



La Academia at the Denver Inner-City Parish

910 Galapago Street, Denver, CO 80204

Grades: 6-12

Director: Jason Torrez

The Hope Online Learning Center at La Academia serves at-risk students in West Denver, where the surrounding neighborhoods are considered economically disadvantaged.

“The Hope Online students at La Academia, the majority of whom are Hispanic, are at-risk of falling through the cracks. Their families live below the poverty line and the students themselves qualify for free and reduced lunch,” says Learning Center Director Jason Torrez. “These students, without proper support, often are negatively influenced by the behaviors that surround them—crime, drugs, gangs and other harmful activities.”

According to Mr. Torrez, most Hope Online students at La Academia are two to three grade-levels behind and have poor learning habits when they enroll. They struggled both academically and socially in their previous school settings. “When they first come to us, many students suffer from severe shortcomings in basic math and writing skills,” says Mr. Torrez. “However, after just a few weeks at Hope Online, these kids demonstrate substantial progress.”

“Hope Online at La Academia offers students individualized attention,” explains Mr. Torrez. “Hope Online’s curriculum, along with the unique model of a community-based Learning Center, provides students with a safe environment suited to their specific learning needs. In this setting, students quickly catch up with their peers.”

Hope Online at La Academia also provides an evening schedule to accommodate students over age 16, who must work during the day.

“Ninety percent of the night school enrollees at La Academia are on their own, with no parental support. We provide an encouraging space for these students to enrich their lives through education and an opportunity to create a future for themselves,” says Mr. Torrez.

The learning environment afforded by Hope Online’s curriculum is instrumental in helping students reach grade-level proficiency. In fact, many new Hope Online enrollees at La Academia achieve the appropriate grade level by the end of their first school year.

Mr. Torrez adds, “We recently enrolled a 6th grade student who was way behind in all subject areas. However, because of Hope Online’s flexible structure, the customized learning plans, and the one-on-one attention, he is now at an 8th grade level and completing 9th grade lessons.”

“Each student learns differently and Hope Online takes a different approach to teach each individual. The students know we are here to support them both academically and personally. Knowing they have an advocate in the Hope Online staff makes a world of difference for these students,” concluded Mr. Torrez.

Learning Center Administration

Jason Torrez - Learning Center Director and Lead Mentor

Jason Torrez has been committed and dedicated to serving the needs of at-risk youth for nearly 14 years, including providing counseling, tutoring, mentoring and case management. Mr. Torrez has facilitated drug and alcohol awareness courses, as well as family classes to provide children with healthy alternatives to street crime. Mr. Torrez is currently pursuing a degree in Visual Arts from the Art Institute of Denver.

Hope Online Teacher

Aurora Gonzalez – Hope Online Teacher

Aurora Gonzalez is a talented and compassionate Colorado licensed teacher with a background teaching bilingual students. She previously worked in Denver Public School's bilingual education program. Ms. Gonzalez received her Bachelor of Science in Engineering from the Instituto Tecnológico in Durango, Mexico and is currently attending Metropolitan State College of Denver in Denver, CO.