Empowering students.
Strengthening families. Building communities.

The LA Promise Fund is a nonprofit organization with a mission to improve academic achievement as well as college and career access and success for students in the Russell Westbrook Why Not? Academy, SLATE-Z and beyond. Our vision is to ensure students are successful in college, career and life by reducing education inequities and opportunity gaps.

To achieve our mission, the LA Promise Fund develops and implements high-impact educational programs and services that connect students and families to the resources they need to succeed, reaching young people inside their classrooms and through a rich array of expanded learning opportunities while building their families’ capacity to support them in realizing their potential.

We employ a variety of strategies to impact educational outcomes for students, including managing charter schools, partnering with Los Angeles School Unified District schools and running countywide programs.
Our Programs

GoForCollege
Creating a school-wide culture where college prep is the norm and every student has access to higher education

SouthLA NSI
Transforming outcomes for African American, Latinx, and low-income students by working with twelve school-based teams to increase the number of students taking and passing the required college preparatory (A-G) coursework

Amgen Biotech Experience
An innovative science education program that provides a hands-on molecular biology curriculum and cutting edge in-person and online lab experiences to students

ArtsMatter
Partnering with top artists and creators to develop high-impact education programming for Los Angeles County public schools

Career Pathway Connections
Strengthens the connection between a network of 10 South LA area high schools, Trade Tech, and the business sector to ensure more local student are prepared to pursue post-secondary education and careers in the fields of Digital Media, Healthcare, Business & Finance, and Construction

TheInternProject
Enhancing career readiness by placing Los Angeles public high school juniors and seniors in paid summer internships in an array of fields

GirlsBuild
Creating the next generation of change agents by challenging young women from public middle and high schools across LA County and beyond to use STEM principles and 21st Century learning skills to tackle issues

Food Pantry
Providing information, services, and healthy opportunities to students and families in our network of schools

PromiseParent
Building capacity of parents and caregivers to support their children’s educational and career pursuits by engaging them around their roles, rights, and responsibilities
Our Schools

- Russell Westbrook Why Not? Middle School
- Russell Westbrook Why Not? High School
SLATE-Z High Schools

- James A. Forshay Learning Center
- Susan Miller Dorsey Senior High School
- Crenshaw High School
- Santee Education Complex
- Thomas Jefferson High School
- John C. Fremont High School
- Dr. Maya Angelou Community High School
- Orthopaedic Hospital Medical Magnet High School
- CRCD Academy at LATTC
ASK 'HOW WILL THEY LEARN BEST? NOT 'CAN THEY LEARN?'"

Jamie Escalante
The heart of what we do at LA Promise Fund is to educate students, strengthen families and build communities. It is our promise to South LA. And yet, the past two years have transformed nearly every aspect of our work.

Our students and families have been forced to adjust and adapt in order to obtain a quality education. Significant challenges presented themselves in all corners of U.S. education, but the pandemic has been especially disruptive among the population of low income students and students of color. In this population, pre-existing educational disparities were significantly exacerbated by the pandemic.

Despite these headwinds, LA Promise Fund has provided quality educational programming as well as basic emergency services to students, families and the community we serve throughout the pandemic. Our teachers and administrators worked tirelessly to continue to provide educational opportunities online during the COVID-19 outbreak to students most in need. We leveraged our deep rooted partnerships to ensure the delivery of wraparound services and enrichment programs to our communities.

LA Promise Fund is dedicated to improving academic achievement as well as college and career access for students at the Westbrook Academy, in the South LA Transit Empowerment Zone (SLATE-Z) and beyond. We ensure that the educators and administrators who are directly responsible for nurturing this critical population of future leaders have the resources and training appropriate for the task. We believe the last two years demonstrated the importance of LA Promise Fund with our ability to nimbly address the urgent needs of the children in our care, even during such a crisis.

We are privileged to serve as leaders of this organization and want to extend our thanks to all those that play a role in moving LA Promise Fund forward. As you will see in this report, we have ambitious goals for the students we serve and are taking big strides towards their achievement. Of course, none of this work can happen without the support of our donors, sponsors, partners, families, students, teachers, administrators, and staff, and we have immense gratitude for all of you.
Although the 2020–21 academic year ended on a high note—with rising vaccination rates, our first graduating senior class, and access to at least some in-person learning for our students—it was as a whole, perhaps, one of the most challenging for educators and students in our history. After two years, the impact of the pandemic on learning has been significant, leaving many students to play catch up on their academics by the end of the school year.

