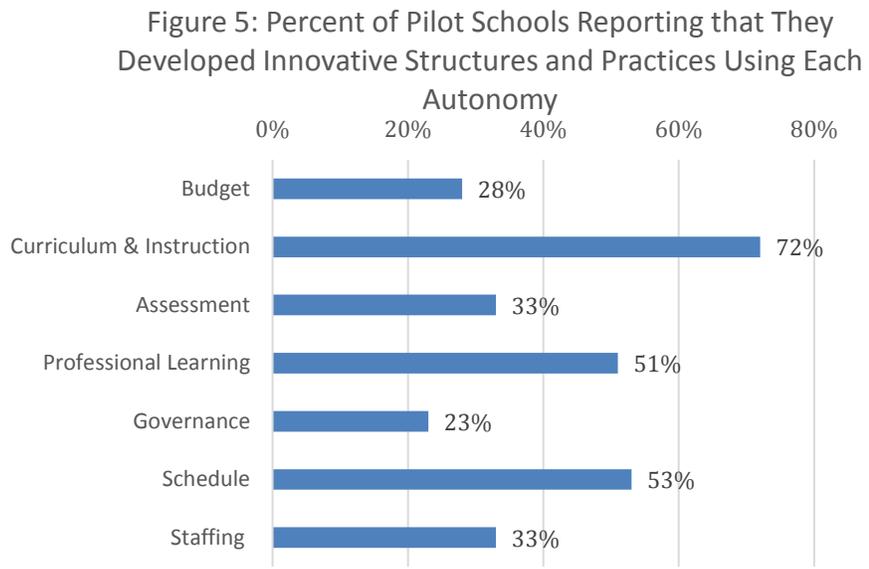
When asked why they became a Pilot School, almost all principals cited the value of local autonomy and professionalism.⁷ Jose Luis Navarro of Social Justice Humanitas Academy responded, “We thought the people closest to the students should have greater impact and more voice over the policies that affect students.” Similarly, Reina Schaffer of Lucille Roybal-Allard Elementary, explained “Teachers had a clear vision of what they wished to see in their community. They felt that becoming a Pilot School gave them an opportunity to make that vision a reality.” Martin Buchman of East LA Renaissance Academy adds, “We became a pilot in order to be more innovative, to work at a school with fewer instructional restrictions & to implement autonomies.”

Pilot Schools have five unique autonomies that are both singularly distinctive and interweave with each other to have a greater impact on Pilot Schools’ ability to innovate, provide equitable services for their students and families, personalize learning, and improve student outcomes through a collaborative network of shareholders.

Figure 3: Pilot Schools Serve a Higher Proportion of Latino/a and Economically Disadvantaged Students than LAUSD (2016-17)



For this report, all Pilot School principals completed a survey that included items about whether and how they used the autonomies to develop innovative structures and practices at their schools. As Figure 5 describes, principals identified curriculum and instruction as the autonomy that is most used to innovate, but all of the autonomies were cited. In what follows, we review the different ways schools are using these autonomies in order to improve student learning and achievement.



Budget Autonomy

Pilot Schools have autonomy over their budgets. This autonomy allows Pilots to allocate funding based on each school’s unique community and goals. Unlike norm-based funding that is traditionally used throughout the district, Pilot Schools receive unrestricted resources through a modified per pupil funding formula based on overall school enrollment and Average Daily Attendance in addition to federal funds. When the first Pilot Schools opened, the district’s budget office had to identify the percentage of categorical funds that autonomous schools were allocated per-pupil. This allowed Pilot Schools to advocate for a new general budget line item that put previously segregated funds into a larger general category about which schools could make spending decisions. Budget autonomy gave Pilot Governing Councils the ability to make annual school budget decisions in a much more transparent process that was inclusive of all stakeholders, including teachers, parents and in the case of secondary schools, students to make more meaningful school decisions.

Based on their per pupil funds, Pilot School Governing Councils have the autonomy to decide how to use these funds to support their school’s mission and annual goals. Cynthia Gonzalez of Community and Technology School, one of four schools at the Diego Rivera campus in South LA, explains, “We align our budget to the needs and plans of our school’s vision, mission and both long and short-term goals.” She adds, “We are able to be creative about cost savings in order to address both the individual needs of our school as well as shared complex costs.”

Having decision-making power over budgets has universally led Pilot Schools to increase hiring of teachers and support personnel. The first budget priority for most Pilots has been to hire additional

teachers to reduce class size or bring in specialized teachers and support staff. For example, Elidia Vazquez, principal at Polytechnic High School shares, “Our focus during budget development is staffing. Making sure we fund class size reduction, teachers and support staff including counselors to assist with the social emotional not just academic needs of students is our top priority.” At LA High School of the Arts (LAHSA) principal Susan Canjura says, “We purchased a full-time work-based learning coordinator and other CTE teachers in order to create a more rigorous arts program. We purchased support positions including a coordinator, teacher aides, Psychiatric Social Workers and Pupil Services and Attendance Counselors.” These positions undergird a strong academic and social-emotional support system for LAHSA students and are echoed at numerous other schools. Principal of Academies for Education and Empowerment, Michelle Bryant, notes, “Purchasing out of classroom positions allows for the ability to pay closer attention to our sub-groups, attendance and intervention. We also have used funds for purchasing technology to enhance our STEAM Program and provide student access to resources on the Internet.”

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Autonomy



Pilot Schools have the autonomy to design curriculum and instruction that supports the mission and vision of each school and address students’ needs while ensuring all state and federal standards are met. This autonomy was cited as the most used in the Pilot School survey that was conducted, indicating that it is central to Pilot School implementation as it has the greatest impact on student outcomes. A recent study of two LAUSD Pilot Schools, conducted by Aixle Aman, found that most of the impacts that resulted from Pilot practices were focused on student learning and led to the school’s overall school effectiveness.⁸ Curriculum, instruction and assessment autonomy allows Pilot Schools to implement innovative practices that engage students, establish a rigorous program of study and ensure students learn 21st century skills—including collaboration, creativity and critical thinking. Pilot Schools engage students in real world projects, dual enrollment courses, professional internships, and more.

For example, five of the district’s eight certified Linked Learning schools are Pilots. Attaining this rigorous certification means that schools have created high-quality college and career pathways for students. At STEM Academy, for example, students have the opportunity to learn from medical professionals as part of the Kaiser Teen Healthcare Leadership Academy. The program has expanded from 10 internships in 2013 to a sequenced set of experiences beginning with career exploration for freshman to 46 senior internships today.

Other Pilot Schools have developed innovative courses with this autonomy, including ArTES, which created a four-year course sequence in each of its six art disciplines. Dr. Julian Nava Learning Academy and several other schools, including Gratts Learning Academy for Young Scholars, New Open World Academy and The Studio School, use the autonomy to introduce Readers' and Writers' Workshop and to deepen the engagement of their students and improve literacy rates. And, the Critical Design and Gaming School has created dynamic cross-disciplinary projects in which teachers are humanizing digital media learning.⁹



Pilot elementary schools such as Lucille Roybal-Allard have used curriculum autonomy to create a STEM Innovation Lab, and obtain materials and a tech expert from LAUSD to work with students and teachers on the application of the latest technology. They've also started a robotics team that provides their students with the opportunity to gain a hands-on head start in using technology to design robots and compete with other schools.



STEM and STEAM learning are features of a number of other K-12 Pilot Schools. Engineering programs sprang up in East Los Angeles at the Torres Engineering and Technology Academy and STEM Academy of Boyle Heights. Walnut Park Middle School STEM Academy partnership with Boeing engineers brings industry experts into the classroom and middle school students can earn college credit by taking a dual enrollment robotics class taught by East LA Community College professors. Robotics courses are also offered at Nava College Preparatory Academy and Academy of Education and Empowerment. Academy of Scientific Exploration has an Amgen Biotech lab at their school while Community Health Advocates School is the only high school in the state with specialized courses in mental health. STEAM learning is alive at Garvanza Elementary School and San Fernando Institute of Applied Media both of which have makerspaces that are used for multiple creative projects.

Environmental studies are a key curricular aspect at Green Design Community School in South LA and LA River School's student environmental learning experience features a one-acre farm with native plants, a greenhouse and livestock including ducks, goats, pigs and, this summer, cows and a pond will be added.

San Fernando Institute of Applied Media, RISE School and School of Business and Tourism all feature entrepreneurial learning. Each has a Virtual Enterprises International program where teacher-facilitators

and business mentors support guide students in creating and managing virtual businesses from product development, production and distribution to marketing, sales, human resources, accounting/finance and web design.

