

Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAS) California

Transformation Award Winner:

For providing students a fully online personalized learning program enabling outstanding achievement on state exams.

The California-based Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAS) provides students in kindergarten through grade 12 a school experience like no other. With more than 90 online courses from which to choose, students enjoy a personalized, full-time, fully online program tailored to their goals and abilities that has helped them achieve outstanding results on California state exams.

Students use FuelEd and K¹² curriculum to work at an individualized pace, and teachers supplement their lessons with live, virtual sessions and office hours.

In addition, teachers serve in multiple roles—as mentors, homeroom teachers, and content teachers—to help students be more successful and support their learning coaches.

The AAS program requires that teachers remain in constant communication with students and families. At least once a week, teachers call or e-mail families to check in with students and discuss progress, concerns, and successes. Teachers are also required to return work with quality comments within three days of submission. This strict grading policy is in place to ensure that students receive the feedback they need to grow and improve.

According to parent Randi Fine, “The amount of personal connection between teacher and student has made the difference in my son's academic success.”

On average, 80 percent of AAS students return to its program annually. Through word of mouth, student enrollment has increased at a rate of 20 percent or greater over the last several years. Enrollment nearly doubled for the current school year with the addition of four new schools to the AAS program.

The program has also experienced strong academic results. AAS’s California High School Exit Exam scores have increased to a 95 percent pass rate, and the number of students that are behind or at risk has significantly decreased.

Crater Lake Charter Academy

Transformation Award Winner:

For providing the ultimate flexibility in a blended learning environment so students can chart their own personalized learning path.

Crater Lake Charter Academy opened in 2013 to provide students with an onsite, blended learning option, and to provide students additional flexibility in determining their path to graduation.

Crater Lake Charter Academy operates on an accelerated block schedule allowing students to focus on four classes at a time, increasing the depth of knowledge being garnered from each course. Crater Lake Charter Academy offers on site core instruction classes, along with electives to increase the level of support provided, as well as providing student to student learning opportunities. In addition, students may elect to come into the Academy's Learning Center for assistance in online course work between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm Monday through Friday.

The Academy is housed in an inviting facility that appeals to students. There are sofas, lounge areas, social spots, and computer labs. The primary goal of Crater Lake Charter Academy is to provide a personalized education for every student every day. It is their staff's focus to build rapport and establish relationships that foster a positive educational experience for all of their students.

The Academy uses PEAK on a daily basis to manage student engagement and activity. Teachers use it to determine the specific needs of students so they can provide help when and where it is needed. PEAK Library allows teachers to personalize learning for each student by leveraging additional third party content and adding their own content when needed.

In just one year, the Academy has grown from a program within an existing school building to one that needs an additional site—its own building. So far this fall, the Academy has 600 course enrollments—and is expecting more enrollments during the school year.

Evergreen Public Schools

Transformation Award Winner:

For serving the community's education needs with a breadth of online and blended learning options available district-wide.

Evergreen Public Schools in Vancouver, WA, serves nearly 27,000 students and is the fourth largest school district in the state. The district had experimented for years with different online education programs. But once the school board determined that online learning was a cost-effective way to meet the diverse education needs of the entire community, the board mapped out a plan for a more comprehensive online program.

After experimenting with various vendor-supplied curricula, the district selected a suite of online learning solutions from Fuel Education that delivers the diverse curriculum, technology tools, and services that support the district's ambitious district-wide education programs. These programs include:

- Students in grades 6–12 can choose the district's **IQ Academy**, which is designed to serve students in either a full- or part-time online learning environment, and uses the curriculum from FuelEd's content partner, K¹².
- The **Evergreen Flex Academy** serves families that choose the district's full-time blended option. Students access the curriculum at home and attend a district brick-and-mortar school at least one day a week for optional electives or to receive in-person assistance with core subjects.
- The district's **Twilight Program** uses FuelEd's online credit recovery solution for all students who need to make up credits to get back on track to graduate. Expelled students also are enrolled in the program to ensure learning continues throughout their expulsion period.
- Evergreen district students have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma in an alternative school environment at **Legacy High School**, which uses the FuelEd credit recovery solution to provide individualized learning plans to meet each student's personal needs and goals.
- Eighth-grade middle school students have three online language options through FuelEd's content partner, Middlebury Interactive Languages™. Students attend a computer lab for one period during the day and complete the course online.
- Students at **Henrietta Lacks (HeLa) Health and Bioscience High School** can choose from four world languages. Students attend a language lab during one class period and complete the course online.

