



Higher Learning Academy
2625 Plover Street, Sacramento, CA 95815 ■ (916)286-5183

Principal

Toolie Younger
(Current Principal)
Ana Gutierrez
(Principal 2005-2011)

Gateway Community Charters

5712 Dudley Boulevard, McClellan, CA 95652 ■ (916)286-5129

Twin Rivers Unified School District

5115 Dudley Boulevard, McClellan, CA 95652 ■ (916)566-1600

Board of Trustees

Bruce Mangerich
Lillie Campbell
Mark Anderson
Jack Turner
Harry Block

Superintendent/CEO

Dr. Cindy Petersen

Mission Statement

The Higher Learning Academy (HLA) is a charter public school that serves the diverse Del Paso, Rio Linda, and North Sacramento families who (1) believe in high academic and behavioral standards and (2) choose to participate in a powerful student, parent, and teacher partnership. It is the mission of this tuition free public charter school team to provide instructional, personal, and behavioral support that will allow each student to academically perform at his/her personal best achievement level and to consistently demonstrate responsible, resourceful and respectful behavior towards self and others.

Vision Statement

Higher Learning Academy teachers and leaders are dedicated to promoting social justice, advancing cultural literacy and facilitating optimal student academic and behavioral performance. These outcomes will be accomplished by implementing powerful teaching and learning strategies that align with the California Grade Level Curriculum Framework & Standards and the solid, sequenced, and specific Core Knowledge Curriculum benchmarks.

Goals

- ❑ Create a quality public education choice in the North Sacramento area.
- ❑ Achieve high levels of academic achievement with a strong foundation in math and reading skills at grade level or above.
- ❑ Reflect and respect the broad diversity within our community by creating a caring and nurturing environment for every child.
- ❑ Provide a broad range of knowledge and a rich vocabulary

- ❑ In partnership with parents, promoting core values such as honesty, individual dignity and hard work.
- ❑ Building an integrated K-12 school and a strong community focus that contributes to the creation of future leaders.

Contact Information

Parents or community members who wish to participate in leadership teams, school committees, school activities or become a volunteer, may contact the Higher Learning Academy at (916) 286-5183.

District & School Profile

Higher Learning Academy is a Gateway Community Charters charter school. Gateway Community Charters (GCC) was created in April of 2003 with a vision to create quality schools of choice in the greater Sacramento region with a particular emphasis on serving under-served and at-risk populations. Each of our schools has a unique mission and vision and has a track record of serving students within the charter school construct. Gateway Community Charters has a total of six charter schools and is associated with Twin Rivers Unified School District as the LEA/oversight agency.

Higher Learning Academy had a beginning enrollment of 45 students in grades kindergarten through three for the 2007-08 school year. During the 2008-2009 school year Higher Learning Academy more than doubled in enrollment, adding 4th and 5th grade. In the 2009-2010 school year, Higher Learning Academy's enrollment went up to 150 students and the school added 6th grade. Most recently, in the 2010-2011 school year Higher Learning Academy added a 7th grade and enrollment increased to 195 students. The Higher Learning Academy plans to continue to add at least one grade level each academic year. Student demographics are illustrated in Table 1 below.

At this quality community based public charter school, students are offered an opportunity of a lifetime to experience an award-winning curriculum called Core Knowledge. HLA is pleased to offer a high quality academic program with small class sizes and a caring professional staff. In each grade students will be exposed to a broad range of historical, scientific, and cultural topics that will build on one another to prepare them for later educational and life success. This wide array of subject matter will not only develop cultural literacy but will also build the strong vocabulary necessary for true reading comprehension. Our unique curriculum at the Higher Learning Academy develops academic excellence in a way that is systematic but leaves room for creativity for both teacher and student.

Table 1: Student Enrollment

Group	Percentage
Number of Students	195
Black or African American	58.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.5%
Asian	0.5%
Filipino	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino	24.6%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.0%
White	15.9%
Two Or More Races	0.0%
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	88.2%
English Learners	5.6%
Students with Disabilities	2.1%

Discipline & Climate for Learning

Students at Higher Learning Academy are guided by specific rules and classroom expectations that promote respect, cooperation, courtesy and acceptance of others. The goal of Higher Learning Academy's discipline program is to provide students with opportunities to learn self-discipline through a system of consistent rewards and consequences for their behavior. Parents and students are informed of school rules and discipline policies through the Parent/Student handbook which is sent home at the beginning of the school year.

