ILEAD Agua Dulce’s charter was approved June 21, 2018, with a staff of eight and opened in just eight weeks after charter approval with 110 learners. For the 2020-21 school year, they have grown to 23 staff members and 284 learners.
Public Charter Schools Grant

In 2019, a grant of $475,000 enabled the school to purchase a SMART Lab Exploratorium, Promethean ActivPanels for every classroom, big blue blocks for engineering and design, and items to enhance their already-outstanding Outdoor Classroom, where all learners in grades TK-7 have the opportunity to learn about and connect with nature. A Makery, art studio, and more technology are arriving during the 2020-21 school year. In addition, iLEAD Agua Dulce was awarded $50,000 for programs to benefit learners who need extra support.

WASC Accreditation

In their first year, iLEAD Agua Dulce achieved the ambitious goal of becoming accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). After adding 7th grade in 2019, the school became accredited through 7th grade. In October 2020, WASC will revisit the accreditation process with the addition of 8th grade.
iLEAD Agua Dulce learners and families have worked hard to win many trophies for their one-of-a-kind floats for the Agua Dulce parade route each September since 2018, and they’ve helped to sponsor the Agua Dulce Country Fair.

iLEAD Agua Dulce hosts many other social events, including:
◊ Harvest Festival
◊ Winter Production
◊ ’50s Ice Cream Socials
◊ Outdoor drive-in movie nights
◊ Binghetti
◊ Pancake and Cereal Buffet Breakfasts
◊ Dress for a Mess Day
◊ Multicultural Feast
◊ Jamboree
Outdoor Classroom

Play is the primary means by which children explore the world, investigate its properties, and build an understanding of the world around them. Because research confirms the value of play for healthy brain development, iLEAD Agua Dulce has designed an Outdoor Classroom with inspiring opportunities and tools for child-led play, such as loose parts, art supplies, mud kitchens, Storybook Theater, science equipment, and musical instruments. The Outdoor Classroom is set up with intentionality to support education throughout the domains and meets learning objectives and goals.

Play Maker’s Institute

iLEAD Agua Dulce School Director Lisa Latimer is the United States Chair for Play Advocacy for the International Play Association. In 2020, she helped launch iLEAD’s PlayMakers Institute to further educate teachers, families and community members on the importance of play and how to incorporate it into their programs.
Real-World Connections

Connecting learners with experts in a variety of fields helps them think globally and understand the workforce on a broader scale. iLEAD Agua Dulce facilitators connect learners with people who specialize in areas that pertain to their projects to connect their learning with the real world. Learners have met with experts in the following fields:

◊ Town Council: Acton, Agua Dulce
◊ Assemblywoman Christie Smith
◊ Urban Forestry Manager
◊ Justice Deputy in Charge Public Safety Legislation and Policy
◊ Two-time Cupcake Wars winner and Food Network Champion
◊ Fire Department
◊ Permaculture
◊ Engineers
◊ General contractors
◊ NASA staff
◊ Vasquez Rocks rangers
◊ Mars Science Laboratory/NASA JPL Scientist
◊ Paleontologist
◊ Musician/Author
◊ Artists/Designers
◊ Architects
◊ And more...

DreamUp To Space and Genes In Space

iLEAD Agua Dulce learners research and design experiments to potentially be conducted in microgravity. This is a very high level project with very specific guidelines. All the teams work incredibly hard. During the 2019-2020 school year, two iLEAD Agua Dulce teams finished in the top six of over 150 teams. Their experiments then were judged by a team of NASA scientists. iLEAD Agua Dulce’s Team Aloe Vera, who researched the effects of microgravity on aloe vera, was among the final teams to travel to Florida in February 2020 to watch their experiment launch to the International Space Station, where their experiment was conducted by astronauts.
Jamboree
The iLEAD Agua Dulce Jamboree is an exciting event where we celebrate the end of a spectacular school year. We have a live band, silent auction, food trucks and games. More importantly, our learners showcase their talents through performance, show their entrepreneurial skills with learner-made items to sell, and take the lead with helping to plan the event.

Gardens/Chicken Coop
As one of iLEAD Agua Dulce’s first projects to nurture a positive and inclusive school environment, learners built a chicken coop and created 12 garden beds for the entire campus to work on together each year. When the chickens lay eggs and the vegetables grow, the learners will host a farmers’ market to promote healthy eating and the entrepreneurial spirit!

Our Critters!
Animals create a sense of responsibility, foster empathy, and serve as a comforting support for learners. The iLEAD Agua Dulce community currently house one gecko, one snake, six guinea pigs, and eight rabbits – and chickens will arrive in the spring of 2021. Miniature horses and donkeys frequently visit the campus as well.

Multicultural Feast
The iLEAD Agua Dulce Multicultural Feast is a yearly event where the entire community comes together to celebrate the wide range of cultures that make up our family! A potluck-style event, the Multicultural Feast allows families, learners, and friends to explore the Agua Dulce campus while sampling foods and gaining understanding for a variety of amazing cultures.
After-School Clubs

iLEAD Agua Dulce’s after-school clubs are led by facilitators to help learners tap into their passions. Clubs change every six weeks to offer a wide variety of hands-on experiences. Learners have fun participating in activities from ballroom dancing to spirit squad, environmental art, mindfulness, home ec, improvisation, reading and math club, crafting, life skills, and outdoor exploration. iLEAD Agua Dulce also offers competitive sports, including soccer, basketball, and flag football.

