Los Angeles Unified School District
PILOT SCHOOLS

ANNUAL REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHO WE ARE

This report summarizes relevant data about Pilot Schools. The intention is to provide data on the performance of Pilots, a summary of what is working well in Pilot Schools and outlining future steps to improve student outcomes.

As the second largest school district in the country the Los Angeles Unified School District can lead the way on autonomous models that are yielding positive results in student outcomes. Currently Pilot Schools serve over 20,000 students throughout the Los Angeles Unified School District. Pilot Schools are in all local districts and all 7 school board districts.

By examining data and understanding the context in which schools are operating and who they serve, we hope to work together to strengthen the Pilot School model across the district. This will require collaboration between the Los Angeles Unified School District, the United Teachers of Los Angeles, and the Associated Administrators of Los Angeles.

Pilot Schools began in 2008, with the central idea that the district had the capacity, talent, and staff to innovate and transform education for students. The values that guide the work of Pilot Schools include:

- *Equity:* A Pilot School ensures success for all students by identifying practices that provide all students opportunities to reach high levels of achievement regardless of race or socio-economic status.
- *Collaboration:* There is a commitment to a strong collaborative school culture with an emphasis on shared decision-making and shared responsibility for student achievement.
- *Personalization:* Pilot Schools, whether small or comprehensive, demonstrate a strong effort to consider individual student characteristics and needs, and implement flexible instructional practices in organizing the learning environment.
- *Innovation:* An innovative pilot school implements creative methodologies and challenges the status quo, whether through student empowerment, broader use of technology, development of partnerships with other industry sectors, or curricula that brings learning outside the classroom.
- *Autonomy:* At the heart of autonomy is the belief that the people closest to students should control the decisions that affect them. Pilot Schools are freed from many constraints to be more innovative, and to empower teachers and engage the community.

Pilot Schools' autonomies include hiring, curriculum and assessment, budget, governance, and schedule. Pilot Schools' focus on stakeholders' voices, teacher leadership, and input makes Pilot Schools unique in this district. The partnership and advocacy from the United Teachers of Los Angeles has contributed to the inception and success of Pilot Schools. They are student-centered, teacher-driven schools that incorporate high levels of community involvement to provide students with a more personalized environment.
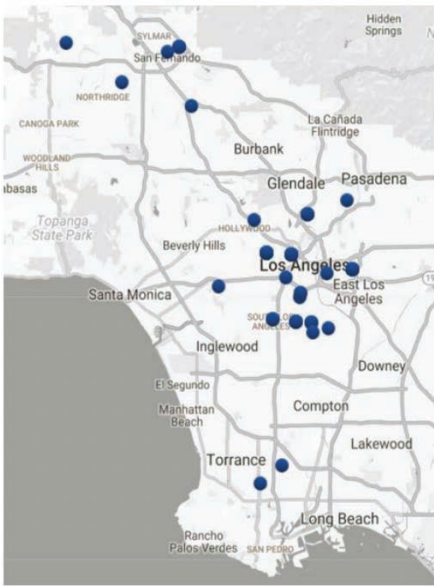
Although teachers at Pilot Schools are a part of the United Teachers of Los Angeles, teachers work together to develop, write, and approve the Election to Work Agreement. Every year, teachers receive an Election to Work Agreement that outlines educators' commitments to improving student outcomes. Examples include implementing instructional strategies, advisory programs, and additional intervention and tutorial support.

Pilot Schools use a distributive model of school leadership. Increased stakeholder voice in school governance is a crucial feature of this model. The principal evaluation process allows staff, students, and families to provide feedback on their effectiveness in leading the school. The evaluation process and the Election to Work Agreement create an environment that requires high levels of collaboration.

All but one Pilot School offer a small school model. Currently there is only one comprehensive high school, Polytechnic High School that is also a Pilot School. Most schools exist on shared campuses with other Pilot Schools or other district comprehensive schools. This composition requires even greater collaboration among school leaders. Families who choose Pilot Schools get to experience both a personalized education, while not losing out on programs that are typical to larger comprehensive schools like sports.

A unique aspect of pilot schools is the extensive collaboration with families and the community at large. Stakeholder voice has been instrumental since the founding of the Pilot School model. The governance model along with the values of collaboration and personalization increase stakeholder voice in budget development, hiring and the principal evaluation process.

Overall, the school board's vision about local decision-making are reflected in the Pilot School model.

