

Catalyst to High School



WWW.ALEARN.ORG



The Challenge

Fewer than 70% of Silicon Valley's students from low-income backgrounds graduate from high school. Completing the UC/CSU required courses (A-G eligibility) remains an overwhelming obstacle for prospective first-generation college students. The social and institutional causes are many, including incorrect course placement, lack of understanding the system, and lack of positive role models.

How do we ensure that greater numbers of students from low-income backgrounds meet the minimum requirements for college enrollment and are prepared for college coursework?

The Solution

Catalyst to High School is a rigorous six-week summer program for underserved 9th-12th graders focused on increasing Common Core Math proficiency, college readiness, and growth mindset. Students also build skills, knowledge, and confidence to achieve in all subject areas beyond this program. Catalyst to High School enables students to:

- **Achieve Common Core Math proficiency.** Depending on the school district, Catalyst to High School allows students to master a traditional math or integrated math pathway.
- **Bridge and accelerated math courses.** Catalyst to High School students take either introductory math courses or accelerate a full year over the summer. Participation in Catalyst to High School increases the path to Advanced Calculus by senior year.
- **Plan for college.** Students spend one hour a day on a college readiness curriculum, which helps them chart their college paths. They also participate in a college field trip and with their families attend a College Inspiration Program. Every class includes a college-age Teaching Assistant.
- **Form deep peer relationships.** Students develop deep relationships with fellow students who will also be the first in their families to attend and graduate from college.
- **Acquire a positive mindset.** ALearn emphasizes Stanford Professor Dweck's "Mindset" approach to teaching and learning. Students learn to have a "growth mindset" to persevere in math and in life.
- **Acquire study skills and tools.** Students use web-based tools like Khan Academy to enhance their learning and, in the process, acquire tools that can help them succeed in many subjects in high school and beyond.

“ All of the students showed remarkable improvement over the summer. I was impressed at how their levels of grit and determination had increased and how proud they were of their achievements. ”

—2016 Catalyst Teacher