Evergreen is a part of a growing group of districts that are finding ways to use online learning to provide educational opportunities that meet a variety of needs for students at every grade level—and it is experiencing improved academic success as a result. In 2013, students completed 3,983 credit recovery courses; 323 eighth-grade students earned a high school world language credit; and 225 students enrolled in a blended learning program.

This fall, Evergreen adopted PEAK Library so the district can create its own courses and deliver them through PEAK. The district also implemented a school-wide program at its alternative high school, using PEAK and PEAK Library, to provide learning opportunities for these students when they are off-campus. It is also using PEAK Library at its Flex Academy.

Middle School 385 – School of Business, Finance and Entrepreneurship,

Brooklyn, NY

Transformation Award Winner:

For introducing a personalized in-class online tutoring program to help students master mathematics concepts, resulting in dramatically improved state math exam scores.

In 2013, Middle School 385 – School of Business, Finance and Entrepreneurship, which is located in the heart of Brooklyn, was struggling when New York adopted the Common Core State Standards, and three quarters of its students did not pass the math exam with Common Core content. When looking for a way to improve math comprehension and exam scores, Principal Anne-Marie Malcolm knew she needed to look beyond the standards and the test, and focus on finding a way to personalize instruction to meet the individual needs of her students.

Principal Malcolm decided to pilot LearnBop, an automated tutoring system for grades 5–9 mathematics, because it simulates a one-to-one tutoring experience. An exclusive partner of Fuel Education, LearnBop guides students through problems step-by-step so they can learn fundamental math concepts at their own pace. Principal Malcolm selected two teachers and three classes—a sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade class—to participate in the pilot program. Only 20 of the 50 students in the program had passed the year-end state math exam that included Common Core math content.

During the 2013–2014 school year, the math teachers presented concepts in class, and then students used the LearnBop tutoring and assessment program for one hour a week, either during class or in an after-school program. Student performance data was reported to the teachers each week, and the teachers used this information to target classroom instruction to better address some of the students' common mistakes, and personalize instruction.

At the end of the year, 48 of the 50 students who participated in the program passed the state mathematics exam. Beyond that, the students' self-confidence grew as they learned higher-level methods of reasoning and problem-solving skills.

Not only did Middle School 385's program produce a greater number of students who passed the test, but it also helped prepare them for a world in which STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) is increasingly important in many career paths.

Poudre School District (PSD) Global Academy

Transformation Award Winner:

For being the first comprehensive, blended school to achieve among the highest growth scores in the state of Colorado.

The Poudre School District (PSD) Global Academy blended learning program brings together the best of both worlds for students—schedule flexibility and the ability to work at your own pace while taking online courses at home, plus on-campus instruction and activities.

Originally launched in 2009 as an online school for grades 6–12, the PSD Global Academy has evolved over the last six years to incorporate all grades levels from kindergarten through twelfth; on-site staff; blended learning courses using a variety of instructional and support strategies; and a hybrid schedule. Through what Principal Heather Hiebsch calls “structured flexibility,” students participate in FuelEd Online Courses or the K¹² curriculum at home three days per week, and attend class on campus with their teachers and classmates two days per week.

Students work at their own pace during the days they are at home. When they come to the Academy, they benefit from direct instruction, hands-on labs, group projects, advisory sessions, community clubs, and events.

Instruction is rigorous both on campus and at home. Teachers focus on differentiating instruction to individualize learning, as well as teaching non-cognitive skills to improve student success. In order to increase the partnership between parents and classroom teachers, parents must attend a Learning Coach professional development series, participate in the Learning Coach mentorship program, and complete a week of activities called Orientation Jump Start.

Academic and behavior interventions are developed by a cross-functional Student Support Team and include strategies that are implemented both at home and on campus. Student growth is monitored constantly through online and on-campus formative and summative assessments. Each student has an individualized learning plan that is modified throughout the year.