SCHOOL LEVEL BREAKDOWN

Span Schools , 3

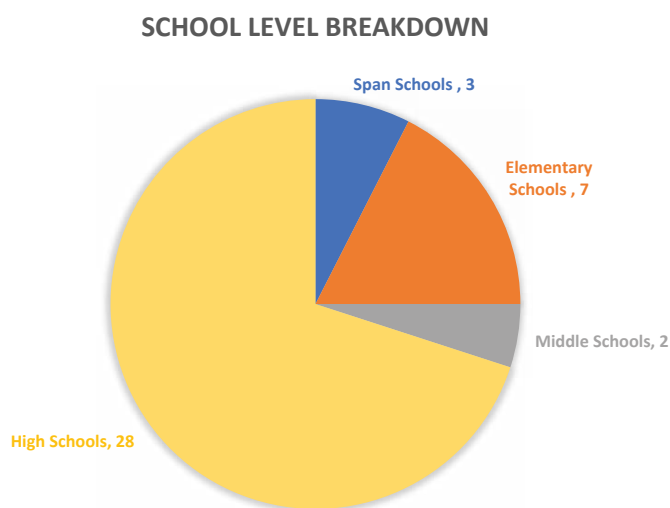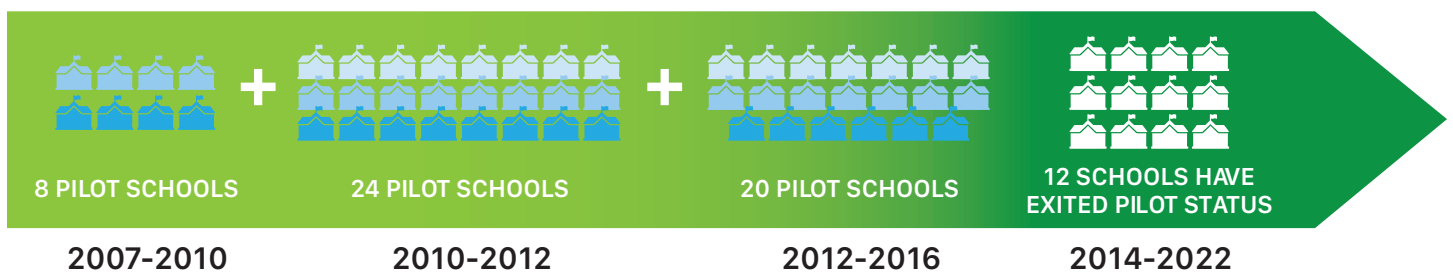Elementary Schools , 7

Middle Schools, 2

High Schools, 28

FIGURE 1 There are 40 Pilot Schools in the Los Angeles Unifed School District. Although most schools are high schools, there are elementary, middle and SPAN schools throughout each Local District.

PILOT SCHOOL HISTORY

Pilot Schools grew out of the district's need to invest in new school construction and improve educational outcomes in targeted high-need areas throughout the Los Angeles Unified School District. Pilot Schools needed the support of key leaders to become a reality. Richard Alonzo, former Local Superintendent of District F, "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" (Fauci & Quartz, 2018[1]). In 2007 the Belmont Pilot Schools Memorandum of Understanding was created after the opening of the Miguel Contreras Learning Center. As the construction of new campuses increased, so did the expansion of Pilot Schools. An LA Pilot Schools Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2010 with the addition of 10 new schools and in 2013 the Local Schools Stabilization and Empowerment Initiative was signed (Fauci & Quartz, 2018[1]). At its peak there were 52 Pilot Schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

PILOT SCHOOL TIMELINE

8 PILOT SCHOOLS	24 PILOT SCHOOLS	20 PILOT SCHOOLS	12 SCHOOLS HAVE EXITED PILOT STATUS
2007–2010	2010–2012	2012–2016	2014–2022

[1] Fauci, J., & Hunter-Quartz, K. (2018). A Decade or Innovation How the LAUSD Pilot School Movement is Advancing Equitable and Personalized Education. Los Angeles.

Pilot Schools have received varying levels of support since their inception. There have been 4 major district reorganizations. Approximately ten years ago, Superintendent John Deasy created the Intensive Support and Innovation Center (ISIC) to provide students with unique needs more targeted services. Since most Pilot Schools served low-income communities, they became a part of this support center. The Superintendent and Directors of ISIC understood how to support the Pilot School model. This had a significant impact on the level of support that Pilot Schools received. The professional development in the form of a Menu of Services offered to schools allowed Pilot Schools to leverage their autonomies while receiving critical support from the district. Pilot Schools engaged in monthly full and half day meetings where they shared best practices and worked in autonomy focused committees. ISIC was disbanded in 2015 under the leadership of Superintendent Cortines and Pilot Schools were placed in different local districts based on region. Under this model Pilot Schools meet monthly with Non-Pilot Schools and attend Local District meetings which are comprised of training in local district initiatives. This has eroded the time Pilot Schools have had in coming together to collaborate, share and innovate around new practices.

The Pilot School Organization has been the only time that principals come together to get updates about Pilot Schools and discuss pressing issues and concerns. The Pilot School Organization meets quarterly for an hour and a half. Dr. Derrick Chau the Executive Director of Strategy and Innovation serves as the organizations sponsor. Pilot School principals have advocated for a director position since 2015 to provide them with the support they need to actualize the autonomies outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Teachers of Los Angeles, the Associated Administrators of Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles Unified School District. The position received funding for the 2021–2022 school year.

