

Student Investment Act Annual Report 2020-2021

WLA's cadets' parents, educators, staff, and school leaders made extraordinary commitments, dedicating talents, energy, and resources to increase academic achievement and decrease academic disparities with underserved cadet groups in SIA through 6-12. 2019-2020 data indicated COVID-19's unevenly impacted deepened disparities in educational opportunity and achievement nationally and state-wide. WLA trended better than national or state data in equity in reducing disparities. WLA leaders and staff was focused to identify barriers and gaps from parent and cadet communication to address barriers to success. Bi-weekly staff meetings were held to address data, trends, identify barriers and work for solution. Parents, family members, and caregivers joined WLA in weekly communication and supporting their cadets while responding to profound challenges in their own lives. SIA funding leveraged with Student School Success allowed WLA to identify barriers and address them to reduce and eliminate disparities especially among the cadets identified by the SIA.

2019-2020 evidence shows that the pandemic has negatively affected academic growth, widening pre-existing disparities in core subjects like math and reading. WLA made efforts in 2020-2021 to reduce the gaps with tools and support. MAP assessments indicated WLA was successful in those efforts. Data revealed cadets of color were engaged and attended as much as other cadets. Providing the technical tools and meeting the needs of all cadets equally helped reduce gaps and disparities. Cadets with special needs and disabilities worked with staff to identify and meet the needs with tools, supplies, tutoring, and support to reduce barriers and struggles and to prevent disruption in education and regression. Special Bus Hubs were set-up bi-weekly to collect and distribute books, technology, school supplies, library books, etc. to reach into the community as much as possible during a pandemic and support the special needs of all cadets and families.

WLA's therapeutic model quickly recognized the increasing need for mental health services and the lack of availability in many of our rural and small communities that our cadets reside in. Cadets and families were at heightened risk for anxiety and stress with little or no regular access to affirming cadet organizations and supportive peers, teachers, and school staff. These cadets are at an increased risk of isolation and abuse from unsupportive or actively hostile family members. WLA was able to increase community partnerships to provide access: Looking Glass, Roseburg Therapy, White Bird and 5th Corner Academy. The LGBTQ cadets were identified by staff and parents as struggling and missing the needed support. WLA reached out to Transponders and Pflag to support cadets.

During this period, all staff took advantage of professional development to further the quality of education and reduce academic disparities.

WLA had numerous barriers in implementing the Wellness/Nutrition Program. The program could not proceed as planned at the beginning of the academic year since the funding agreement with the State was not signed and provided to WLA until after January 5th with a quarter 1 report period less than 30 days later. The Wellness/Nutrition Lessons and activities were implemented in Sept. of 2020, but the corresponding nutritional snack was not able to be provided until 3rd quarter during LIPI and the Hybrid Model implementation. The cadets and parents felt the program was a success and reported cadets making better food choices.

By creating a supportive culture of safety and well-being for academic and social-emotional growth, WLA increased access to mental health services utilizing community partners to 62% of cadets and families. COVID-19's toll on cadet well-being and mental health was huge and staff supported cadets and families with education, awareness, mental/behavioral health materials and referrals to community partners. With more than a year of "staggering" loss, grief, isolation, and uncertainty the toll on many cadets' mental health, compounding the challenges cadets face in virtual classrooms was staggering and ran across all population groups. Each family and each cadet had unique circumstances that needed to be addressed and referral and resources were made available to remove barrier and support cadets and families. Our community partners: Looking Glass, Roseburg Therapy and 5th Corner Academy reported staff, cadets and families were referred for services. Roseburg Therapy provided Spanish speaking counseling, therapy and support groups for cadets and families. 5th Corner Academy provided multiple weekly services for cadets, parents and family members with counseling, Peer and Family counseling, support groups and therapy. One cadet participating received her certificate in Mental Health first Aid and Peer Mentor.

During 3rd quarter, LIPI and Hybrid Instruction cadets reported a high sense of connectedness to WLA, especially to the Officers, NCO and support staff who had been numerous times a week for classroom instruction, mentoring, tutoring and individual support. At the beginning of LIPI, WLA saw participation and engagement reach over 88% with cadets reporting a sense of hope that school would resume. This was a huge motivational factor to help cadets engage, complete work and pass. WLA is built on mastery learning so a cadet must reach 70% or better to pass. Our academic success trended higher than national or State data across all populations.

During this academic year cadets who disenrolled were tracked as much as possible to identify cadets that may be in an unsafe environment, dropping out, or moving in an attempt to provide the best possible services and resources. WLA worked closely with other educational institutions to help with a student's academic success and specialized needs to ensure all youth in our communities are cared for in the best possible way.