Many Pilot high schools and now some middle schools offer dual enrollment classes so that students can earn college credit while still in high school. Early College Academy is on the campus of LA Trade-Technical Community College and students take advantage of multiple community college courses.

Many schools also used curriculum and instruction autonomy to holistically consider how families could benefit from educational programs. In each approved Pilot School's proposal, a section focuses on how each school will include parents as vital contributors to participants in the school culture's culture and educational programs. For example, at School for the Visual Arts and Humanities, parents are engaged partners and asked to participate at least 10 hours per year in various ways including governance roles, by attending student art exhibitions or participating in Parent Education Workshops such as computer literacy, college application and financial aid workshops.



At Humanitas Academy for Art and Technology (HAAT) and several other Pilot Schools, parents attend student-led academic conferences that occur once a semester after mid-term grades. Students present their academic progress using their digital portfolios to adult family members and have guiding prompts to make conversation flow. HAAT senior Hugo Rios shares, "Student-led conferences are a perfect way for me to explain my education to my parent. At first, I was nervous, scared even to speak about my work. After the first time, I knew for sure that my number one support was my mother." Hugo's mother Laura Rios Gonzalez adds, "The parent is the first teacher in

the home. It made me think about my role - am checking in on you about doing your work, or studying? Am I questioning how much time you're dedicating to school? Because of it I'm taking more responsibility." HAAT Principal Deborah Lowe sums up this learning experience, "Student-led Academic conferences build relationships between families, students, and the school by facilitating real conversations about academics and goals in a caring, supportive environment." Over 80% of HAAT parents attend the conferences.

These and other innovative approaches to learning are common across Pilot Schools, thanks to teachers' autonomy over curriculum, instruction, and assessment. As described in more detail in Part 4, assessment autonomy allows Pilot Schools to measure multiple forms of student learning and to develop and implement alternative assessments of learning that are used to measure student growth and progress over time.

Professional Development Autonomy

In order to meet school wide goals, and to create personalized learning environments that support students' achievement, Pilot Schools have flexibility with the design of their professional development. Teachers are active participants in identifying the type of professional development that aligns with their school's curriculum, assessment, and intervention. Having this flexibility encourages collegiality and fosters agreement on goals and visions among the participants. Research has shown that shared ownership among participants is crucial as the process acknowledges their existing beliefs and practices.¹⁰ With professional development autonomy, a Pilot School can determine the frequency and schedule of its professional development, decide on the content that will best meet their students' learning needs, and address the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching staff internally and/or by contracting with outside PD providers.

Several Pilot Schools hold faculty retreats, often during the summer, and provide job-embedded time for planning and professional development. For example, while students at Baldwin Hills are engaged in STEAM enrichment, their teachers meet in professional learning communities to analyze data and improve practice. When teachers do meet outside of school hours to innovate and plan, they are respected as professionals and paid for their time.



Governance Autonomy

The central premise of Pilot Schools is that the people closest to the students make school and policy decisions. Pilot Schools have a unique school-based governance structure that provides increased decision-making power over the school's vision, budget, principal selection and evaluation, and program policies, while complying with federal and state legal requirements. Pilot Schools form a Governing School Council (GSC), modeled on a legally required School Site Council composition with the addition of several community representatives. The GSC has responsibilities that lead to local control. The Pilot GSC: (1) sets and maintains the school vision; (2) selects, supervises, and evaluates the principal with final approval by the Local District Superintendent; (3) approves the annual budget; (4) approves the annual

Elect-to-Work Agreement (EWA) for UTLA staff; and (5) establishes bylaws and school policies that are consistent with applicable laws and regulations to ensure students are successful.

Principal hiring and evaluation is a part of governance autonomy that is unique to Pilot Schools, and has proven challenging, at times, for LAUSD to honor. The Governing School Council (or Design Team in the case of a new school), with the support of the local district create a principal job description, the position is posted on the LAUSD website and can also be advertised outside the district. A hiring team, made up of teachers, parents, students, community members and a local district representative, establish interview questions and schedule, develop a rubric used to assess each candidate based on the job description and conduct interviews. One finalist is chosen and submitted to the local district superintendent for approval.

Many Pilot Schools have key partners who serve on their Governing School Councils and participate in principal hiring and evaluation. The Los Angeles High School of the Arts, for example, has partnered with performing arts industry professionals and the UCLA Community School has partnered with UCLA faculty. Jody Priselac, Associate Dean of Community Programs at UCLA and a member of the Shared Governing Council, commented “as a university-assisted K-12 Pilot School with a history of strong teacher leadership, it was crucial to make sure that the school community and the university could be the central decision maker in principal hiring.”¹¹ Dr. Priselac chairs the principal evaluation sub-committee of the GSC, which collects data from students, parents, staff, and faculty using items designed to help the principal reflect on how well they have met school and personal goals and proactively plan for the next school year.

Pilot Governing School Councils structure has been adjusted from that of a traditional school site council so that parents are engaged decision makers. For example, a lead teacher at an established pilot school recognized that the traditional format of the meetings made participation difficult for many parents and re-prioritized agenda items that required parents’ input so that parents would feel more welcomed and have their voices heard. This had the net effect of creating space for parents to feel their voices were included and heard, elevating their role from simply approving decisions to helping shape them.¹²

The governance autonomy has enabled over 10 former lead teachers/assistant principals to become principals at the school they helped to found. This has provided for greater continuity of each school’s mission, vision and program with a natural in-school succession. Pearl Arredondo now principal of San Fernando Institute of Applied Media began as the lead teacher, transitioned to Title One Coordinator then became an Instructional Specialist. When the school’s principal retired, teachers advocated for Pearl to become the new principal. She shares, “I think the staff felt like we were continuing our forward movement without having to take any steps back or having to pause to acclimate anyone.”

Scheduling Autonomy

Scheduling autonomy provides Pilot Schools with flexibility to increase planning and professional development time for their faculty and to create annual and daily school schedules that maximize learning time for students and for their teachers. Los Angeles High School of the Arts (LAHSA), the first Pilot School to open its



doors in 2007, began using its scheduling autonomy immediately. Founding principal Esther Soliman recalls, “Scheduling autonomy allowed our school to create a framework to best support our instructional program. Annually, for the first few years, we would examine the daily and yearly schedule. That, in itself, was a great opportunity for teachers to have their ideas valued. Rather than six classes every day for one hour, three classes were held each day. We also added an Advisory period to provide a socio-emotional support and ensure students were prepared for college, career and community.”¹³

When LAHSA applied to be the first certified LAUSD Linked Learning school, they realized that developing interdisciplinary projects was a major instructional shift that required more than the minimal professional development time of two hours per week. Esther Soliman adds, “I have never understood how we expect teachers to plan together, act as critical friends for improving performance assessments, and calibrate student work without time—we devised a schedule with 12 hours a month teacher planning time so we could create and revise engaging, challenging work for our students.”¹⁴ LAHSA has served as a model for numerous other schools seeking to improve their schedules to improve learning and teaching.

Sally Lopez, principal at Performing Arts Community School at Diego Rivera cites the importance of scheduling autonomy to address student needs, “Our 8-periods-block-schedule, which meets four periods each day in an ODD and EVEN rotation, has allowed us to provide intervention and recovery classes for students. Providing this support to students prevents the loss of time, and makes us less dependent on outside resources such as adult school or summer school that may not have the social/emotional supports our students need.”



This past fall, the three Pilot Schools at Chavez Learning Academies began their school year a week earlier than the district. Academy of Scientific Exploration principal Dana Neill explains, “The early start calendar provides a more balanced school year and better serves the needs of high school students.” Principal Jose Luis Navarro adds, “We have created a calendar and schedule that has increased student achievement and staff retention.”