PILOT SCHOOLS SERVE MORE LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

Pilot Schools were the district's response to provide high-quality education to low-income, high-needs communities. Since its inception, the Los Angeles Unified School District has looked at Pilot School's success and outcomes to actualize these equity ideals. For this reason, understanding whom Pilot Schools serve is a critical component of the success of this model. Pilot schools serve a higher percentage of the following targeted subgroups, socioeconomically disadvantaged, Long Term English Learners, and Newcomer students. Traditionally these subgroups struggle on various district benchmarks, including graduation rates and "C" or better graduation rates.

Although demographic data can differ based on the community in which the school resides, most Pilot Schools are in communities with a high propensity of low-income students and students of color.

2021 Demographic % by Norm Day Enrollment

Category	Pilot Schools	Non-Pilot Schools
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	87.4	81
English Learners	17.8	21.5
LTEL	7.3	4.8
International Newcomer	3.9	2.9
Foster	0.8	1.1
Students with Disabilities	12	13
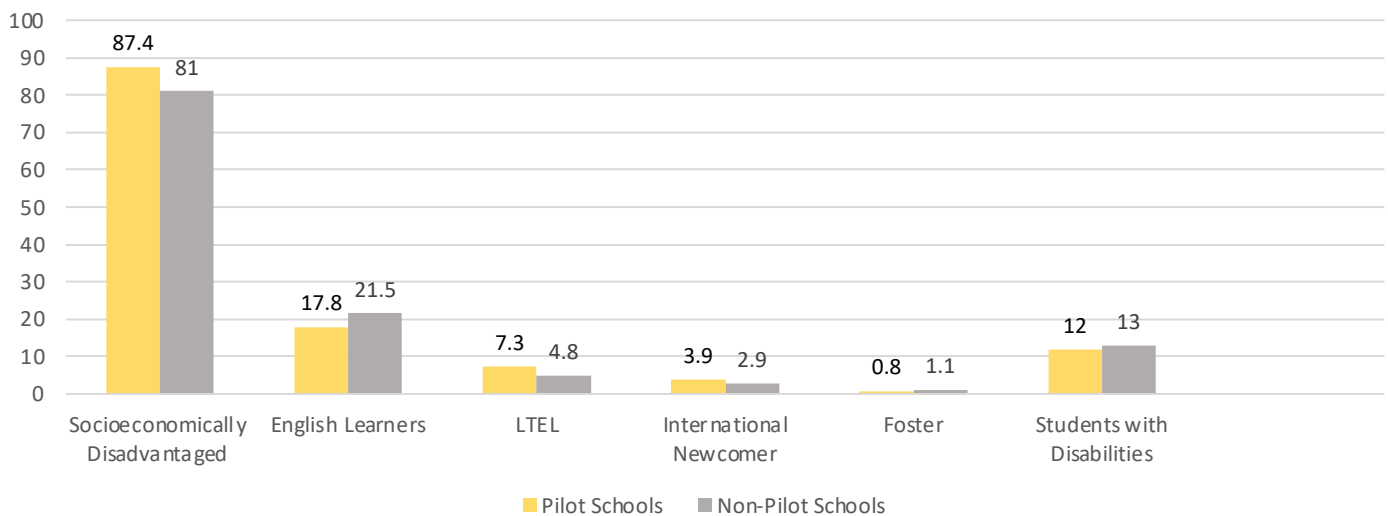
FIGURE 2 Source: Office of Data and Accountability Los Angeles Unifed School District (2021)

The district is committed to providing a high-quality education to all students. Over the last several years and especially with the occurrence of a global pandemic the Los Angeles Unified School District understood the importance of providing students socio-emotional supports. During the last decade Pilot Schools have led the way in fostering a rigorous academic setting, while providing students personalized and innovative socio-emotional supports. The goal has been to leverage pilot school autonomies and values to increase student academic success. The following data provides a glimpse into Pilot School outcomes.

EXCELLING ON EARLY LITERACY BENCHMARKS

Ensuring that every child has quality instruction and the access to a strong foundation is critical to their academic success and to overall life outcomes. The Los Angeles Unified School District set a goal to have 77% of kindergartens, 72% of 1st graders and 78% of 2nd graders meet early literacy benchmarks by the 2023-2024 school year. Elementary Pilot Schools are paving the way in meeting these outcomes.
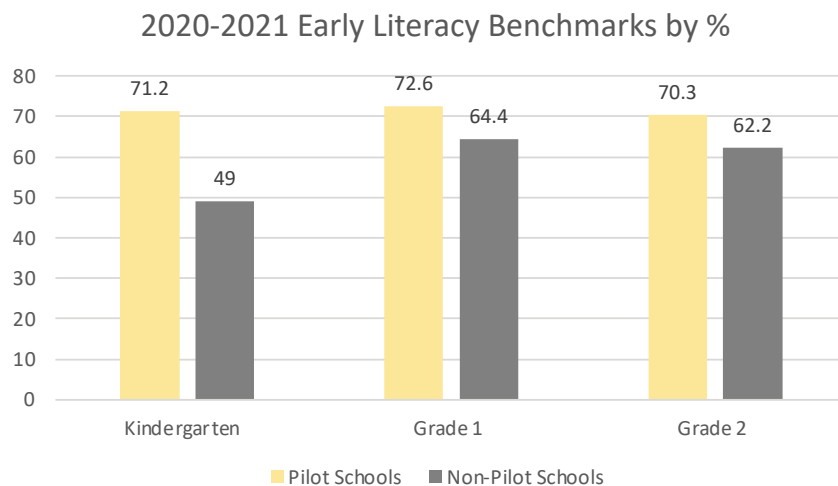
2020-2021 Early Literacy Benchmarks by %