WLA continued to recognize cadets at Award Ceremonies help virtually, provide attendance rewards and incentives which were gladly provided by many community businesses that had

A huge negative impact for COVID-19 upon WLA was the reduction in enrollment. In an exit survey, cadets were generally removed from WLA to attend the cadet's Home Base school.

The physical aspect of our program model was not possible to achieve during DL. Cadets were given physical education assignments, but the level of physical workout was not as rigorous as WLA's regular curriculum. When LIPI commenced in 3rd quarter, it centered around physical education and training. The cadets and parents reported a high satisfaction an increase in good mood, attitude, school and family engagement. One parent stated, "My child is back."

The Drum Corp and Archery were not implemented this year due to COVID.

In a bi-weekly meeting, staff brought up the need for cadet interaction and a need for creative expression and outlets. Educators became creative themselves and gave assignments that called for video produced creative expressions from showing off artwork, self and group produced commercials, songs, etc. The creative expression the cadets came up with was a

wide array but spoke to the huge need for creative expression during this very difficult time and a staff that recognized the need and incorporated it into lessons with surprising outcomes:

- Development and sharing of unique skills and abilities and the furthering of leadership, teamwork and social responsibility, planning, resourcefulness, analytical thinking and public speaking alongside academia.
- Creative Expression enhanced academic engagement through higher brain functioning and as a stress reliever.
- Assignments that pushed cadets outside their comfort zone demonstrated the supportive environment through their participation in taking risks which in turn leads to higher self-esteem.
- Creative expression and solving or looking at a situation through or with a different perspective builds tolerance and acceptance of all cadets in all populations.
- Looking outside the box and participating in a variety of challenges with creative solution better prepares cadets to adapt to change and the changes life brings. Many cadets report discovering a new talent or passion which lead to the reduction in harm and at-risk behaviors and the increase in Protective Skill and Factors.
- Increases health, well-being and increase academic success by providing joy and relaxation for cadets that are under pressure.

When cadets came together in LIPI and Hybrid Instruction, they were excited to be part of their company and to compete against other companies. The joy of belonging was apparent.

Our Community Connection made great strides during this period. Businesses that had to shutter their doors reached out to WLA and WLA had the time to reach out and network with businesses and community partners. Community Partners are going to be just that in the future. The connections strengthened and made will grow and their commitment shows, and the 2021-2022 academic year has all partners on-board and participating at the beginning.

SIA #4

WLA held respect as the key value during this trying period: respect for the cadet, respect for the family, respect for the educators and their families. During the somewhat volatile political climate this key value was needed.

The MAP assessment and skill-based benchmark assessments were critical in helping staff evaluation, modify and adjust methods, strategies and approaches which were discussed weekly in collaborative meetings and bi-weekly at data/barrier meetings.

What stands out is the high number of staff participating in one or more professional development activities. Formative assessments and observations were NOT as usual. Yes, educators were observed in their virtual instruction as to how they planned, carried out and connected to cadets. However, most formative and summative evaluations of cadets and their educators are rooted in well-known education practices.

This past year and a half were not normal, not root practices founded in research. Proudly WLA notes that it gave all staff the ability to identify the professional development each felt would help them the most along with Distance Learning best practice training on a routine basis and the

high rate of attendance and success denoted by staff. Staff felt supported in this very trying time for a job they technically were not trained for and hard not signed up for. One staff caringly reminded all... "If this is how you feel, imagine how the cadets feel?" This respect of sharing this perspective was helpful.

Staff devised many alternatives, multiple access points for cadets to gain lessons and information especially as technical issues prevailed, like being disconnected in the middle or beginning of a lesson. Communication, tolerance and acceptance became critical in the academic success and engagement of all cadets.

Staff was able to place realistic goals inside their professional development plan that dealt with the actual issues they were facing and finding multiple solutions. The amount of Teacher Talk was reduced significantly, and greater interaction was recorded.

New techniques were learned and implemented with some that will carry over when IN-Person Instruction begins. Staff is prepared and ready for a changing educational environment this year and looking at how to be a better professional to increase the quality of instruction and academic, mental and physical health of all cadets

Collaboration became huge for support, sharing practices and surviving. The feeling of NOT being alone was a large for the educators as it was for cadets. Feeling connected and not lost was a familiar statement made by staff, cadets and parents.

Staff felt the value of weekly meetings for communication and bi-weekly meetings to look at trends, data, hiccups and for support. Staff valuing and respecting the talents, skills and perspective of others became an important element of the school's supportive culture.