



STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ACHIEVE SUCCESS AT PACIFIC POINT ACADEMY

Parents of students with special needs often find themselves in a labyrinth trying to find alternate solutions when their children fail to thrive in public school. By the time they seek a new placement, their child has already “failed” multiple times - if not for years - in the traditional classroom.

Families often try to keep their child in school by filling in the academic and social/emotional gaps with outside enrichment. Depending on their child’s diagnosis, if they even have one, trying to cobble together an effective solution can be overwhelming.

There’s a growing market of specialized after-school programs, each sure their approach is the right one. Some address challenges like autism, ADHD, or anxiety. Others are purely academic, focusing on tutoring for kids who have learning disabilities, or those who are gifted and ahead of schedule. A majority of special needs kids also see specialists such as a psychologist or psychiatrist. Trying to access and schedule all these visits into a school day is draining for a child, and prohibitively expensive for families. Ultimately, many parents turn to alternative, full-time placements. Therein lies the problem: specialty or private schools often focus on only certain pieces of the puzzle.

How do you educate a child with multiple needs, who requires both therapeutic support and specialized academic teaching *at the same time*?

This was the undertaking of the Lasky and Richmond families, among many others. Elizabeth and Richard Lasky worked with their school district for three years, forming an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) for their daughter, while also retaining tutors. Leanne and Tony Richmond had a 504 plan in place for their son at public school, and an outside psychiatrist and speech therapist. Despite school district special education programs, outside interventions, and everyone’s best intentions, their kids were still below grade level, and floundering socially with peers.

When the Laskys first heard about Pacific Point Academy, Elizabeth Lasky admits she almost didn’t even tour the school. After a long list of rejections, she didn’t have much hope her daughter could be educated outside of the home. “Hannah was refusing to go to school at all by the time we got to Pacific Point. We were being reprimanded for truancy at the time.” She and her husband eventually did visit - and could scarcely believe what they were seeing. There wasn’t a static program their daughter had to conform to.

Pacific Point Academy designs a program around each child to meet their unique needs.

Richard Lasky expands on this concept. “There’s nothing more painful than seeing your child struggle over and over. And we tried so many different programs. Not only did these teachers throw Hannah a lifeline to help pull her out of the “mud”, they got into the mud with her! The changes in her outlook, confidence, and ability to make friends all came together once someone figured out how to actually teach her in a way she could understand. Truly a miracle.”

The Richmonds echo the element of stunned surprise - and gratitude. “OCA conducts their initial assessments in a way to discover how a child processes information, how they can learn, and then puts a program together to teach them! Our son advanced two grade levels in one year. And he has actual friends! These kids who couldn’t fit in anywhere...now have a fighting chance.”

Pacific Point Academy is the only therapeutic school in the West Los Angeles area offering one to one and group based teaching to address learning, attentional, or social/emotional differences – or combinations thereof.

Pacific Point provides many of the same educational models that families drive all over town to attend. These programs address Executive Functioning & Organizational Skills, Auditory Processing, Attention and Working Memory, Reading and Language, and Writing and Mathematics - and are taught by licensed and credentialed teachers. The proper licenses and credentials are crucial if you are continuing to work with your school district through an IEP and wish to seek funding support.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Students who need therapeutic support to access their schoolwork have counseling available onsite with a licensed psychologist *at any time* during their learning day. This gives kids who suffer from anxiety, ADHD, and a host of challenges a better chance to be able to stay focused and in the classroom. In most public schools, it’s fairly standard to have access to a psychologist only once or twice a week.

Unparalleled access to extensive services and staff all under one roof creates a level of success the school has become known for. The highly qualified team includes Teachers, Interventionists (1:1 remediation specialists), Educational Therapists, Art Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Psychologist, Marriage & Family Therapists, Licensed Social Workers and Speech/Language Pathologists.

THE OPPORTUNITY TO TEACH

It’s not only the student and parent population that are elated to have found Pacific Point Academy. Many of the teachers came to OCA after working in the public school sector to have the ability to give more time and attention to each student.

Licia Stockton, Director of Intervention, worked as a special education teacher in the public school system for more than a decade. Ms. Stockton took a leap of faith to join the staff at a small therapeutic school. She did this for the opportunity to make more a difference in her students’ lives. “Due to budget constraints, the impossible ratio of students to teachers, and

red tape, I didn't feel that I could help these kids enough. There wasn't the time and tools to create big change in that environment. It's so exciting to be part of this school, able to make choices that truly impact learning, and see the results so quickly. It's the best decision I've ever made."

CLOSING THE GAPS

Pacific Point Academy and Learning Center was established to address the lack of options available to special needs students, and create a solution to support kids with challenges whose needs were not being met in other academic environments. Indeed, PPA's founder is a parent of a special needs child who was falling through the cracks in public school.

Pacific Point's credo is that whether students remain at the Academy for their entire school career K-12, or transition to different learning environments, the goal is to teach them how to learn, how to be independent, and prepare them for success beyond the classroom.

Though Pacific Point's students may need more individualized attention due to learning challenges, as a result of the intensive one to one teaching model employed, most no longer need modified curriculum to meet their goals. That translates into a standard AG diploma, with more opportunities after graduating from high school.

The Laskys, Richmonds, and others in the "PPA Family" gained access to an entirely different future by walking through the Academy's doors. "We were afraid Luke would never catch up to grade level...or have a friend to come to his birthday party. This school...has literally changed his life. *Our* lives. As parents, we finally have other adults who understand what this path has been like. We've gained lifelong relationships. I fully encourage any struggling family to visit this school. Our only regret is that we didn't do it sooner."