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2
Pilot Schools	71.2	72.6	70.3
Non-Pilot Schools	49	64.4	62.2

FIGURE 3 Source: Open data website Los Angeles Unified School District (2022)

72.6% of first grade Pilot School students are currently meeting the districts 2023-2024 benchmarks. Kindergarten and 2nd grade Pilot School students are outperforming Non-Pilot Schools. These outcomes are promising and highlight the need to study the initiatives and strategies that elementary Pilot Schools are employing to garner these results.

The collaboration of teachers, critical partnerships, and ability to innovate curriculum all contribute to the success of schools. Baldwin Hills elementary school was highlighted for its academic achievement, which was due to teacher's curricular autonomy. According to a 2020 ABC 7 report "Their curriculum embraces African-American identity and experiences into daily lesson plans" (Lara, 2020[2]). Investing in personalized environment, while providing teachers curricular autonomy leads to the creation of curriculum that meets the needs of students. It is important to learn and expand this success.

[2] Lara, J. (2020). Once-Struggling Baldwin Hills Elementary School Thriving Academically After Revamp to Curriculum. Los Angeles: ABC 7.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND BEYOND

High School graduation is a key indicator of a school's and district's success. In addition to a high school diploma, ensuring that students meet college entrance requirements is of high importance. For most Pilot School students, a high school diploma and access to higher education are critical in breaking cycles of poverty. LAUSD has set a goal to increase the 9-12th grade 4-year cohort graduation rate of "C" or better to 70% by June 2026. Pilot Schools are leading the way in meeting this goal while serving targeted student populations. They performed better than LAUSD non-Pilot Schools on graduation rates and "C" or better rates in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

Addressing the needs of high school students begins early for several Pilot Schools. Schools like Huntington Park Institute of Applied Medicine at Marquez High School & the Academies of Education and Empowerment at Carson High School offer freshman Success and Summer Bridge programs. To increase personalization schools like the Science Technology Engineer and Math Green Design Academy at the Diego Rivera Learning Complex and the Social Justice Humanitas Academy at Chavez Learning Academies have strong peer mentoring programs. In addition to this support schools like the Communication and Technology School at the Diego Rivera Learning Complex and LIBRA at Marquez High School build intervention opportunities into their master schedule.

4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate by %

Year	Pilot Schools	Non-Pilot Schools
2019	86	78
2020	88	79.9
2021	88.7	80.8
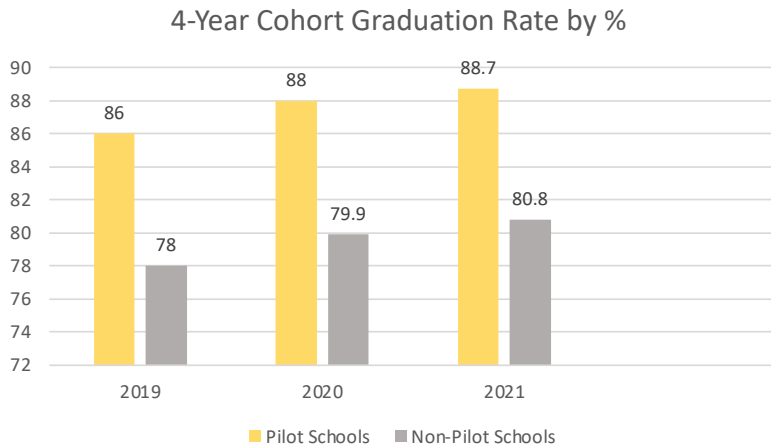
FIGURE 4 Source: Office of Data and Accountability Los Angeles Unified School District (2021)