Staffing Autonomy

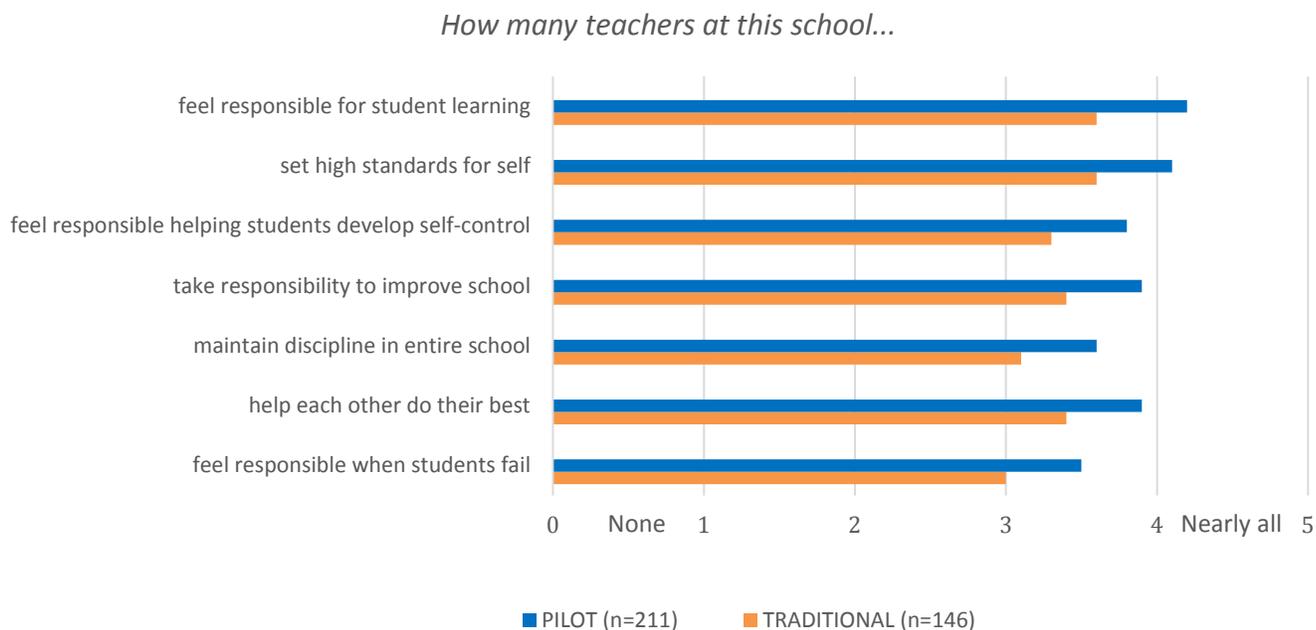
Perhaps the most challenging negotiation of the original Belmont Pilot School MOU was autonomy over staffing schools. Negotiations with LAUSD and United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) began in 2004 and continued through 2007 when the MOU was signed by UTLA President, A.J. Duffy, and the new LAUSD Superintendent, David Brewer. Every Pilot School has in place an Elect-To-Work (EWA) agreement that is developed by the teaching staff and clearly states the agreed-upon work conditions for UTLA collective-bargaining members. Typically, the EWA contains the following:

- The length of the instructional day, school day, and work day
- The length of the instructional year, work year, and school calendar
- The amount of time or responsibilities an employee is required to render beyond the instructional/school work year or day set forth in the UTLA Agreement.
- Any additional required duty time, such as during summers, school breaks, etc.
- Any additional evaluation measure, which enhances the Pilot School

All teachers are required to sign the EWA as a condition of working at the school. If, after a year, a teacher is not following one or more of the responsibilities in the EWA, s/he can be excised from the school without any negative reflection on their teaching record.

Staffing autonomy has professional implications that extend beyond the annual Elect-to-Work agreement. In a study on teacher collaboration and cohesion, Bruce Fuller and colleagues posited that when teachers work closely together, a range of positive outcomes often follow: stronger motivation among teachers, a widely shared commitment to lift all students, and less staff turnover.¹⁵ Fuller and colleagues tested this idea through a survey of LAUSD teachers in 10 Pilots, 10 charters, and 2 traditional, comprehensive high schools. The survey covered a variety of topics related to collaborative work, motivation, views regarding their school’s cohesion, and which fellow teachers they sought out for advice on several different topics. The findings revealed that Pilot School teachers are more likely to share teaching strategies and exercise collective responsibility than teachers in traditional schools (see Figure 6). They also reported higher levels of trust among their colleagues, and a shared commitment to lifting students and improving one’s school, compared with peers in traditional schools.

Figure 6: Collective Responsibility-Items with Significant Differences (Fuller, 2014)



Overall, the Pilot School autonomies work together to support teacher leadership and community-driven, student-centered schooling. We turn now to the evidence on student outcomes in Pilot Schools.

Part 4: Student Outcomes

Local autonomy matters because it leverages powerful teaching and learning for students. As described above, giving teachers and other site-based leaders control over their work unleashes enormous creative energy into schools and classrooms. With this burst of innovation also comes a heightened responsibility for making public clear and compelling student outcome measures that communities can track, fight for, and celebrate over time. These measures should include common indicators that are shared across the system such as graduation and college-going, but the real power of the Pilot School movement lies in combining these standard measures with alternative assessments that capture how students are meeting locally-determined sets of competencies. Only then can schools move beyond a culture of compliance to own their data and use it to learn and improve. This is the real promise of local autonomy over assessment.

To help communicate the variety of Pilot School student outcomes, we offer a sampling of three local outcome measures used by different sets of Pilot Schools. Our intent is to portray the richness and opportunity these data afford schools, teachers, parents, and students to learn and improve. Following these alternative measures, we turn to two sets of outcome measures widely considered to be important in the lives of young people. The first uses the district’s school experience survey data to assess the culture of Pilot Schools and the socio-emotional well-being of students. The second focuses

on high school graduation and college enrollment. We are intentionally privileging these measures over standardized test measures traditionally used to punish and sanction schools. These measures are publicly available through several public, private, non-profit, and partnership organizations.¹⁶ We have also chosen not to compare or rank schools on these measures, although we acknowledge that some schools are doing better than others on standard outcomes. Further analysis is needed to probe these differences in a way that helps propel the movement forward.

Innovative Local Measures

Biliteracy

With the passage of Proposition 58, the number of dual language programs is on the rise, guided by a new [English Learner Roadmap](#) that supports “opportunities to develop proficiency in multiple languages.” Complementing this effort is the national [Seal of Biliteracy](#) movement that “promotes bilingual pride” and “help schools to promote bilingualism by providing medals and seals.” Although these efforts are leading the way, there is very little support for collecting data on biliteracy. Instead, compliance data focuses on reclassification rates and English proficiency. Taking seriously the measurement and use of biliteracy data is a frontier that Pilot Schools have an opportunity to influence.

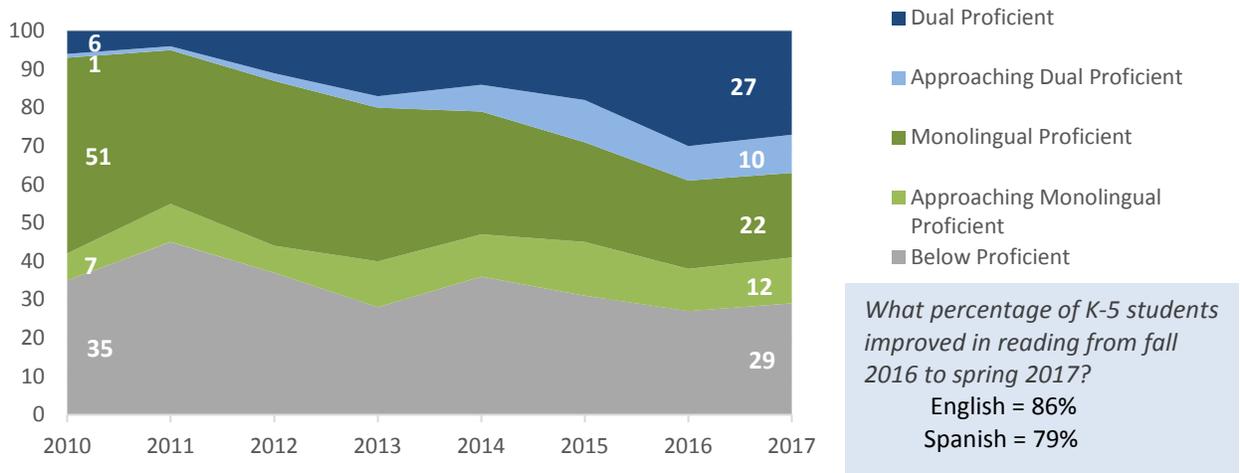


Currently, five Pilot Schools are listed in the district’s [Dual Language Bilingual Programs School Directory](#): Ambassador School of Global Education (ASGE), Gratts Learning Academy for Young Scholars, Lucille Roybal-Allard Elementary School, Porter Ranch Community School, and the UCLA Community School. Principal Yousef Kang of ASGE explains that her school is a member of the “International Schools Studies Network, which is part of the Asia Society. We receive a Hanban Grant through the Asia Society as well as a grant to support our Korean language program through the Korean Education Center in Los Angeles (KECLA).” Pilot Schools have sought these types of global and local partnerships to build on the linguistic assets of their families.