Table 2 illustrates the Suspensions and Expulsions cases for the last school year, as well as percentage of enrollment. Suspensions are expressed in terms of total infractions, not number of students suspended, as some students may have been suspended on multiple occasions. Expulsions occur only when required by law or when all other alternatives are exhausted.

Table 2: Suspensions & Expulsions

	School			District		
	08-09	09-10	10-11	08-09	09-10	10-11
Suspensions	8	5	26	10898	6864	6641
Suspension Rate	7.8%	3%	9.2%	35.2%	22.0%	21.0%
Expulsions	0	0	0	64	52	26
Expulsion Rate	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%

Student Recognition

Higher Learning Academy recognizes and celebrates the achievements and successes of students and staff on a regular basis. Students receive Wise Skills awards, Attendance certificates, Honor Roll awards, etc.; and each trimester the school comes together in an end of the month assembly to celebrate examples of student excellence.

School Enrollment & Attendance

Charter schools receive financial support from the state for the education of the students they serve based on how many students attend each day. Most importantly, attendance is critical to academic achievement and regular daily attendance is a priority at Higher Learning Academy. Student attendance is carefully monitored to identify those students exhibiting excessive absences.

Attendance, tardy, and truancy policies are clearly stated, consistently enforced, and consequences fairly administered. Parents are advised of their responsibilities, including proper notification of when and why students are absent. The school monitors student attendance very closely, makes phone calls to parents on a daily basis, and will send letters home if absences become a problem.

Table 3 illustrates the enrollment trend by grade level for the past three school years.

Table 3: Enrollment Trend by Grade Level

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
K	30	29	43
1 st	32	26	23
2 nd	12	25	35
3 rd	11	17	25
4 th	6	17	21
5 th	12	10	20
6 th	-	13	12
7 th	-	-	16
Total Enrollment	103	137	196

Class Size

Average class sizes vary by grade level and subject area taught. Table 4 indicates the average class size by grade level or subject area, as well as the number of classes offered in reference to their enrollment.

Table 4: Class Size Distribution

	Average Class Size			Classrooms Containing:								
				1-20 Students			21-32 Students			33+ Students		
	08-09	09-10	10-11	08-09	09-10	10-11	08-09	09-10	10-11	08-09	09-10	10-11
K	13	17	22	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	14	13	16	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	12	13	21	1	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	13	20	23	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
4	-	-	21	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	20	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
6		13	12		1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
7			16			1			-			-
4-8	11	30	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-

Class Size Reduction

In 1996, state legislature approved implementation of the Class Size Reduction (CSR) program that provides funding to hire additional teachers to assist schools in reducing K-3 class sizes. Higher Learning Academy began implementing CSR for grades kindergarten through three in 2007-08 and has continued full implementation of this program. Table 5 displays the percentage of K-3 classrooms that participated in CSR for the past two school years.

Table 5: CSR Participation

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
K	100%	100%	100%
1	100%	100%	100%
2	100%	100%	100%
3	100%	100%	100%
K-3	-	-	100%

School Leadership

Leadership at Higher Learning Academy is a responsibility shared between Gateway Community Charters central administration, the principal, instructional staff, students, and parents. The mission of this team is to provide all students with the opportunity to attain an excellent education.

From 2008-2010 Higher Learning Academy was lead by Principal Ana Gutierrez, who had over 11 years of experience as an educator focusing on excellence in education. In January 2012 Principal Toolie Younger assumed leadership of Higher Learning Academy. Mrs. Younger has over 7 year of experience in education and has been working on the staff of Higher Learning Academy since 2008, first a teacher and then as Vice-Principal. Superintendent/CEO, Dr. Cindy Petersen, has over 25 years experience as an educational leader, an administrator and classroom teacher. Principal Younger participates in monthly one-on-one meetings with the Superintendent as well as an additional monthly meeting with the Chief Business Official for collaborative budget review and management. As principal, Mrs. Younger also participates in twice monthly meetings with all GCC central administration and principals via an ongoing professional learning community.

School site support includes: a BTSA Support Provider, an Academic & Assessment Coordinator, a Director of Community Engagement and Development, and a Director of Categorical Programs. The faculty also participates in weekly staff development and coordinated team meetings that focus on excellence in instruction and student outcomes.

Staff members and parents participate on various committees, such as the School Site Council and Parent Faculty Organization, which make decisions regarding the priorities and direction of the educational plan to ensure instructional programs are consistent with students' needs and comply with Gateway Community Charters goals.