4-year Cohort Graduation Rate "C" or Better by %

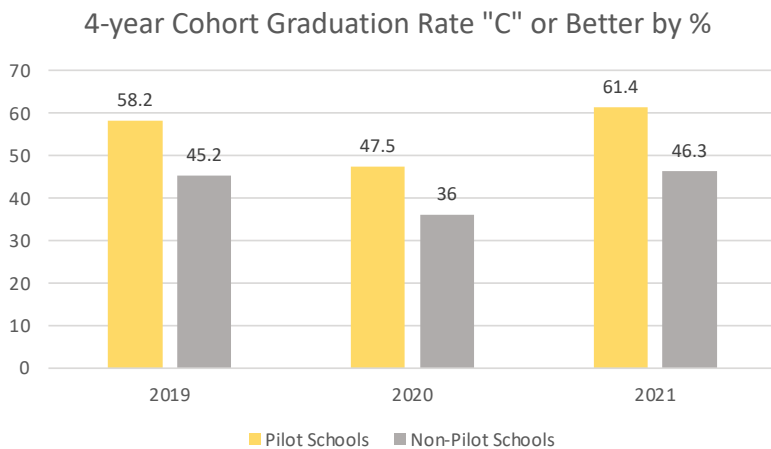| Year	Pilot Schools	Non-Pilot Schools
2019	58.2	45.2
2020	47.5	36
2021	61.4	46.3

FIGURE 5 Source: Office of Data and Accountability Los Angeles Unified School District (2021)

SCHOOL CULTURE AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Personalized environments and a focus on equity and collaboration support a college-going culture in LAUSD Pilot Schools. A college-going is evidenced by responses in the School Experience Survey (SES) and A-G "C" or better data. As a part of creating a student-centered personalized environment for its students over 80% of the Pilot Schools implement an advisory curriculum centered on either socio-emotional supports and college and career information. Pilot Schools adopt strategies to support students with college information, the college application process, and socio-emotional well-being. These strategies include an advisory curriculum focused on college and career, additional partnerships, and staff to support college work and social–emotional support. Currently 16 out of 40 Pilot Schools have Achievement and Commitment to Excellence coordinators that focus their work on building positive school cultures.

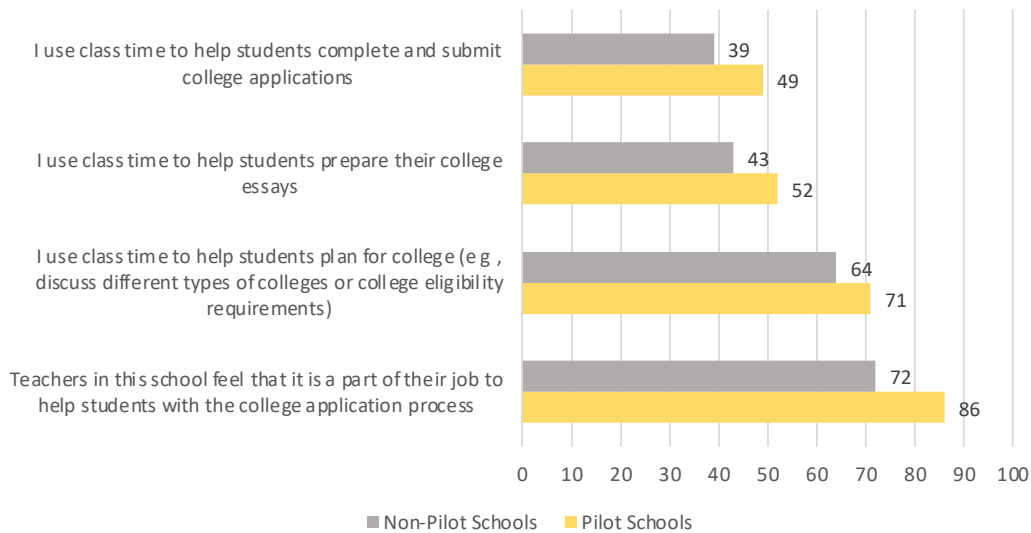### 2021 SES Teacher Responses Agree/Strongly Agree by %

I use class time to help students complete and submit college applications
- Non-Pilot Schools: 39
- Pilot Schools: 49

I use class time to help students prepare their college essays
- Non-Pilot Schools: 43
- Pilot Schools: 52

I use class time to help students plan for college (e g , discuss different types of colleges or college eligibility requirements)
- Non-Pilot Schools: 64
- Pilot Schools: 71

Teachers in this school feel that it is a part of their job to help students with the college application process
- Non-Pilot Schools: 72
- Pilot Schools: 86

■ Non-Pilot Schools   ■ Pilot Schools

FIGURE 6 Source: Office of Data and Accountability Los Angeles Unified School District (2021)

2021 SES Student Responses Agree/Strongly Agree by %

Adults at this school have helped me learn how to find free online help for the SAT or ACT
- Non-Pilot Schools: 50
- Pilot Schools: 58

Adults at this school have helped me learn how to find free online help for the PSAT
- Non-Pilot Schools: 36
- Pilot Schools: 41

Adults at this school have talked to me about the GPA I need to get into the colleges I want to go to
- Non-Pilot Schools: 61
- Pilot Schools: 70