The partnership with UCLA at the UCLA Community School has helped develop infrastructure to measure biliteracy from Kindergarten through graduation—guided by a local vision to prepare students as biliterate, bilingual and multicultural learners.¹⁷ Over the past nine years, the Spanish-English dual language program has developed through 5th grade and is currently being extended to the secondary grades. To support this program development, the school created routines for documenting practice and collecting Independent Reading Level data using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System in the Lower Grades and a different reading assessment in the Upper Grades.¹⁸ These two assessments allow teachers to score student fluency, decoding, and reading comprehension on a developmental continuum.

Exercising their local assessment autonomy, the school adapted these systems in a dual language context and used the longitudinal student-level data to create five dual language learner profiles: dual proficient, borderline dual proficient, monolingual proficient, borderline monolingual proficient, and low proficient. These profiles were created as a counter narrative to the mainstream English-dominant assessments by the school’s research committee, a group that consists of teachers, students, researchers, and district personnel. The biliteracy data is used to: (1) provide a foundation for teaching; (2) guide curriculum planning; (3) link assessment to instruction; (4) evaluate and grade; (5) support student self-assessment and goal-setting; (6) engage parents in supporting language learning at home; (7) guide intervention; and (8) ground iterative Plan-Do-Study-Act improvement cycles.

Figure 7: Independent Reading Levels in English and Spanish (K-5) (% students)



As Figure 7 describes, the percentage of dual proficient or biliterate students in the Lower Grades has steadily increased over the past eight years. Upper Grades biliteracy data collection has just begun, but the school has increased the number of students graduating with the Seal of Biliteracy each year.

Student Spotlight: Joselyne Franco



Joselyne Franco entered the UCLA Community School in 2009 as a 7th grader and graduated in 2016 with the Seal of Biliteracy. She is currently a pre-med Sophomore at UCLA and is also pursuing a minor in Spanish. This Spring, Joselyne will help conduct parent interviews in Spanish, as part of a research study on the school’s Multigenerational Arts School Arts (MASA) Program. She continues to exemplify the school's motto, *Where We Grow Together*.

Civic Engagement

The need to strengthen our democracy feels more acute today than it has in decades. Public schools have an important role to play in addressing this need. Research conducted over the last two decades suggests that a variety of civic learning opportunities can foster greater and more informed civic and political engagement across diverse groups of students.¹⁹ Yet studies also point to inequalities in these important civic learning opportunities along lines of race and social class.²⁰ The [Leveraging Equity and Access in Democratic Education Initiative](#) (LEADE) from UC Riverside’s School of Education and UCLA’s Center X, is collaborating with educators in four school districts to collect and analyze data so as to deepen, expand, and equalize civic learning. LAUSD’s school board passed a resolution in May 2017 endorsing this effort and LEADE is currently working with Pilot Schools to use student surveys to create school-based reports on civic learning opportunities.

While all Pilot Schools are committed to educational equity, seven foreground the value of civic engagement and social justice in their names: Academies of Education & Empowerment, Public Service Community School, Responsible Indigenous Social Entrepreneurship School (RISE), Social Justice Humanitas Academy, Social Justice and Leadership Academy, School of Social Justice (Marquez), and School of Social Justice (Contreras). Nova Meza, principal of School of Social Justice at Miguel Contreras Learning Complex, collaborated with LEADE researcher John Rogers to create a student survey on civic learning that includes (among many other topics) questions about the school’s particular focus on community service.

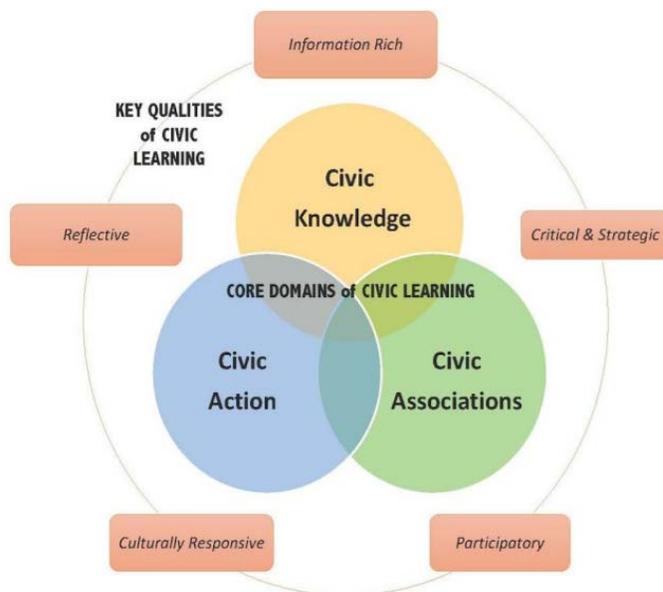


Figure 8: LEADE Key Qualities of Civic Learning

The School for Social Justice began in 2002 as an academy at Belmont High School, moved to the new Miguel Contreras Learning Complex in 2006, and became a Pilot School in 2013. Service learning is at the center of the school’s curricular design to encourage students to take ownership of their education and develop a deeper understanding of social justice issues. Multi-disciplinary service learning projects emphasize student voice, student choice, and student involvement. As the school’s vision states, “Graduates of The School of Social Justice will continue to educate, organize, and advocate as lifelong champions of dynamic social change.”

The LEADE Initiative administered a civic engagement survey to 192 students from grades 9 to 12, about half of the school’s population, in the winter of 2018. The survey included items about three core domains—civic knowledge, civic associations, and civic action—as represented in the LEADE framework

(Figure 8). The school found the results instructive. For example, they learned that girls are more likely than boys to value getting involved in improving their community—a finding that can inform how teachers differentiate instruction. Finally, LEADE tailored the survey to understand the effect of the school’s signature projects. Responding to the item “I feel the Service Learning Projects push me to learn more about social justice issues,” 85% of students agreed or strongly agreed—compelling evidence that the school is preparing students to be “champions of dynamic social change.”²¹

Graduation by Exhibition

LAUSD Pilot Schools have assessment autonomy. While all schools must meet federal and state graduation requirements, schools also have the ability to consider the student outcomes that they have set and add their own internal graduation requirements that more authentically measure those outcomes. For example, a dozen Pilot K-12 and high schools require their 12th graders to do a culminating presentation or exhibition (also known as Senior Portfolio and Defense) of their learning, illustrating their high school journey, how they have met their schools’ graduation outcomes and sharing their postsecondary plans. These schools include: Academic Leadership Community, Boyle Heights STEM High School, Communication & Technology School, Community Health Advocates School, Critical Design and Gaming School, East LA Performing Arts Magnet, Huntington Park Institute of Applied Medicine, LA High School of the Arts, New Open World Academy, Responsible Indigenous Social Justice Entrepreneurs School, School for the Visual Arts and Humanities and STEM Academy of Hollywood. Each Pilot School assesses student exhibitions through a staff created rubric that outlines levels of competency that students are required to meet. If students do not meet the basic level of competency, they receive support from their teachers to improve their presentation and/or complete assignments and present a second time or until they achieve the presentation requirements.

Academic Leadership Community (ALC) became a Pilot School in 2008. In 2010, ALC seniors first presented their learning to their families, teachers, and community members in three main areas: academic learning, leadership experiences and community involvement. ALC staff devised a system for students, at each grade level, to maintain binders that contained their best work, revisions of their work, transcripts, community service projects, etc. In 2015, the binders were digitized and in 2017 seniors were able to prepare their graduate presentations by compiling work from their digitized portfolios. Using a framework/rubric that outlined all required portfolio components, students addressed their growth as learners, leaders, and as members of the ALC and larger community. Additionally, a detailed portfolio presentation guide assisted students in creating their presentations, and enabled students to share their journey at ALC using artifacts and evidence to support their growth.

Upon completion of visual presentations, students practice presenting to their peers and assess themselves using the ALC Senior Portfolio Presentation grading rubric. Seniors share their digital portfolios and presentations ahead of time with panel members who are scheduled to assess their presentations. Panels are comprised of student family members, teachers, fellow students, ALC alumni, and community members. Students present their portfolio for 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of

questions and answers. After presentations, student and family members are excused to enable remaining panel members to assess the presentation using the portfolio grading rubric. The rubric focuses on presentation delivery, design, and content. Students return to receive a composite rating for their work, comments, and congratulations from the panelists.