Teacher Assignment

Gateway Community Charters and Higher Learning Academy recruits and employs the most qualified credentialed teachers. Teacher misassignments (Table 7) reflect the number of placements within a school for which the certificated employee in the teaching or services position (including positions that involve teaching English Learners) does not hold a legally recognized certificate or credential. Teacher vacancies reflect the number of positions to which a single designated certificated employee has not been assigned at the beginning of the year for an entire year.

Table 5: Teacher Credential Status

	School			District
	08-09	09-10	10-11	10-11
Fully Credentialed	7	9	10	1091
Without Full Credentials	0	0	0	12
Working Outside Subject	0	0	0	14

Table 6: Misassignments/Vacancies

	08-09	09-10	10-11
Misassignments of Teachers of English Language Learners	0	0	0
Total Missassignment of Teachers	0	0	0
Vacant Teacher Positions	0	0	0

Highly Qualified Teachers

The Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires that all teachers in core subject areas meet certain requirements in order to be considered as “Highly Qualified” no later than the end of the 2006-07 school year. Minimum qualifications include: possession of a Bachelor’s Degree, possession of an appropriate California teaching credential, and demonstrated competence in core academic subjects. Table 7 indicates the percentage of Core Academic Courses taught by NCLB compliant teachers.

Table 7: NCLB Compliant Teachers

	% of Core Academic Courses Taught by NCLB Compliant Teachers	% of Core Academic Courses Taught by Non-NCLB Compliant Teachers
School	100.00%	0.0%
District	90.6%	9.4%
High Poverty Schools in District	90.6%	9.4%
Low Poverty Schools in District	N/A	N/A

Teacher Evaluation & Professional Development

A constructive evaluation process promotes quality instruction and is a fundamental element in a sound educational program. Evaluations and formal observations are designed to encourage common goals and to comply with the state’s evaluation criteria and GCC policies. All teachers are formally evaluated annually and are informally observed on a regular basis.

Each teacher is evaluated annually via a performance pay system. The assessment of performance is completed by themselves, their administrator, and a peer. Criteria for the evaluation are based upon the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP). Using a rubric for evaluation, teachers have the opportunity to earn performance pay based upon observable quality teaching performance.

Staff members build teaching skills and concepts through participation in conferences and workshops throughout the year. The school offers five staff development days annually and holds weekly collaboration meetings where teachers are offered a broad based variety of professional growth opportunities in curriculum, teaching strategies, and methodologies. Friday afternoon collaboration is also utilized for review of school-wide and student specific data to create critical intervention and support strategies to ensure ongoing student growth and success.

Counseling & Support Staff

It is the goal of Higher Learning Academy to assist students in their social and personal development as well as academics. The school gives special attention to students who experience achievement problems, difficulty coping with personal and family problems, trouble with decision making, or handling peer pressure. Table 8 lists the support service personnel available at Higher Learning Academy.

Table 8: Counseling & Support Services Staff

	Number of Staff	Average Number of Students per Academic Counselor
Counselor	0	0
Social Work Intern	1 (Intern)	
Psychologist	1 (As Needed)	
Resource Specialist Program Teacher	1 (As Needed)	
Speech and Language Specialist	1 (As Needed)	

Parent Involvement

Higher Learning Academy greatly benefits from its supportive parents who provide different activities, field trips, and volunteer in the classroom. Parents are also welcome to join the Parent Faculty Organization (PFO), School Site Counsel (SSC) and the English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC).

Curriculum Development

All curriculum development at Higher Learning Academy revolves around the California State Content Standards and Frameworks and the Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence. Teachers align classroom curriculum to ensure that all students either meet or exceed state proficiency levels. Throughout the school year teachers adjust those plans based on the result of ongoing assessment and data analysis.

Instructional Materials

Table 9 displays information about the quality and currency of the standards-aligned textbooks and other instructional materials used at the school.

Table 9: Gateway Community Charters Board Adopted Textbooks

Grade Levels	Subject	Publisher	Adoption Year
K-6 th	English/Language Arts	SRA/ Core Knowledge	2008 2002
7 th	English/Language Arts	Aurora Learning Springs/ Core Knowledge	2010 2002
K-6 th	History/Social Science	Pearson	2002
7 th	History/Social Science	Holt	2006
K-6 th	Mathematics	Saxon: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt/ Scott Foresman	2008 2001
7 th	Mathematics	Aurora Learning Springs	2010
K-6 th	Science	Delta Education	1997
7 th	Science	Aurora Learning Springs	2010

School Facilities & Safety

Higher Learning Academy consists of eleven classrooms, a multipurpose room, staff lounge, cafeteria, library, computer lab, office, and a playground.