Adults at this school have helped me learn the details of getting into college (completing applications, financial aid, etc)
- Non-Pilot Schools: 60
- Pilot Schools: 68
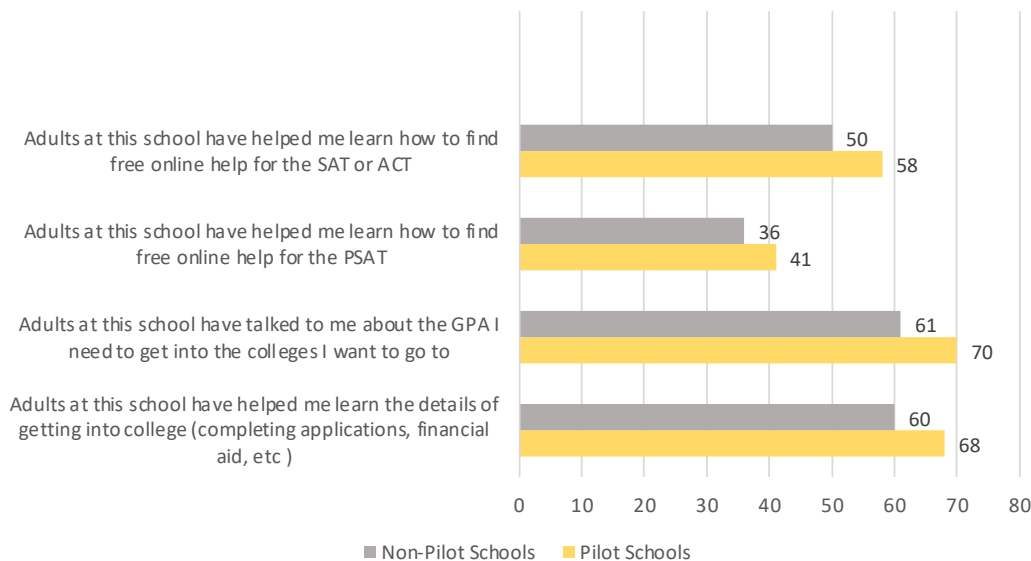
■ Non-Pilot Schools   ■ Pilot Schools

FIGURE 7 Source: Office of Data and Accountability Los Angeles Unified School District (2021)

Pilot schools outperformed LAUSD Non-Pilots schools despite pandemic conditions in three out of the four stakeholder categories on the School Experience Survey. Pilot school students responded Agree or Strongly Agree at a higher rate on 41 of the SES items compared to 37 of the SES items for Non-Pilot Schools. Pilot school staff responded Agree or Strongly Agree at a higher rate on 28 of the SES items compared to 10 for Non-Pilot Schools. Finally, Pilot School teachers responded Agree or Strongly Agree at a higher rate on 34 of the SES items compared to 9 for Non-Pilot Schools. Teacher data is important to Pilot Schools because they function as a teacher-powered model. The distributed leadership aspect of Pilot Schools is intended to bring parity in decision-making to allow those closest to students to inform school-wide practices. Sharing decision-making power acknowledges the strength, knowledge, trust, and professionalism of teachers.

Pilot schools are making progress in achieving the objective of addressing equity gaps while fostering a collaborative and inclusive education model.
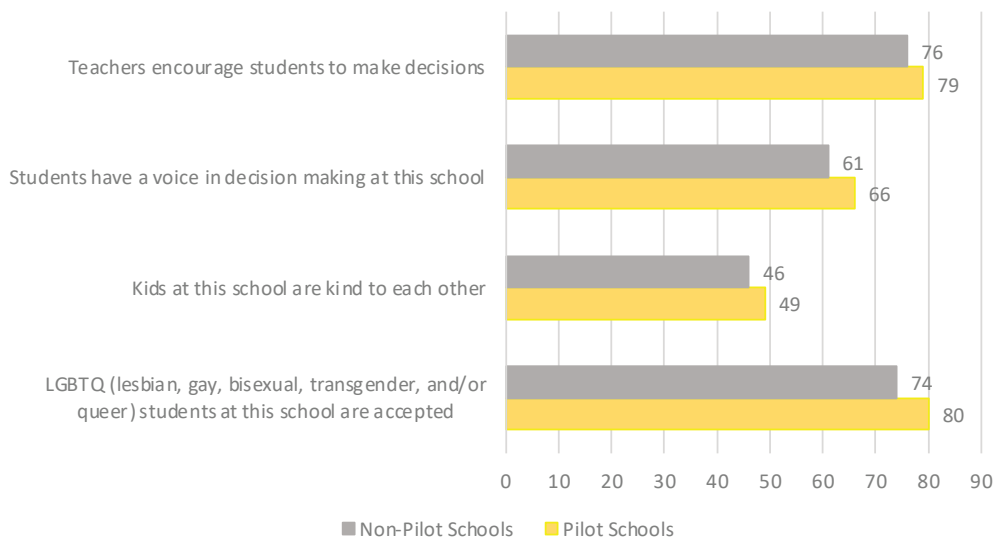
2021 Student SES Agree/Strongly Agree %

Question	Non-Pilot Schools	Pilot Schools
Teachers encourage students to make decisions	76	79
Students have a voice in decision making at this school	61	66
Kids at this school are kind to each other	46	49
LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer) students at this school are accepted	74	80