The staff has refined the portfolio and presentation process every year by gathering feedback from participant surveys. ALC lead teacher Max Castillo-Sanchez has helped coordinate the graduation presentations from the beginning. He shares, “We’ve improved the process each year by using pathway time to show students how to collect and analyze the data, create smart goals, and practice presentations because we want students to internalize our themes of academics, leadership, and community, and talk about how they will use their learning outside of ALC.”²²

Student Spotlight: Katherine Trejo



2012 ALC alumni Katherine Trejo graduated from UC Santa Cruz and is now Education Program Coordinator at United Way of Greater Los Angeles heading the Young Civic Leaders program. She frequently participates in ALC events and was one of the panel members at the 2017 ALC senior presentations. She shares that, “Through the community aspect of ALC portfolio, I interned in Board Member Monica Garcia’s office and that connection led to my current job. The support of my ALC teachers and completing the senior portfolio solidified what I wanted to do professionally: to help my community and give back.”

Comparison Measures

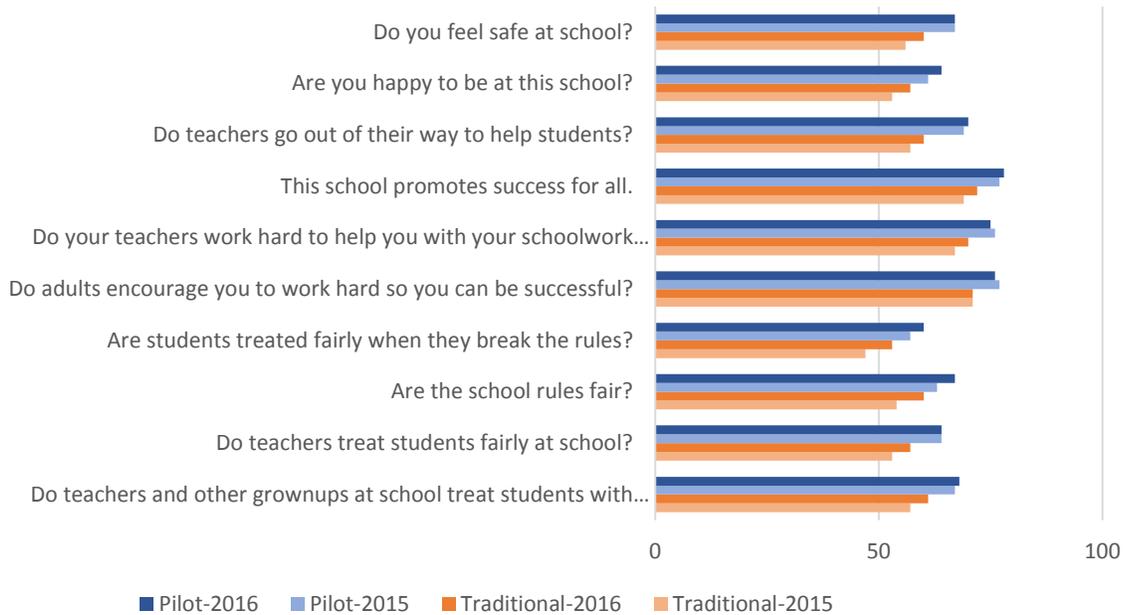
Socio-emotional Well-Being and Support

Our current political and social context has focused public attention on students’ socio-emotional well-being in schools. We know that key to student success is feeling safe and happy at school, being supported and respected by teachers, and belonging to a fair and inclusive school culture. Each year, the Los Angeles Unified School District administers a School Experience Survey (SES) designed to capture and track this complex set of outcomes, among others. Delia Estrada conducted a quantitative study using these survey data to explore whether the experience of students at autonomous schools differed from traditional LAUSD schools.²³

Estrada analyzed 25 items from the SES, using data from 2015 and 2016. The questions were selected to provide indicators for five elements of schools’ “Cultural Proficiency” from the students’ perspective: Assessing Culture (four items); Valuing Culture (six items); Managing Dynamics of Difference (five items); Adapting to Culture (five items); and Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge (five items). The analysis

utilized the percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed with the items. Thirty-nine schools were in the Pilot School sample, and 44 schools were in the traditional school sample. Based on these analyses, Estrada found a significant difference between LAUSD Pilot Schools and traditional schools on many of the selected items. Figure 9 highlights those items with the largest difference (significant at the $p < .05$ level).

Figure 9: Student Well-Being & Support: LAUSD School Experience Survey (Estrada, 2017)



Overall, these data illustrate that Pilot Schools are providing a more positive school culture than traditional LAUSD schools. More students in Pilot Schools than traditional LAUSD schools report that they feel safe, happy, supported, and respected—all strong indicators of student success in college, career and life.

Student Spotlight: Mara Tinajero



Mara is a proud graduate of Humanitas Academy of Arts and Technology (HAAT) at the Torres Campus in East LA. She attributes her success as a current student at UC Santa Barbara to the “enormous amount of support” she received at HAAT. She shares “Without HAAT, I believe I would have had a difficult time navigating the higher education system as many of my peers did. Although I am now an alumnus of HAAT, I still feel highly supported by the staff as they continuously check in on me, provide me with valuable information and encourage me to strive towards my career goals.” Mara is currently on track to become a teacher and earn her Master’s in Education.

Graduation and College-Going

An important indicator of student success is graduation from high school, and increasingly, graduation from college. LAUSD has foregrounded 100% graduation as its primary goal and has made steady progress district-wide. From 2012 to 2016, the district’s graduation rate increased from 68% to 77%, and the Pilot Schools’ rate increased from 78% to 85%—8 percentage points higher than LAUSD. To understand the growth of the longest running Pilot Schools—those that opened between 2007 and 2012—Figure 11 displays the change in graduation rate since 2013. The original seven Belmont Pilots improved by 11%, from 70% to 81%, and the second wave of 17 LA Pilots improved from 78% to 88%—both exhibit rates of growth that exceeded the overall LAUSD rate of 9% during the same period.²⁴

Figure 10: 2015-16 Pilot School Graduation Rate is 8 Percentage Points Higher than LAUSD

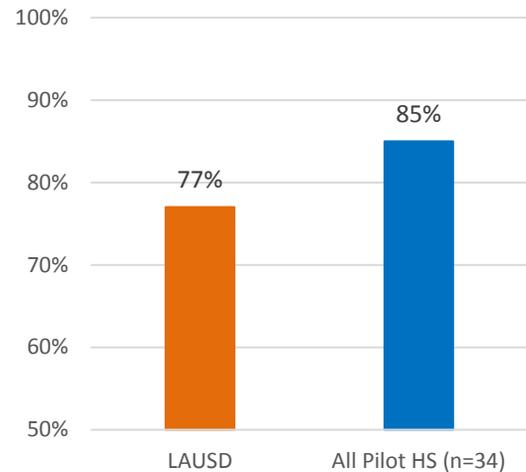
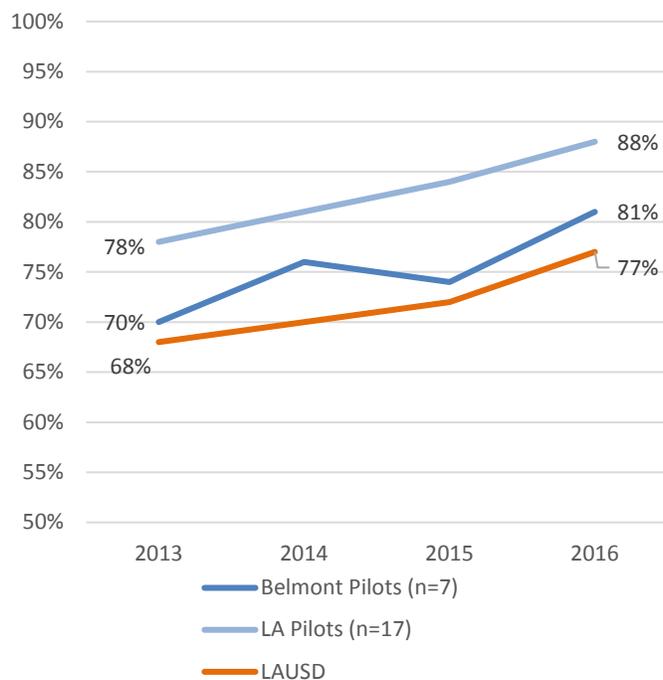


Figure 11: Graduation Rate Growth Greater than LAUSD for Longest Running Pilot Schools (est. 2007-12)



Similar to the graduation rate growth, Figure 12 uses data from the National Student Clearinghouse to describe the change in Pilot School students’ immediate enrollment in college. The college enrollment rate in the original Belmont Pilots and the LA Pilots both increased by 4% from 2014 to 2016 while the district average remained flat. Looking further into the data for all Pilot Schools, Figure 13 describes that Pilot School students’ immediate enrollment in 4-year colleges is 7 percentage points higher than LAUSD.²⁵

Figure 12: College Enrollment Growth is 4 Percentage Points Higher than LAUSD for Longest Running Pilot Schools