School safety is a primary concern of Higher Learning Academy. The school strives to be in compliance with all laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to hazardous materials and state earthquake standards. Each classroom and office area has an Emergency Preparedness Guide. The school at large has regular emergency preparedness drills. The safety plan was updated and reviewed with staff in fall 2011. A school site representative participates on the

Gateway Community Charters Safety Committee. Visitors to the school must first check in at the front office. All students must be signed out at the end of the day.

Additional Internet Access/Public Libraries

Higher Learning Academy is in the process of growing the school library and has a computer lab with 29 computers. Each class has a weekly assigned library time where students are allowed to check-out books to take home. Each classroom is also wired for internet access and has computers available for student and teacher use. For additional research materials and Internet availability, students are encouraged to visit the public libraries located in the city and county of Sacramento, which contain numerous computer workstations. Visit www.saclibrary.org for more information and directions to the nearest branch.

California Standards Test

The California Standards Test (CST), a component of the STAR Program, is administered to all students in the spring to assess student performance in relation to the State Content Standards. Student scores are reported as performance levels: Advanced (exceeds state standards), Proficient (meets standards), Basic (approaching standards), Below Basic (below standards), and Far Below Basic (well below standards). Table 10 shows the combined percentage of students scoring at the Proficient and Advanced levels in English/Language Arts, Math, Science, and History/Social Studies for the most recent three-year period, is shown. Table 11 shows the combined percentage of students scoring at the Proficient and Advanced levels in English/Language Arts, Math, Science, and History/Social Studies by subgroup.

Table 10: California Standards Test (CST)

Subject	School			District			State		
	08-09	09-10	10-11	08-09	09-10	10-11	08-09	09-10	10-11
English/Language Arts	16%	33%	31%	38%	39%	40%	49%	52%	54%
Mathematics	14%	35%	38%	35%	40%	41%	46%	48%	50%
Science	23%	0%	19%	34%	39%	41%	50%	54%	57%
History/Social Science	0%	0%	0%	25%	27%	29%	41%	44%	48%

**Scores are not shown when the number of students tested is ten or less, either because the number of students in this category is too small for statistical accuracy or to protect student privacy.*

Table 11: California Standards Test (CST) Subgroups

Subject	English/Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	History/Social Studies
All Students in the District	40%	41%	41%	29%
All Students at the School	31%	38%	19%	0%
Male	26%	32%	25%	0%
Female	37%	45%	0%	0%
Black or African American	30%	33%	23%	0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian	0%	0%	0%	0%
Filipino	-	-	-	0%
Hispanic or Latino	25%	50%	0%	0%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	-	-	-	-
White	41%	41%	0%	0%
Two or More Races	-	-	-	-
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	31%	38%	21%	0%
English Learners	0%	0%	0%	0%
Students with Disabilities	0%	0%	0%	0%
Students Receiving Migrant Education Services	-	-	-	-

**Scores are not shown when the number of students tested is ten or less, either because the number of students in this category is too small for statistical accuracy or to protect student privacy.*

Academic Performance Index

The Academic Performance Index (API), summarized in Table 12, is a score on a scale of 200 to 1,000 that annually measures the academic performance and progress of individual schools in California. The state has set 800 as the API score that schools should strive to meet.

Table 12: Academic Performance Index Growth by Student Group- Three Year Comparison

Group	Actual API Change 2008-2009	Actual API Change 2009-2010	Actual API Change 2010-2011
All Students at the School	B	141	3
Black or African American			
American Indian or Alaska Native			
Asian			
Filipino			
Hispanic or Latino			
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander			
White			
Two or More Races	N/D		
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged			
English Learners			
Students with Disabilities			

**Note: "N/D" means that no data were available to the CDE or LEA to report. "B" means the school did not have a valid API Base and there is no Growth target information.*

Table 13: Academic Performance Index Growth by Student Group- 2011 Growth API Comparison