Based on state test scores from the 2013–2014 academic year, PSD Global Academy is among the highest performing schools for all Colorado schools—online, blended, and traditional schools in the public, private, and charter sectors—and all grade levels. PSD’s elementary reading and math scores are in the 98th and 95th percentiles statewide respectively; middle school reading and writing scores are in the 95th and 99–100th percentiles statewide; and high school reading and writing scores are both in the 99–100th percentiles statewide. Students at PSD Global Academy also led the district and the state by reaching “Strong and Distinguished Command” achievement levels in fourth and seventh grade social studies and fifth and eighth grade science.

According to Kate Stevens, PSD Global Academy high school English teacher, freshman class advisor, and yearbook sponsor, “PGA has always fostered innovation through hybrid learning, and given students a place to grow and succeed. This community allows learners to experience true 21st-century preparation with the support of dedicated teachers, staff, and students.”

St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS)

Transformation Award Winner:

For providing personalized learning to enable high-risk students to graduate.

St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS) decided to implement an online program to help the district's high-risk students complete high school. During the 2013–2014 school year, SLPS established four Virtual Learning Centers within the high schools across the city that had the highest dropout rates. The centers are staffed by district personnel who serve as facilitators to assist students enrolled in the online program.

Using FuelEd's online credit recovery courses, assessment tools, prescriptive learning and remediation content, certified online teachers, and online learning platform, the Virtual Learning Centers offer a viable way for students to recapture credits, stay in school, and graduate.

In addition, the district reaches out to students under the age of 21 who have dropped out, and encourages them to return to school and take advantage of the credit recovery program at the Virtual Learning Centers.

St. Louis Public Schools tracks student progress through PEAK reports to identify struggling students early on so they can intervene and provide students the support they need. Teachers spend one-to-one time with students to provide additional help, answer questions, and keep them on track.

SLPS uses PEAK Library to build its own courses and to offer students additional fine arts course options, such as art appreciation and humanities. Instructors use PEAK Library to customize courses for students by building lesson plans tailored to each student's knowledge level.

St. Louis recently added a middle school program to assist students with significant skill deficits. PEAK Library allows the district to review and refresh students' early elementary skills, as needed, in order to keep them on track with their peers.

During the first year, 61 SLPS students graduated from the full-time virtual program. In addition, more than 1,000 students—approximately 20 percent of the district's graduates—were supported by the program when they took original credit and credit recovery courses, as well as when they received supplemental content in their traditional classes.

St. Louis Public Schools is committed to doing whatever is necessary to help students graduate. The district's goal is to provide the program and curriculum that best fit each student's individual needs.

Trigg County High School

Transformation Award Winner:

For using online learning to bring a wide variety of education opportunities to its students, despite its rural setting.

Trigg County Public Schools in Cadiz, KY, decided that online learning provided a viable way to expand the range of courses available to its high school students. By using FuelEd Online Courses, the FuelEd Anywhere Learning System, and Middlebury Interactive Languages™, Trigg County High School is able to exist in a rural setting with a limited number of staff members and still offer students a wide variety of courses that they can complete at home or in a lab setting at school.

Trigg County uses Middlebury to provide access to world languages that otherwise would not be available. The school also offers credit recovery courses to students who have failed a subject in the classroom, or who have transferred to the school and are missing a course that is required to graduate.

Students are able to take electives that interest them through FuelEd, and complete the courses outside their daily onsite class schedule. They can explore introductions to possible career paths—like culinary arts and veterinary science—that the school had never been able to offer before. For students who transfer into the county after their junior year and who need to complete the state requirement for “demonstrated performance-based competency in technology,” Trigg County provides them the option to take one of several FuelEd technology courses.

When the school’s Site Based Council decided in 2014 that there would be no on-site summer school option available, Trigg County was able to offer online summer school courses through FuelEd so students could stay on track to graduate with their class.

In 2014, Trigg County High School was named a District of Innovation by the state of Kentucky. This designation enables the school to take advantage of certain state waivers in order to rethink what a school might look like, and to redesign student learning in an effort to engage and motivate more students and increase the numbers of those who are college- and career-ready. The district also believes that part of creating an effective and engaging learning experience includes online and blended learning programs offered in partnership with FuelEd.