■ Non-Pilot Schools   ■ Pilot Schools

FIGURE 8 Source: Office of Data and Accountability Los Angeles Unified School District (2021)

Pilot Schools have led the way in the implementation of innovative practices throughout the Los Angeles Unified School District. Pilot high schools engage in practices like senior defense, student portfolio presentations and student led conferences. They use their calendar and professional autonomy to provide teachers weekly professional development time to increase staff collaboration.
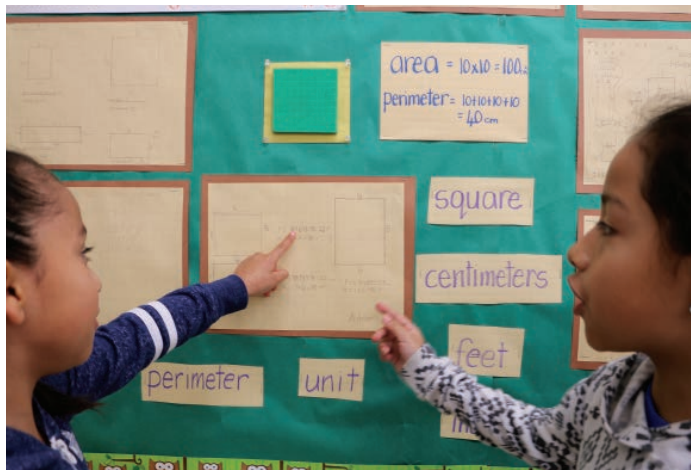
Over 50% of Pilot schools transitioned to mastery grading with over 60% implementing for more than 3 years. Pilot schools continue to lead the way in thinking about grading especially within the context of a global pandemic. A recent article highlighted the work taking place at Social Justice Humanitas Academy. According to the article staff "considered getting rid of grades altogether, but instead they decided on standards-based grading, a system that instead of giving A-F, student grades were based only on the mastery of specific skills." (Bavaria, 2021[3])

Los Stemateros, a student robotics group from STEM Boyle Heights High School have led the way demonstrating that kids from that community can excel in that field. There are currently 9 schools that are a part of Linked Learning, focused on exposing students to post-secondary careers. In addition to Linked Learning several Pilot Schools offer Career Technical Education Programs and Dual Enrollment. Early College Academy located on the LA Trade Tech Community College campus offers students the opportunity to gradate with an Associate of Arts degree.

Additionally, Pilot School academic distinctions include the 2021 California Distinguished Schools award for three of our Pilot Schools Huntington Park Institute of Applied Medicine at Marquez High School, the Social Justice Leadership Academy and Esteban Torres High School and Science Technology Engineering and Math Academy at Bernstein High School. Artes at the Cesar Chavez Learning Academy received the Exemplary Arts Education Award for advancing achievement in arts instruction for all students. Balboa Gifted Magnet is a 2021 Blue Ribbon school and Walnut Park Middle School Science Technology Engineering, and Math is a California Gold Ribbon School. Marquez School of Social Justice, LIBRA at Marquez, Social Justice Leadership Academy at Torres are a few of the Pilot Schools that have received Gold and Silver recognition by US News and World Report.

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[3] Bavaria, M. (2021, November 2). For This LA High School, the Pandemic Meant the End of Traditional Grades.

According to a survey given to Pilot School principals in the spring of 2021, 85.2% of survey respondents stated that synchronous instruction was more effective during virtual learning. In addition, 62.9% felt that pilot school autonomies made virtual learning more effective. The autonomies leveraged included schedule, budget, and elect-to-work agreement commitments. Schools opted to increase synchronous time with students, modify their bell schedules to meet students' needs, and continue to implement their advisory models. Although Pilot School principals indicated the use of schedule and budget autonomies over the pandemic period, they also indicated wanting the district to respect all other school autonomies. These include staffing and curriculum, and assessment. When asked about required participation in local district initiatives or programs that limit the use of their autonomies, they named the following:

1. LD Signature Strategies
2. Instructional Walks and Checklists
3. Breakthrough teams
4. Assessments
5. ABL/Master Schedule Initiatives
6. LD Professional Development

Pilot schools have expressed concerns about their inability to hire principals of their choice. This autonomy has become an important one for administrators, staff, and teachers. To address this autonomy, policy about Pilot schools being able to hire first choice principal candidates should be drafted and presented to the board.

Local district expectations of schools to abide by LD initiatives are still reflective in the number of meetings and training principals and their teams attend weekly and monthly. These demands can limit schools' opportunities to invest time and human capital in their own school goals and efforts. When local district initiatives supersede local school-based decisions it poses a challenge to schools that have made instructional choices. For example, a school decides on a specific reading strategy. They provide staff professional development on the strategy, pay teachers to attend training and implement instructional rounds. A local district can then develop its own set of reading strategies that they want all schools to implement. Teachers at Pilot Schools are then confused as to what to adhere to. It impacts how schools proceed with professional development and what they prioritize as a site.

