

**Evie Santana-Nola,** PROUD EXCEL ACADEMY PARENT



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## Finding a Community of Support

You might have seen signs up and down Bennington Street that read *Aplica Hoy* in Spanish or *Apply Now* in English. This year I will make the decision for the fourth time to apply for one of my children to go to Excel Academy Charter School.

In 2008, I made the decision for my oldest son to enter 5th grade. At the time, I wasn't sure if I was making the right decision, but after having three children go through Excel Academy Charter School and now with the opening of the High School, I am sure that I did what was best for my family.

I first heard about Excel Academy from a neighbor and I remember being a little intimidated. I heard the school was different and I wasn't sure what that would mean for my child. I have now had the opportunity to experience what that means for three of my children and I am hopeful my youngest will get the chance as well.

My first child struggled in finding success in school. He is bright, but was not excited to "do work" while in school. During his time at Excel Academy, he was nurtured and supported in a way that he wasn't in his other schooling experiences, including private, public, and trade school. My son found the most success during his time at Excel Academy through the support of his teachers who encouraged him and empowered him to learn through exploring. They pushed him and provided him the unique support he needed to be successful. Unfortunately, at the time, Excel Academy did not have a high school and after leaving Excel Academy he struggled to find the same supportive environment. The same was true for my second child. I believe if my two older children had been able to attend Excel Academy Charter High School they would have had less struggles.

I continue to choose Excel Academy for my younger children and I'm thrilled that they will have the opportunity

to continue with Excel Academy through their high school experience.

At Excel Academy my children have been guided by the incredible support of a truly exceptional group of teachers and support staff. My daughter recently came home from school on a Friday so excited about her most recent homework assignment. Her Science teacher, Mr. Gaar, asked the students to create something to express their opinion on a specific topic. She chose to create a video on the impact of the world's over-population and its effects on the environment and she got the whole family involved to help her develop her vision for the video. I received a text from Mr. Gaar the same day he received her work to let me know how excited and proud he was to see her go above and beyond.

I love how Excel Academy communicates with me as a parent. Whether it is to celebrate or to support my children, I hear directly from the teachers at Excel Academy immediately. This has helped me to continue to feel involved and assured that my children's individual needs are being met and nurtured.

But what I love most about Excel Academy Charter School is that all three of my children were shown how much potential they had. They were supported in ways that were unique to them whether that was with their individual learning challenges or encouraging them to push themselves even further.

What initially intimidated me about applying has turned out to be the best thing for my children. Excel Academy provides the structure and consistency while building their confidence and academic independence and I hope that all families have the opportunity to access a similar high-quality public school for their children.

For further information about our organization, please visit [excelacademy.org](https://www.excelacademy.org)