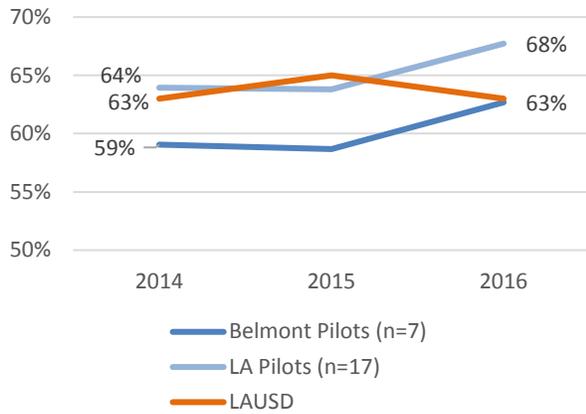
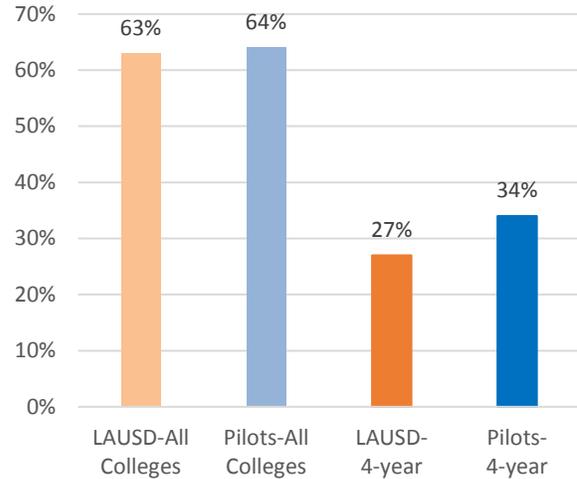


Figure 13: Pilot School Graduates' Enrollment in 4-year Colleges is 7 Percentage Points Higher than LAUSD (2016)



Although there is clearly room for growth, both of these indicators are evidence that Pilot Schools are on the right path. These findings are especially promising given the fact that Pilot Schools, as a group, serve higher proportions of students of color and families living in poverty than the district.

Student Spotlight: Sidronio Jacobo



Sidronio Jacobo was a member of the first Governing School Council at the Los Angeles High School of the Arts (LAHSA). He graduated from high school in 2010 and from UC Berkeley in 2014. Sidronio is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Higher Education and Organizational Change at UCLA’s Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. His research interests focus on college access and persistence of first generation college-going students. He also works as a graduate student researcher at the UCLA Community School and leads the school’s longitudinal effort to track alumni to and through college.

Part 5: Advancing and Supporting the Movement

The LAUSD Pilot School movement is a powerful community-based, teacher-driven, student-centered reform that has weathered significant district changes in leadership and local district organization. As a network of schools, this within-district movement has been supported by a broad-based coalition of partners, including UTLA, community-based organizations, local businesses, educational support organizations, and higher education institutions. These partnerships have helped sustain the pilot school movement, yet each school has experienced significant challenges in preserving their local autonomies.

One of the greatest challenges cited in the principal survey was turnover in local district leadership and school directors. Some Pilot Schools report having a new director every year or two. As one principal commented, “each director has had a learning curve since none of them were familiar with Pilot Schools.” Many of the principals commented that the Intensive Support and Innovation Center (ISIC) helped facilitate local autonomy before it was disbanded a few years ago. Although Pilots now receive support from the Local Options Oversight Committee (LOOC), many would appreciate additional central office support to sustain their autonomies across LAUSD units and departments. In particular, principals cited the need for more support to ensure staffing autonomy—a key lever for developing intentional and trusting school communities.

Reflecting on these and other challenges, the Pilot School principals offer the following recommendations for advancing and sustaining the movement:

- Reaffirm Pilot School autonomies with LAUSD Central Offices and Local Districts, increasing understanding of and support for Pilot autonomies;
- Use innovative Pilot School practices as models to increase graduation and college going rates district-wide;
- Provide support for the Pilot School Organization to focus on data-based school improvement and continue to increase students’ college, career and civic success.

In conclusion, this report has attempted to take stock of the collective experience of 47 schools—both to capture the quality of the movement and to honor the persistence and reform spirit of local educators working for a decade to make change within the nation’s second largest public school district. Although we have used multiple data sources to understand the impact of the Pilot movement, many questions remain.

- We know that Pilot School teachers experience higher levels of trust and collective responsibility, but we have only anecdotal evidence that Pilot School teacher retention is higher than average.

- We know that parents feel honored and engaged at Pilots, but we don't know how the implementation of the new LAUSD system of universal enrollment will impact the choices families make about their neighborhood schools.
- We know that making budget decisions locally is key to the Pilot Schools' success, but we don't know how these local funding structures impact the larger district.
- We know that some of the Pilot Schools have managed to raise additional funds through grants and partnerships, but we don't know the level or sustainability of these funds.

Finally, we know that 27,046 students in Los Angeles currently attend a Pilot School and more than that number are Pilot School alumni. We have shared a handful of their stories in this report and we have learned a bit about their school experiences as well as their college and career pathways. Based on our research, there is widespread agreement from current Pilot School students and graduates of their affection for their schools. Students appreciate that their schools care for them, challenge them, and prepare them for college and their adult lives. To propel the Pilot movement forward, we need to hear much more from students—to be inspired by their dreams and the power of their ideas.



Acknowledgements

The authors and the Pilot School Organization Executive Board would like to thank the many individuals that encouraged and initiated the Los Angeles Unified Pilot Schools including Board President Mónica García; former Local District Superintendent Richard Alonzo; Belmont Pilot Schools Network Director Edmundo Rodriguez; LA Unified leadership including Linda Del Cueto, Vivian Ekchian, Kelly Rozmus Barnes, Kathi Littmann; Cris Gutiérrez who assisted in bringing small, personalized schools to LAUSD; past UTLA President AJ Duffy; former UTLA officers Linda Guthrie, Greg Solkovits, Joel Jordan and Dori Miles; Associated Administrators of Los Angeles former presidents Mike O’Sullivan and Judith Perez; Dan French and staff from Center for Collaborative Education (CCE) including Rachel Bonkovsky, and Augustin Vecino who provided on the ground support for the first Belmont Pilot Schools; community members Veronica Melvin, Angela Sabrano, Marvin Andrade and all member organizations of the Belmont Education Collaborative; and the first Pilot School principals, teachers, staff, community members, parents and students.

The authors also extend their thanks to those who continue to support Pilot Schools including the members of the LAUSD Board of Education especially Board President Mónica García; Board Vice-President Nick Melvoin and staff; Kelly Gonez and staff; Ref Rodriguez and staff; Acting Superintendent Vivian Ekchian; Office of School Choice Chief George Bartleson; staff member Christina Esguerra and the LOOC Committee; Local District superintendents and the many Pilot School directors; UTLA leadership including Secondary VP Daniel Barnhart, Board of Directors members and local Chapter Chairs; Associated Administrators of Los Angeles President Juan Flecha; LA Education Partnership including Peggy Funkhauser, Ellen Pais, Jane Patterson and past and current staff; the Pilot School Organization(PSO) leadership including current Chair Cynthia Gonzalez and Vice-Chair Paul Hirsch; and past PSO chairs Jose Luis Navarro IV, Ari Bennett and Tadeo Climaco; current PSO Executive Board members Pearl Arredondo, Susan Canjura, Gregory Fisher, Nova Meza, Kristine Puich and Claudia Rojas; United Way of Greater Los Angeles and the Communities for LA Student Success (CLASS) member organizations including Alliance for a Better Community, CARECEN, Community Coalition, Educators 4 Excellence, Families in Schools, InnerCity Struggle, Los Angeles Urban League, MALDEF, Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, Proyecto Pastoral/ Promesa Boyle Heights, Teach Plus, and Youth Policy Institute; and Jorge Nuño and NTS Communications.

We are indebted to our colleagues at the Center for Powerful Public Schools and the UCLA Center for Community Schooling who helped organize and analyze the data in this report. In particular, we would like to thank Carlos Ibarra, Marco Antonio Murillo, and Marisa Saunders for their careful scholarship throughout the report writing process.

Finally, our deep gratitude to the funders whose vision and support strengthened the Pilot Schools movement: the Annenberg Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation and the Weingart Foundation.

Center for Powerful Public Schools provides services to school districts and individual public schools in Greater Los Angeles and across California. We build the capacity of educators to create and sustain powerful public schools that prepare every student for college, career and life, and equitable classroom experiences. Our learner-centered teaching practices have impacted more than 15,000 students. We believe that powerful public schools are essential to an equitable society, economy, and democracy. To learn more about the Center, visit www.PowerfulEd.org.