The pandemic widened and brought national attention to pre-existing opportunity and achievement gaps, hitting historically disadvantaged students hardest. And the crisis has had an impact, not just on academics, but also on the broader health and well-being of students. To address critical needs, the team served 5,000 family members in South Los Angeles by operating our weekly food pantry, providing weekly COVID tests, and vaccination clinics.

Through our schools and program efforts, we were able to provide support to more than 48,000 youth.

We are extremely grateful for all of our educators who have remained dedicated to crafting the best distance learning program possible using experiences from the spring, research, and what we know will be most effective for the students they interact with every day. We are so thankful to our funders who have stepped up to help us close the tech gap by providing essential items, including computers and hot spots to our families.

We look forward to continuing to work together to further our mission.
INTELLIGENCE PLUS CHARACTER, THAT IS THE GOAL OF A TRUE EDUCATION.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Go for College exposes students at our charter schools to an array of colleges and universities. From college trips and college counselor training for teachers to dual enrollment classes with middle and high school students taking community college classes, Go for College ensures that every student is aware of post-secondary options and has the support needed to fulfill their college dreams.

89% Cohort Graduation Rate
College Acceptances:
The South LA Network for School Improvement (South LA NSI), is a partnership of 10 schools located in South Los Angeles, committed to transforming outcomes for African American, Latinx, and low-income students. The South LA NSI will work with school-based teams to increase the number of students taking and passing the required college preparatory coursework (A-G) mandated by the State of California.

93%
Believe they have greater access to research-based best practices through this network

9%
Increase in the first targeted cohort of freshmen students who are college-ready on-track
CAREER
The Amgen Biotech Experience (ABE) is an innovative, hands-on science education program that encourages high school students to explore biology and biotechnology through the lens of scientists. ABE provides teachers with curriculum, training, and state-of-the-art lab equipment that allows students to learn core scientific concepts utilizing the same techniques used by biotechnology researchers. The result is an immersive, inspiring learning experience that links classroom learning to real-world application. This work is funded by the Amgen Foundation and the Education Development Center.

160+ Participating Schools

220+ Participating Teachers

434 Students participating in hands-on labs during the pandemic

27,400+ Participating Students
**ABE hosted** their first virtual summit to inspire and engage students in the real-life possibilities of biotechnology, as well as inspire them to pursue further studies and careers in the field. The virtual summit reached more than 6,500 students and educators throughout the state of California. The two-hour event featured diverse speakers, including Secretary of State Shirley Weber and Scott Heimlich, Vice President of Amgen Foundation and Director of Philanthropy at Amgen Inc., followed by dynamic panels, and illustrative demos.
Career Pathway Connections creates a collaborative regional approach to align K-14 pathways for student success by strengthening career pathways across SLATE-Z, a federally designated Promise Zone and collective impact partnership with the mission to revitalize South LA. The program partners 10 local high schools with a local community college to create comprehensive career technical education pathways that develop experience and skills for college and career readiness through dual enrollment and workforce learning.
The Intern Project (TIP) advances students’ career readiness by placing Los Angeles County public high school juniors and seniors in dynamic paid internships in high-growth fields such as digital media, entertainment, technology, health care, and design. For the first time this summer, The Intern Project placed 100 students of color and/or low-income students into internships with major companies including the Los Angeles Rams, Russell Westbrook’s Why Not? Foundation, Chernin Entertainment, and Martin Bros. These experiences have helped level the playing field for students in South LA and SLATE-Z areas.

**The Intern Project**

- **650+** Student applications
- **51%** of interns from SLATE-Z schools
- **100** Subsidized internships
“My internship impacted me by opening up doors and providing an experience. The experience overall was an eye-opener and showed me what an internship is like and how to communicate with people.”

Louis Galvan, 11th Grade, Esteban Torres High School
LA Promise Fund’s ArtsMatter program is thrilled to have been awarded a $3.3 million Assistance for Arts Education grant from the U.S. Department of Education as part of the federal Arts in Education initiative. Funding will support media arts programming for Los Angeles students and teachers through the close of the 2025-26 academic year. Programming will advance the study of the burgeoning media arts education field while simultaneously building a diverse talent pipeline of Black and Brown students who are prepared to take on jobs in Los Angeles’s media and entertainment sectors.

1,000 participating students

61% of teachers reported that this program increased student participation during virtual learning

Partners:
LIFE
GirlsBuild challenges young women from public middle and high schools to use STEM principles and 21st Century learning skills to effect social change. GirlsBuild activates young women to engage with the issues they care about and prepares them to solve the problems of tomorrow.
In November,
at the GirlsBuild Virtual Summit more than 15,000 girls from 136 schools in California and states across the country, including New York, Hawaii, Texas, Illinois, and Puerto Rico, were inspired to become planet advocates by keynote speakers House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senator Alex Padilla, and actor and environmental activist Jason Momoa. Our amazing panelists - all women of color - discussed diversity, equity, and how the next generation of female leaders can focus both on the health and well-being of the planet and of themselves. Their powerful conversations centered on social and emotional well-being mixed in with energizing breaks from DJ Livia.
In the face of a climate crisis and so many other challenges, the world needs more young women leaders like those joining this year’s GirlsBuild Virtual Summit. Each one of our young people has the unique ability to create change. We must all remember the power that we have to make a difference.”