Project-Based Learning

iLEAD Agua Dulce’s curriculum and instruction meet Common Core state standards through authentic Gold Standard Project-Based Learning (PBL). Authentic project-based learning is the ideal way to prepare learners for higher learning in college and the 21st-century workplace. Not only do facilitators work with a variety of curriculum to support personalized learning, but learners have opportunities to follow their passions and set their own unique goals for their education. All iLEAD Agua Dulce staff go through extensive training every August before the school year starts and throughout the year.

Family Communications

The Monday Message, iLEAD Agua Dulce’s weekly online publication, provides a wealth of information on school events, PBL, and ways for families to get involved. This is the main source of school information. Facilitators also send out weekly grade-level emails highlighting academics, projects, and upcoming events. In addition, Table Talks are emailed home two to three times per week to provide specific questions families can ask their children to spark meaningful conversations about the learning taking place in the classroom.
¡SUPPORT!
Each month, families meet with the director and team to talk about school updates, upcoming events, and ways to be involved.

◊ Attend annual conferences: CCSA, A Plus, College Board, CCIS, Student Support Symposium, School Pathways

◊ Maker Team: supports and gives ongoing training on current topics in EL, PBL, conflict resolution, leadership, and 7 Habits as well as conducting twice annual “Camp Make” intensive staff development multi-day workshops

◊ ED Specialist, Counselor, multiple service providers to provide OT, adaptive PE, DHH

◊ Third year of hosting a Student Support Symposium that offers training to everyone on staff about special-education-related support. This is open to staff, parents, and outside school communities in the area to help train them on special education supports.

◊ SST process with multiple tiered interventions has been developed and implemented over the past couple years, promoting growth and support for general education learners so they can be successful.
Distance Learning

Under the most difficult circumstances and with support from iLEAD Schools, iLEAD Agua Dulce was able to adapt to distance learning with no loss of learning. Technology was provided for all learners who were in need the day of school closure. Facilitators trained on the online platform prior to school closure on March 13. Families and learners were trained on the platform Monday, March 16, and all learners were engaged with Zoom live sessions and asynchronous work on Tuesday, March 17. The school continued to assess learners’ growth through proctored MAP assessments given in the fall, winter and spring, and they are proud to have had 93% participation.

Virtual Play

During distance learning, iLEAD Agua Dulce intentionally continued to promote play. Through virtual live sessions, learners escaped the stress of the sudden change to distance learning by participating in activities that stimulated their sense of wonderment, sparked their curiosity and fostered creativity and independence. Knowing that play allows children to become adaptive, resilient, collaborative, and imaginative, iLEAD Agua Dulce launched Play Each Day Week, empowering learners to select their own activities in the areas of design thinking, imagination, passion, messy play, and curiosity.

Building Community Virtually and Social Distancing

During distance learning, iLEAD Agua Dulce continued to build community and nurture connections. Social events have included an end-of-year Decorated Car Parade, a Welcome Back and School Supply Car Parade, a learner-hosted virtual assembly honoring Patriot Day, and a virtual book fair. iLEAD Agua Dulce regularly posts fun videos showcasing learners and staff. The iSUPPORT family group is planning more virtual events, such as bingo, paint nights, and other activities that bring the community together.
The “I” in “iLEAD” stands for “Leadership,” and the “D” in “iLEAD” stands for “Design Thinking.” Knowing this, iLEAD Agua Dulce learners took on a leadership role by writing a proposal to have an area where they could design and build with loose parts. Thus, Creation Station was launched! Learners worked alongside a professional muralist to turn an unused shed into a beautiful masterpiece! Inside the shed are many loose parts for the learners to create with during recess and lunch. The Inspiration Generation leadership group of learners maintain the Creation Station, replenishing loose parts and ensuring that everyone is included.

Creation Station

Makery and Art Studio

iLEAD Agua Dulce’s new Makery and art studio are creative spaces where learners can design, invent, create, engineer and express themselves through a variety of mediums. The Makery allows learners to tinker and build while learning how to properly use power and hand tools; which fosters autonomy and self-regulation. A new art studio gives learners an outlet to practice a variety of art techniques and find their own styles. Both the Makery and art studio develop confidence, increase learner empathy, and help children discover how to look at the world from different perspectives and view their world with passion and creativity.
Art Contest Winners

iLEAD Agua Dulce learners have many opportunities to display their talents in multiple art disciplines. The annual Santa Clarita Youth Arts Showcase invites learners to submit their art to be displayed and enjoyed by the community. In May 2020, five iLEAD Agua Dulce learners placed in the top three for their age groups.

Helpful Honda Award

In May 2020, Outdoor Classroom facilitator Aidan Bybee was honored by Honda for her continued efforts in facilitating the Outdoor Classroom virtually. Through creative thinking and innovation, the Outdoor Classroom live Zoom sessions kept a sense of normalcy for the learners and engaged them with hands-on learning activities.