The UCLA Center for Community Schooling is a campus-wide initiative to advance [university-assisted community schools](#). As stable anchor institutions, universities play a unique role as K-12 community school partners. As one of the founding LAUSD Pilot Schools, [UCLA Community School](#) has engaged in this work for almost a decade and the [Mann UCLA Community School](#) partnership has just begun. The UCLA Center for Community Schooling was created to share the work of these schools and join with others to unite the K-12 community schools movement with higher education civic engagement reforms. For more information, visit www.communityschooling.gseis.ucla.edu.

Endnotes & References

- ¹ Gencer, A. Plan aims to boost school choice: New campuses in the Pico-Union area would get freedoms similar to those of charter sites. *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 2006. Retrieved 3/15/18, <http://articles.latimes.com/print/2006/jul/25/local/me-belmont25>
- ² The 10 Year Anniversary Pilot School Principal Survey was administered to all 47 Pilot School principals between November 2017 and February 2018. See Appendix B to view the Pilot School Principal Survey instrument.
- ³ In 2000, the district was organized into 11 sub-districts, each assigned a letter. In 2004, the district was reorganized in an effort to reduce the budget and cut the districts from 11 to 8. The new sub-districts were identified by number versus letter. In 2012, the district was again reorganized into 5 local district offices called “educational service centers”—four regional headquarters and an additional local district for schools that were considered innovative or non-traditional (known as the Superintendents’ Intensive Support and Innovation Center, or ISIC). In 2015, “education service centers” were replaced with six geographically-based local districts: Central, East, Northeast, Northwest, South and West.
- ⁴ See the LAUSD Pilot School Manual at https://achieve.lausd.net/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/262/Pilot%20Manual%202016-17_v3_02.03.17.pdf; Meier, D., & Gasoi, E. (2017). *These Schools Belong to You and Me: Why We Can't Afford to Abandon Our Public Schools*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- ⁵ Meier, D., & Gasoi, E. (2017). *These Schools Belong to You and Me: Why We Can't Afford to Abandon Our Public Schools*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, p. 125.
- ⁶ Overall LAUSD and Pilot School demographic information retrieved by the Los Angeles Unified School District; also available from the California Department of Education Data Reporting Office: <https://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthGrd.aspx?cds=1964733&agglevel=district&year=2016-17>
- ⁷ Unless otherwise noted, all data cited from current Pilot School principals are retrieved from the Pilot School Principal Survey.
- ⁸ Aman, A.D., (2017). *Transformative community school practices and impact: A tale of two community schools*. Loyola Marymount University: Unpublished doctoral dissertation
- ⁹ See Garcia, A. (2015). *Designed Equity: Reflection on Youth-focused Game Jam in South Central LA*. dml Central blog. <https://dmlcentral.net/designed-equity-reflection-on-youth-focused-game-jam-in-south-central-la/>
- ¹⁰ See Ware, H. & Kitsantas, A., (2007). Teacher and collective efficacy beliefs as predictors of professional commitment. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 100(5), 308-321; Saunders, M., Alcantara, V., Cervantes, L., Del Razo, J., López, R., & Perez, W. (2017). *Getting to Teacher Ownership: How Schools Are Creating Meaningful Change*; Providence, RI: Brown University, Annenberg Institute for School Reform.
- ¹¹ Interview with Dr. Jody Priselac conducted on March 12, 2018.
- ¹² See Payne, P. (2013). *Pilot school leaders’ experiences in innovation*. California State University, Northridge: Unpublished doctoral dissertation, p. 76.
- ¹³ Interview with Esther Soliman, current Administrator of LAUSD’s Linked Learning Office, conducted on March 13, 2018.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ See Fuller, B., Waite, A., Lee Chao, C., with Benedicto, I.M., (2014). *Rich communities in small high schools? Teacher collaboration and cohesion inside 25 Los Angeles campuses*. A Report from the L.A. Teacher Ties Project University of California, Berkeley and UCLA.
- ¹⁶ LAUSD School Experience Survey results are available at <http://reportcardsurvey.lausd.net/surveys/reports.jsp>. Other data are available through the California Department of Education Data Reporting Office (<https://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest>), The Education Data Partnership (<https://www.ed-data.org/>), the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (<http://www.caaspp.org/>), as well as other sites.
- ¹⁷ See Quartz, K.H., Kawasaki, J., Sotelo, D., & Merino, K. (2014). Supporting assessment autonomy: How one small school articulated the infrastructure needed to own and use student data. *Journal of Educational Change*, 15(2), 125-152.
- ¹⁸ See Fountas, I., & Pinnell, G. S. (2010). The continuum of literacy learning, Grades PreK-8; Pinnell, G. S., & Fountas, I. C. (2010). Research base for guided reading as an instructional approach. *Scholastic: Guided reading research*.

¹⁹ See Gould, J., Hall Jamieson, K, Levine, P., McConnell, T., & Smith, D.B., (eds). (2011). *Guardian of democracy: The civic mission of schools*. Philadelphia: Lenore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center and the Civic Mission of Schools.

²⁰ See Kahne, J. E., & Sporte, S.E. (2008). Developing citizens: The impact of civic learning opportunities on students' commitment to civic participation. *American Educational Research Journal*, 45(3), 738-766.

²¹ Results available at <https://centerx.gseis.ucla.edu/leade/>

²² Interview conducted with ALC co-lead teacher Max Castillo Sánchez on March 2, 2018.

²³ Estrada, D. (2017). *Utilizing the Lens of Cultural Proficiency to Judge the Impact of Autonomous School from the Student Perspective* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation).

²⁴ Overall LAUSD and Pilot School high school graduation data provided by the Los Angeles Unified School District; also available from the California Department of Education Data Reporting Office (<https://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/cohortmulti/CohortMultiYear.aspx?agglevel=D&cdscode=19647330000000>).

²⁵ Overall LAUSD and Pilot School College enrollment data provided by the Los Angeles Unified School District based on district and school-level data reports from the National Student Clearinghouse (<http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/>)

References

Aman, A.D., (2017). Transformative community school practices and impact: A tale of two community schools. Loyola Marymount University: Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

Estrada, D. (2017). Utilizing the lens of cultural proficiency to judge the impact of autonomous school from the student perspective. University of California, Los Angeles: Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

Farris-Berg, K. & Kohl, K. (2014). Teachers design and run L.A. Unified 'Pilot' Schools. Education Week Blog.

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/on_california/2014/11/teachers_design_and_run_l.a._unified_pilot_schools.html

Fuller, B., Waite, A., Lee Chao, C., with Benedicto, I.M., (2014). Rich communities in small high schools? Teacher collaboration and cohesion inside 25 Los Angeles campuses. A Report from the L.A. Teacher Ties Project University of California, Berkeley and UCLA.

Garcia, A. (2015). Designed Equity: Reflection on Youth-focused Game Jam in South Central LA. dml Central blog. <https://dmlcentral.net/designed-equity-reflection-on-youth-focused-game-jam-in-south-central-la/>

Gencer, A. (2006) Plan aims to boost school choice: New campuses in the Pico-Union area would get freedoms similar to those of charter sites. Los Angeles Times, July 25, 2006. Retrieved 3/15/18, <http://articles.latimes.com/print/2006/jul/25/local/me-belmont25>

Gould, J., Hall Jamieson, K, Levine, P., McConnell, T., & Smith, D.B., (eds). (2011). Guardian of democracy: The civic mission of schools. Philadelphia: Lenore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center and the Civic Mission of Schools.

Kahne, J. E., & Sporte, S.E., (2008). Developing citizens: The impact of civic learning opportunities on students' commitment to civic participation. *American Educational Research Journal*, 45(3), 738-766.

Klein, A. (2015). No Child Left Behind: An overview. *Education Week*, 34(26), 1.
www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/no-child-left-behind-overview-definition-summary.html

Martinez, R. & Quartz, K.H. (2012). Zoned for change: A historical case study of the Belmont Zone of Choice. *Teachers College Record*, 114(10).

Meier, D. & Gasoi, E. (2017). *These schools belong to you and me*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Nesoff, J. (2007). *The Belmont Zone of Choice: Community-Driven Action for School Change*. Coalition of Essential Schools. Horace, v23 n4. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ853147>

Payne, P. (2013). *Pilot school leaders' experience in innovation*. California State University, Northridge: Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

Pinnell, G. S., & Fountas, I. C. (2010). *Research base for guided reading as an instructional approach*. Scholastic: Guided reading research.