Pilot schools need structured time and space to come together, collaborate and share best practices. Increased collaboration time can maximize opportunities to implement autonomies with fidelity. In addition, limiting LD meetings that Pilot schools are required to attend, especially as they relate to LD initiatives around curriculum and assessment, might create space that allows pilot schools to come together in meaningful ways.

STRENGTHENING PILOT SCHOOL SUPPORTS

Pilot Schools not only offer a unique educational choice for families, but they also provide the Los Angeles Unified School district an opportunity to lead increasing local-level decision making. Strengthening Pilot School autonomies can further expand their success. Strategic support on behalf of the district can help close achievement gaps that have persisted in communities throughout Los Angeles.

Current support structures include the addition of a Director of Pilot Schools Support under the School Design and Options office. The Pilot School Steering Committee, which ensures Pilot School Accountability through its yearly review process is comprised of representatives from the United Teachers of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Associated Administrators of Los Angeles, the Center for Powerful Public Schools, and the Parent Organization Network.

2021-2022 Pilot School Steering Committee Members include the following:

Derrick Chau Ph.D
Executive Director Strategy and Innovation
Los Angeles Unifed School District (LAUSD)

Cynthia Gonzalez Ed.D
Director of Pilot School Support
Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)

Julie Van Winkle
Secondary Vice President
United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA)

Marie Germaine
Teacher Baldwin Hills Elementary
United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA)

Charlotte Lerchenmuller
Consultant
Associated Administrators Los Angeles (AALA)

Alicia Montgomery Ed.D
Executive Director Center for Powerful Public Schools
Non-Profit

Araceli Simeon
Executive Director Parent Organization Network
Non-Profit

We are amid developing processes and procedures to increase support to pilot schools while adapting accountability expectations based on pandemic conditions. This has meant revising the annual review process in a way that reflects the work of schools during these challenging times.

The continued success of Pilot Schools will require increased levels of support and collaboration amongst the Los Angeles Unified School District, the United Teachers of Los Angeles, and the Associated Administrators of Los Angeles. The outcomes highlighted in this report offer a promising model to close long-standing equity gaps for low-income students and students of color.

END NOTES

Overall LAUSD and Pilot School demographic information retrieved by the Los Angeles Unified School District; Office of Data and Accountability. https://achieve.lausd.net/oda

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

Overall LAUSD and Pilot School high school graduation data provided by the Los Angeles Unified School District; Office of Data and Accountability. Also available from the California Department of Education Data Reporting Office. https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/

Overall LAUSD Early Literacy data provided by the Los Angeles Unified School District; also available from the Open Data website. https://achieve.lausd.net/opendata

List of Pilot Schools by Local District and School Board District

LOCAL DISTRICT	BOARD DISTRICT	SCHOOL NAME
Central	2	Academic Leadership Community @ Contreras
Central	2	Ambassador School of Global Education @ RFK
Central	2	Ambassador School of Global Leadership @ RFK (SPAN)
Central	2	Early College Academy @ Trade Tech
Central	5	Garvanza ES
Central	2	Gratts Learning Academy for Young Scholars ES
Central	2	Los Angeles Academy of the Arts @ RFK
Central	5	Nava College Prep Academy @ Jefferson HS
Central	2	New Open World Academy @ RFK (SPAN)
Central	2	School of Business and Tourism @ Contreras
Central	2	School of Social Justice @ Contreras
Central	2	School of Visual Arts & Humanities @ RFK
Central	2	UCLA Community School @ RFK (SPAN)
East	2	Boyle Heights STEM HS @ Roosevelt HS
East	2	East LA Performing Arts Magnet @ Torres HS
East	2	East LA Renaissance Academy @ Torres HS
East	2	Engineering and Technology Academy @ Torres HS
East	2	Humanitas Academy of Arts and Technology @ Torres HS
East	5	Huntington Park institute of Applied Medicine @ Marquez HS
East	5	LIBRA Academy @ Marquez HS
East	5	Roybal Allard ES
East	5	School of Social Justice @ Marquez
East	5	Social Justice and Leadership Academy @ Torres HS
East	5	Walnut Park MS STEM
Northeast	6	Academy of Scientific Exploration @ Chavez LA
Northeast	6	ARTes Magnet Academy @ Chavez LA
Northeast	6	Francis Polytechnic HS
Northeast	6	San Fernando Institute of Applied Media at SFMS
Northeast	6	Social Justice Humanitas Academy @ Chavez LA
Northwest	3	Balboa Gifted–High Ability Magnet ES
Northwest	3	Porter Ranch Community School SPAN
South	7	Academies of Education & Empowerment @ Carson HS
South	7	Academy of Medical Arts @ Carson HS
South	7	Communication & Technology School @ Rivera LC
South	7	Green Design Community School @ Rivera LC
South	7	Humanities and Arts Academy of LA @ Narbonne HS
South	7	Performing Arts Community School @ Rivera LC
South	7	Public Service Community School @ Rivera LC
West	1	Baldwin Hills ES
West	1	STEM Academy @ Bernstein HS