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CELEBRATING EXCEL ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL'S FIRST GRADUATING CLASS

DEAR FRIEND,

Last spring we celebrated a huge milestone for Excel – the graduation of our first class of high school seniors. We started Excel because we wanted to provide a free, neighborhood, college preparatory option for students from East Boston and Chelsea that was both **rigorous and inclusive**. Excel's middle schools have always been rigorous and inclusive. And so the big question for us was whether we could do the same in high school. As you will see from the stories and numbers in this appeal, the answer is yes, most definitely.

We have also just launched construction of a new home for Excel Academy - Orient Heights, the middle school campus where Excel was founded 17 years ago in a strip mall next to a CVS. While we have a lot of nostalgia for that space, it has a number of significant challenges as a place of learning. The new building will be elevated above our High School parking lot and will include a daycare for Excel staff members' children.

None of this work would have been possible without your support. Thank you for helping to build this amazing community!

Owen Stearns
CEO

90%

were admitted to
at least one college that
was affordable
for them

Of the **116** students
who started with
this class 4 years ago,
98 graduated
last spring

13%

were admitted to
colleges defined as
“most competitive”
by Barron's



Here are two stories from our founding class, illustrating the range of choices students are exploring:



Edy De Leon

Edy De Leon is a reflective young man who started at Excel as a fifth grader. He has been a wrestler, a member of Band of Brothers (Excel's young men's leadership group), and a construction project manager through the Architecture, Construction and Engineering (ACE) program at Wentworth Institute of Technology. He also was a college student as part of our dual enrollment program with Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology. As Edy prepared to leave Excel he had choices, choices he worked hard for – he earned admission to the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, UMASS Boston and UMASS Dartmouth. And his work in the ACE program earned him offers to pursue apprenticeship programs in the construction industry. Edy was asking himself an important question –

do I want to go to college for me or because I am trying to prove something to others? As he reflected on all of his experiences in college classrooms, on construction jobsites, in school, and at home, Edy decided to pursue an electrical apprenticeship program, and we could not be more proud of him.





Natalia Calvo

Natalia Calvo has also been a part of the Excel community since 5th grade, and she truly maximized her time here. She especially excelled in our computer science program, culminating in earning a 5 on the AP Computer Science exam as a junior. Her legacy at Excel will live on through Tech Club, which she co-founded as a freshman and co-led throughout high school with her twin sister Yasmine. In the summer she participated in Brandeis' App Design Bootcamp, MIT's Beaver Works and Code Academy, and

she spent all of last summer at Amherst College as part of the prestigious Noonan Scholars program. Natalia received SIXTEEN college acceptance letters and extraordinarily generous scholarships. She made the choice to attend Harvard University, and we could not be more proud of her.



HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

100%

100% OF OUR STUDENTS PARTICIPATE
IN COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAMMING
BEGINNING IN 5TH GRADE





At Excel we believe the real finish line for our students is post-secondary success, not a high school diploma. To that end, our seven person College Access and Post Secondary Success (CAPS) team is dedicated to ensuring every Excel student has access to college going identities and the non-cognitive skills essential for post-secondary success. This significant investment in our graduates' futures has always been a hallmark of Excel's program, and we are thrilled that this first graduating class has taken full advantage of it.

If you are interested in learning more about our schools or visiting, please email

Diane Cohen at dcohen@excelacademy.org

EMAIL ME!

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The mission of Excel Academy is to prepare students to succeed in high school and college, apply their learning to solve relevant problems, and engage productively in their communities.

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