Quartz, K.H., Kawasaki, J., Sotelo, D., & Merino, K. (2014). Supporting assessment autonomy: How one small school articulated the infrastructure needed to own and use student data. *Journal of Educational Change*, 15(2), 125-152.

Saunders, M., Alcantara, V., Cervantes, L., Del Razo, J., López, R., & Perez, W. (2017). *Getting to Teacher Ownership: How Schools Are Creating Meaningful Change*; Providence, RI: Brown University, Annenberg Institute for School Reform.

UCLA/CARECEN Research Collaborative (2009). *A community zoned for change: Lessons from the first three years of the Belmont Zone of Choice*. <http://centerx.gseis.ucla.edu/resources/policy-briefs/BZOC%20report%20final-12-17-09.pdf/view>

Ware, H. & Kitsantas, A., (2007). Teacher and collective efficacy beliefs as predictors of professional commitment. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 100(5), 308-321

Appendix A: Pilot School Awards, Recognitions and Presentations

Group Awards and Recognitions

2018 Teacher-Powered Schools

Of the more than 120 teacher-powered public schools spanning 18 states, serving students from Pre-K to 21, in urban, suburban, and rural settings, 17 of them are LAUSD Pilot Schools, representing the largest concentration of teacher-led public schools in the country:

Academic Leadership Community School for Advanced Studies

Academy of Medical Arts

Ambassador School of Global Education

Ambassador School of Global Leadership

ArTES

Baldwin Hills Elementary Pilot and Gifted High Ability Magnet

Dr. Julian Nava Learning Academy

East LA Renaissance Academy

Humanitas Academy of Art and Technology

Los Angeles High School of the Arts

NOW Academy

School for the Arts and Humanities

School of History and Dramatic Arts

School of Social Justice

Social Justice Humanitas Academy

The Studio School

UCLA Community School

LAUSD Teacher of the Year Award

Dana Brooks, U.S. History and Government teacher at John H. Francis Polytechnic High School (16-17)

Melanie Du Bose, English and filmmaking teacher at East Los Angeles Performing Arts Magnet (15-16)

Marina Henderson, third grade teacher at Garvanza Elementary School. (16-17)

Grace Maddox, high school art teacher at UCLA Community School. (16-17)

Lisa Robles, fourth and fifth grade teacher at Lucille Roybal-Allard Elementary School. (16-17)

Christine Zhou, secondary mathematics teacher at Social Justice Leadership Academy. (15-16)

Linked Learning Certified High Schools

Los Angeles High School of the Arts
School of History and Dramatic Arts
School for the Arts and Humanities
School of Business and Tourism
STEM Academy of Hollywood

2017 U.S. News and World Report

Of the 18 LA Unified public high schools that received Gold, Silver or Bronze status as best public high schools in the country, half of them are Pilot Schools:

Silver

Academies of Education and Empowerment

Academy of Medical Arts

Libra Academy

School of Business and Tourism

School of History and Dramatic Arts

Social Justice Humanitas Academy

STEM Academy of Hollywood

UCLA Community School

Bronze

Academy of Scientific Exploration

2015 United Way of Greater Los Angeles Top 25 Inspirational Teachers

Of the top 25 teachers cited by UWGLA in 2015 who inspired their students every day, six came from Pilot Schools:

Isagani Celzo, School of Social Justice at Marquez High School

Mark Gomez, Critical Design and Gaming School

Patricia Hanson, Critical Design and Gaming School

Sasha Guzman, Social Justice Humanitas Academy

Katie Raining-Briggs, Responsible Indigenous Social Entrepreneurship School

Jason Torres-Rangel, UCLA Community School

Individual School Awards, Recognitions and Presentations

The Pilot School Principal Survey asked schools to self-report their awards, recognitions, and presentations. The following list includes those schools who responded to this question.

ArTES was selected as an Arts School Network “Exemplary Arts School”, one of only 40 schools in the US and Canada. Received AALA Administer of the Year Award; four Teacher of the Year Awards; Mr. Holland's Opus Music Award; Annual citywide dance trophies.

Academic Leadership Community School for Advanced Studies is the only AVID School of Distinction in LAUSD.

Baldwin Hills Elementary Pilot/Gifted High Ability Magnet: Ranked in Top 5 in LD West for ELA based on 2017 SBAC performance; Honored with "Excelling Magnet" award for 2017 SBAC results; Lauren Carr, first grade teacher, selected as an LAUSD Rookie of the Year Teacher, 2016-2017 school year. Balboa Gifted/High Ability Magnet: National Blue Ribbon School; California Gold Ribbon School; Instruction Tech Initiative School.

Community Health Advocates School: Only Mental Health Career Pathway in California; Annual presenter at Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools Conference and National Child Traumatic Stress Network Conferences.

Gratts Learning Academy for Young Scholars: First AVID elementary school in LA Unified. Huntington Park Institute of Applied Medicine: US News and World Report Top US School 2016; Great Public Schools Now Top 49 School List.

LIBRA Academy: Awarded US News Best High Schools Gold & Silver medals 2016, 2017. Recognized monthly by Local District for high attendance, graduation rate, and A-G on track rate.

Los Angeles High School of the Arts: RISE Up Conferences Student Presentations; Drama Teachers Association of Southern California student awards; and California Educational Theatre Association Awards for Technical Theatre students.

Marquez School of Social Justice: AVID certified school; Newsweek: Silver Medal School

Porter Ranch Community School: Gold Ribbon School

San Fernando Institute for Applied Media: Presentations at TedTalks Education; CUE conference, Helsinki, Finland; Technology Conference, Bogota, Colombia; Curriculum Conference; Facing History conferences; CBS Teacher-Student of the Month.

Social Justice Leadership Academy: 2018 International Center for Leadership in Education Model School; Recognized by State Superintendent Torlakson for Civic Learning; Washington Post Most Challenging Schools for three years; Facing History and Ourselves “Upstanders of the Year”; Franky Carrillo Teen Court recognized by L.A. County Courts.

Social Justice Humanitas Academy: 2015 National Community School Award; 2016 Teacher Powered Schools Academic Excellence award.

UCLA Community School: Governor’s Award for Innovation in Higher Education; UCLA Community Program of the Year.

Appendix B: 10 Year Anniversary Pilot School Principal Survey

This survey was created as a collaboration among the UCLA Center for Community Schooling, the Center for Powerful Public Schools, and the LAUSD Pilot Schools Organization. The purpose of the survey is to capture the history, experiences, practices, and outcomes of the current set of 47 Pilot Schools. This information will be used to create a report about the Pilot School Movement in LAUSD, in honor of the movement's 10th Anniversary and to inform future reform efforts in LAUSD.

1. **Email address ***

2. **Pilot School name**

3. **Principal's name**

4. **What year did you open as a Pilot School?**

Mark only one oval.

- 2008-09
- 2009-10
- 2010-11
- 2011-12
- 2012-13
- 2013-14
- 2014-15
- 2015-16
- 2016-17

5. **Part 1: Pilot School Origin and Context: How did you become a pilot school?**

Mark only one oval.

- new school start-up
- existing school conversion
- Other: _____

6. Why did your school become a pilot school?

7. **Part 2: Pilot School Autonomies: To what extent does your school use the following Pilot autonomies to develop innovative structures and practices?**

Mark only one oval per row.

	never use	almost never use	occasionally use	moderately use	always use
Budget	<input type="radio"/>				
Curriculum & Instruction	<input type="radio"/>				
Assessment	<input type="radio"/>				
Schedule	<input type="radio"/>				
Professional Learning	<input type="radio"/>				
Staffing	<input type="radio"/>				
Governance	<input type="radio"/>				

8. **For the autonomies you use, please describe the innovative structures and practices that you have been able to develop as a Pilot School.**

9. **What barriers or challenges have you faced in exercising the Pilot School autonomies?**

10. **Part 3: District Support: How have the central and local districts supported your work as a pilot school?**

11. How might the central and local districts improve their support of Pilot Schools?

12. **Part 4: Partnerships and Other Forms of Support: What other partners and forms of support (e.g., external grants and affiliations) help your school flourish?**

13. **How might these partnerships and supports be improved?**

14. **Part 5: Local Measures of Success: What are the three most important measures of your school's success? Include measures your school collects and/or standardized measures collected at all schools.**

15. **Part 6: Leveraging Change Beyond your School: How does your school engage with other networks and organizations to advance educational equity and excellence beyond your school? List any any honors or awards your school has received.**

16. **Part 7: Lead Teachers.** We'd like to connect with the lead teachers at your school to engage them in the 10-year anniversary report. Please list their names and emails. Thank you!

17. **Anything else you would like us to know?**
