



December 2020

## End of our First Semester

We knew going into this school year that we would need to be agile, and have the overall ability to adapt to shifts potentially outside of our control.

We would like to thank everyone for their support, commitment, and partnership in navigating a uniquely challenging year, where we are currently focusing on ensuring a safe space as well as our continued ability to offer in person learning support for our students. As we prepare for the close of the first semester of our school year, we wanted to update everyone on upcoming **important dates**:

- **December 18th, last day of semester for all students**
- **December 17th is the last scheduled day of in-person services for the on-campus program**
- **Winter Break: December 21st through January 1st.**
- **January 4th, start of the second semester**
- ***Remote only instruction for all students, January 4th through January 15th***
- **Anticipated day of return to on-campus, in-person program, January 19th**

These dates are subject to change based on local and site based conditions. We have decided to build in the 2-week remote only period to further strength our safety, and to avoid any potential conflicts that may occur during the break period. It also gives us the ability to ensure no sudden shifts in approach during the break period for the scheduled return date.

Wishing everyone a safe, healthy and happy holiday season.

Together We Can Achieve,  
Ryan C. Eisenberg  
Executive Director

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## Donate Today!

Donate today to help us continue to offer the highest quality of education, whether remote or in-person, to our community's most complex learners.

Please help us reach our annual campaign goal.

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## From Our Endowment Scholarship Winner



The Endowment Scholarship that I received from AchieveKids allowed me to begin the final chapter of my journey of becoming a credentialed Education Specialist (Special Education Teacher). In August of this year, I was accepted into UCLA's Induction Program. It is a 2-year program that will result in me being able to obtain an Education Specialist Clear Credential.

Being a Special Education teacher is an important aspect of my life. I really enjoy working with youth. Being able to positively shape the minds of young people is a beautiful experience. One of the more important reasons is that I want to not only assist in educating individuals with special needs, but I want to be one of their strongest advocates.

Unfortunately, there are misconceptions about the special needs and mental health communities. Through advocacy and education, attitudes and perceptions are thankfully, changing. There needs to be more people providing support and being the voice for this wonderful population. I want, and need, to be a part of this.

The coursework in my Induction Program will prepare me to better address the various needs of our students. I will have the necessary tools to not only assist students, but their families as well. The success of our students is rooted in collaborative efforts of the parents, teachers, service providers, and school administration. In my experiences, there are times parents need more help and are sometimes hesitant to ask. I typically use a proactive approach to ensure the families of my students receive the assistance they need. This is beneficial for all involved, especially the students.

I am very grateful to AchieveKids for this scholarship so that I can finish my education.

Thank you,  
Jamal Mpenda

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*If you have any topics or program aspects you'd like to learn more about; or have suggestions for future topics, please let us know. Email [info@achievekids.org](mailto:info@achievekids.org)*

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