Group	2011 Growth API					
	Number of Students	School	Number of Students	District	Number of Students	State
All Students at the School	117	676	18,302	726	4,683,676	778
Black or African American	75	673	2,770	663	317,856	696
American Indian or Alaska Native	1		150	672	33,774	733
Asian	1		1,919	761	398,869	898
Filipino	0		231	819	123,245	859
Hispanic or Latino	22	668	7,155	713	2,406,749	729
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0		307	712	26,953	764
White	18	680	4,994	764	1,258,831	845
Two or More Races	0		553	739	76,766	836
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	98	679	15,054	716	2,731,843	726
English Learners	7		6,696	709	1,521,844	707
Students with Disabilities	9	0	2,328	557	521,815	595

Adequate Yearly Progress

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is a federal law enacted in January 2002 that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). It mandates that all students (including students who are economically disadvantaged, are from racial or ethnic minority groups, have disabilities, or have limited English proficiency) in all grades meet the state academic achievement standards for Mathematics and English/Language Arts by 2014. Schools must demonstrate “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP) toward achieving that goal. The Federal NCLB Act requires that all schools and districts meet the following Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements:

- ❑ Participation rate on the state’s standards-based assessments in English/Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics.
- ❑ Percent proficient on the state’s standards-based assessments in ELA and Mathematics.
- ❑ API as an additional indicator.
- ❑ Graduation rate (for secondary schools).

There are several consequences for schools that do not meet the AYP standards, including additional tutoring and replacing of staff. Students would also be allowed to transfer to schools (within their district) that have met their AYP, and the former school would be required to provide the transportation to the new site. Results of school and district performance are displayed in Table 14.

Table 14: Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

AYP Criteria	School	District
Made AYP Overall	No	No
Met Participation Rate- English-Language Arts	Yes	Yes
Met Participation Rate- Mathematics	Yes	Yes
Met Percent Proficient- English-Language Arts	No	No
Met Percent Proficient- Mathematics	Yes	No
Met API Criteria	Yes	Yes
Met Graduation Rate	N/A	Yes

Federal Intervention Program

Charter schools, schools and districts receiving Federal Title I funding enter Program Improvement (PI) if they do not make AYP for two consecutive years in the same content area (English/Language Arts or Mathematics) or on the same indicator (API or graduation rate). After entering PI, schools and districts advance to the next level of intervention with each additional year that they do not make AYP.

Table 15: Federal Intervention Programs

	School	District
Program Improvement (PI) Status	Not in PI	In PI
First Year in PI		2010-2011
Year in Program Improvement		Year 2
Number of Schools Currently in PI		47
Percent of Schools Identified for PI		83.9%

Physical Fitness

In the spring of each year, Higher Learning Academy is required by the state to administer a physical fitness test to all students in fifth grade. The physical fitness test is a standardized evaluation that measures each student’s ability to perform fitness tasks in six major areas and the results are summarized in Table 16. Students that meet or exceed the standards in all six fitness areas are considered to be physically fit or in the healthy fitness zone (HFZ).

Table 16: Percentage of Students in Healthy Fitness Zone

Grade Level	Four of Six Standards	Five of Six Standards	Six of Six Standards
5 th	26.30%	21.10%	15.80%
7 th	18.80%	25.00%	6.30%

Expenditures & Services Funded

Prior to fiscal year 2008–09, funds for 38 categorical programs were restricted to specific purposes. Per *EC* Section 42605, these funds are now unrestricted. Schools may use the funds to provide services under the pre-flexed programs or for other education purposes or programs. Gateway Community Charters utilizes these funds for educational costs for each of our schools. In addition to general state funding Higher Learning Academy receives state and federal funding for the following categorical funds and other support programs:

- Title I
- Title I ARRA
- Title II
- Title III-LEP

- ❑ Charter School Facilities Grant
- ❑ CSR
- ❑ SFSF
- ❑ Education Jobs
- ❑ State Lottery
- ❑ State Lottery, Instructional Materials
- ❑ Art & Music Block Grant
- ❑ After School Education and Safety Grant

Data Sources

Data within the SARC was produced by Gateway Community Charters, provided by Twin Rivers Unified School District through HLA's MOU services with the district for testing, retrieved from the 2009-10 SARC template, and/or located on Dataquest (<http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest>). Dataquest is a search engine, maintained by the California Department of Education (CDE), which allows the public to search for facts and figures pertaining to schools and districts throughout the state. Among the data available, parents and community may find information about school performance, test scores, student demographics, staffing, and student misconduct/intervention. Additional data was provided from the school's use of ZOOM: Data Director and the Aeries information system.