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
No Kid Hungry, a national foundation committed to ending child hunger and malnutrition, presented LA Promise Fund's Promise Parent team and its food pantry volunteers with the School, overseen by Promise Parent program, with the School Meals Hero and #HungerHero awards for providing 1 million pounds of food and serving 5,000 family members in South Los Angeles. Eighty percent of families served by the pantry reported all income was lost at the height of the pandemic. LA Promise Fund's Promise Parent team worked every week for one year to provide meals and offer PPE equipment, COVID-19 vaccine information, dental hygiene products, and assistance with voter registration to ensure the community's basic needs were met.
Russell Westbrook

along with his wife, Nina, and longtime business partner, Donnell Beverly has partnered with LA Promise Fund to launch the Russell Westbrook Why Not? Middle and High Schools, known collectively as Russell Westbrook Why Not? Academy with the goal of ensuring students in South Los Angeles has access to high-quality athletic programs while balancing a strong education and leadership development. Westbrook and Beverly have also joined LA Promise Fund's board to help oversee developments at the schools.
Creating and supporting educational opportunities for underserved youth has always been a passion of mine. It’s so important that every child has access to a good education regardless of their socioeconomic background. My goal in partnering with the LA Promise Fund is to ensure our South LA students are ready for college and ultimately success in a 21st-century career."

9-Time NBA All Star
Russell Wesbrook
OUR SCHOOLS
Our Schools

Russell Westbrook Why Not? Academy delivers world class education to South Los Angeles youth grades 6 through 12 while simultaneously developing academic achievers, athletes and activists committed to social change. The Academy is a community hub that offers students a safe and personalized learning environment while engaging parents as partners in their children’s education. Why Not? Academy, which consists of a High School and Middle School, are public charter schools authorized by the Los Angeles County Office of Education and are members of California Charter School Association.
As the first graduating class, RWWNHS had an 89% Graduation rate and a 90% college acceptance rate
During the pandemic, RWWNHS maintained an average 91% attendance/participation and a 0% suspension rate
11.3% of English Learners were reclassified to fluent English proficient (RFEP) status

*For 2020-21, RWWNHS does not have CAASPP data due to the Statewide suspension of the 2020-21 Summative CAASPP.
• During the pandemic, RWWNMS maintained an average 91% attendance/participation and a 0% suspension rate.
• For the academic year, RWWNMS increased their NWEA ELA proficiency by 3 percentage points and the NWEA Math proficiency by 1 percentage points.
• Both 7th and 8th grade Average Lexile Growth has shown consistent growth.

*For 2020-21, RWWNMS does not have CAASPP data due to the Statewide suspension of the 2020-21 Summative CAASPP.*
Upon a rewarding yet challenging first semester, we want to showcase a special teacher who goes above and beyond to fulfill the mission and vision of the Russell Westbrook Academy.

Mr. Ryan MacDonald teaches Integrated Math 3 at Russell Westbrook Why Not? Academy. Through his engaging teaching style, Ryan helps students who have not experienced success in math, understand and enjoy this critical subject area. Ryan builds trusting relationships with his students and is highly respected and regarded by every member of our learning community.

When you enter Ryan’s classroom, you will notice he is never sitting at his desk. Instead, he is walking around, providing differentiated assistance to students in small groups and immersing them in critical thinking activities. These connections to real-world problems make math relevant to students’ lives.
Our charters have a higher percentage of students of need relative to LAUSD. Compared to similar and Resident schools, our charters have high percentages of English Learners (EL), Students with Disabilities (SWD), and Black students.
YoungProfessionalsCouncil
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Para Mi Familia
Que Llegaron Sin Nada Y Me Lo Dieron Todo
ORDOÑO
OSUDH
Join Us

Serving tens of thousands of students across LA County, the LA Promise Fund is committed to bringing key resources to those who need them the most.

LEND YOUR SUPPORT

info@lapromisefund.org

LAPromiseFund.org/donate
Donor List

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- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Russell Westbrook Why Not? Foundation
- Amgen Foundation

$100,000 & above
- Service Station Foundation
- Ballmer Group
- Marina Verti & Stephen Prough
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- Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
- Kissick Family Foundation
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- Share Our Strength/No Kid Hungry
- Weingart Foundation
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- Joseph Drown Foundation
- Katie McGrath & JJ Abrams Family Foundation
- AT&T

$25,000 & above
- California Arts Council
- United Way of Greater Los Angeles
- Walt Disney Company
- Microsoft
- California Community Foundation
- Dwight Stuart Youth Fund
- Dean & Kelli Hallett
- PwC
- Verizon Foundation
- Ralphs/Food4Less
- Play Equity Fund
- Pacific Western Bank
- LA84 Foundation
- LA Rams
- Evil Geniuses
- California Department of Education
- Berti Foundation

$10,000 & above
- Carol & James Collins Foundation
- Just Keep Livin Foundation
- Facebook
- California Emerging Technology Fund
- Amazon Web Services
- Robin Kurtzman
- Richard Maloof
- Paramount
- Karsh Family Foundation
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- City National Bank
- Chip Rosenbloom Family
- Brian & Gillian McNamee

$5,000 & above
- Langwater Foundation
- Danielle Vick
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- Simon Osborn
- Seth & Jody Brufsky
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- Nickelodeon
- Nicholas & Alison Temple
- Kaiser Permanente
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- Americo Cascella

$1,000 & above
- Buro Happold
- Lori & David Johnston
- PC Films LLC
- David & Gina Burcham
- American Heart Association
- Byrant Lee
- Morgan Family Foundation
- JP Morgan
- Andrea Foggy-Paxton
$1,000 & above

- Vincent Jones
- Fleischer Ruben
- The Wonderful Company Foundation
- Ruben Fleischer
- Matt Stewart
- Lucas Museum of Narrative Art
- Katie Brody
- John Solberg
- Frank Marshall
- Erik Ridgley
- Citizen Jones Consulting

$100 & above

- Schools First Credit Union
- Tonecia Wahlstrom
- Kevin Gold
- Croft & Kingsley
- Wild Card Media
- Michelle Cheang
- Edlio LLC
- Abramson Architects
- Owang Family Foundation
- Maxwell Wear Charitable Account
- Laurie Owyang
- Kendall Ranjbaran
- Davis Publications
- David Kersey
- Cathy Bender
- Lovida Galie/Auntie Veete
- Jane Man
- High Wide & GHandsome Marketing LLC
- Liliana Vasquez
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- Brian Simmons
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- Adam Dreyfuss
- Aaron Tabak
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Partner List

AMGEN BIOTECH EXPERIENCE
- CSU Channel Islands
- Fullerton College
- Los Angeles Pierce College
- Los Angeles Mission College
- Los Angeles Community College District
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- Rancho Santiago Community College District
- Pasadena Bio Collaborative Incubator

CARER PATHWAY CONNECTIONS/THE INTERN PROJECT
- 42West
- 826LA
- Amazon
- AWS
- Ayzenberg
- Abramson Architects
- Alliance for a Better Community
- Budding Artists
- Buro Happold
- Campaign for College Opportunity
- Cedars Sinai Accelerator
- Chernin Entertainment LLC
- Children’s Hospital
- Climate Journal Project LLC
- Coalition for Responsible Community Development
- Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment
- Community Health Partners
- Disney
- Edlio
- El Nido Family Centers
- Essential Health Access
- Green Pines Media
- Heart of Los Angeles
- High Wide & Handsome
- Hotel Bel Air
- Justice for My Sister
- Los Angeles Medical Center
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- Martin Brothers
- Microsoft
- MOCEAN

ARTSMATTER
- Paramount
- Film Independent
- Epic Games
- BRIC Foundation
- Meta/Facebook

GIRLSBUILD
- Alison & Nick Temple
- Amazon Web Services
- Amgen Foundation
- Annenberg Foundation
- AT&T
- Boeing
- National Geographic
HEALTH & WELLNESS

- 986 Pharmacy
- ALLIANCE
- byteCares
- Just Keep Livin’ Foundation
- Kaiser Permanente
- LA84
- LA Regional Foodbank
- No Kid Hungry
- St. Brigid Catholic Church
- St. John’s Well Child & Family Center
- The Harmony Project
- Vision to Learn
- Wellnest

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

- 986 Pharmacy
- byteCares
- Kaiser Permanente
- Microsoft
- Fulfillment Fund
- OneLA
- SALEF
- St. John’s Well Child & Family Center
- The Harmony Project
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Charles Daroy
Technology Manager

Jonathan Guido-Avila
Director of People & Operations

Sarah Escajeda
Associate Director of Parent Engagement

Wendy Ayuso
Community Representative

Cindy Garcia
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