



NO EXCUSES UNIVERSITY AT EL PORTAL

Our one goal:

We are committed to developing the character and academic achievement

Our pledge:

Every student, without exception and without excuse, will meet or exceed standards in Language Arts and math.

WHAT IS NO EXCUSES UNIVERSITY?

Damen Lopez is the founder of No Excuses University (NEU). He began NEU when he was principal at Los Penasquitos (Los Pen), an elementary school in Poway Unified School District in San Diego. He started NEU after researching the kinds of programs available for teaching elementary school students about going to college. Because there wasn't anything for elementary school, he founded No Excuses University.

His mother used to tell him every night before bed, "After high school, comes college." No Excuses University is based on the idea of college readiness—"Every student deserves the opportunity to be educated in a way that prepares them for college, if they so choose to attend." The Six Exceptional Systems help schools focus on the most important part of a school- learning and better results for students' education. No Excuses! No Limits!



NEU Six Exceptional Systems

NEU: SIX EXCEPTIONAL SYSTEMS: A CULTURE OF UNIVERSAL ACHIEVEMENT:

In order to promote systematic results at El Portal, our work is based on No Excuses University's concept of the Six Exceptional Systems.

As defined by NEU, exceptional systems are:

- Unique solutions to important challenges
- Created by the critical mass of a staff in a highly collaborative way
- Reviewed annually and driven by results

These systems are: a belief in a culture of universal achievement, collaboration, standards alignment, an assessment plan, data management, and finally, a system of interventions. Each exceptional system is displayed on the staircase to the left. This progression guides each step as we seek to achieve our **one goal** as a school. We continue to engage in trainings that help teachers analyze data and provide them with new strategies for lessons and interventions.

Data Analysis: Data should be the language of any NEU school. Teachers analyze data to plan for interventions and daily lessons.

"AFTER HIGH SCHOOL COMES COLLEGE"

COMMITMENT

Interventions: Data is used to plan interventions. Interventions provide teachers with data regarding the effectiveness of an intervention.

NEU: EI Portal Pledges: An important part of being a No Excuses University (NEU) school is that everyone pledges to give their best effort to prepare EI Portal students for college.

At EI Portal, a 3-way pledge is introduced every academic year. Students, parents, and teachers are asked to sign it as a way to begin the conversation of helping to support students to be college bound.

Part of the **staff pledge** is that:

We are committed to providing extraordinary educational opportunities to every learner.

Teachers Pledge to:

- Our Pledge and Goal of EI Portal
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Implement the 6 Exceptional Systems

Students Pledge to:

- Arrive at school everyday on time, ready to learn and stay all day, unless he/she is ill
- Follow rules and LJSD's character education program
- Complete and turn in homework on time, every day
- Give letters, corrected work, and school materials to my parents
- Return signed agendas and/or passback folders to my teacher

Parents Pledge to:

- Our Pledge and Goal of EI Portal
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Commitment to ensure my child arrives at school everyday, on time, ready to learn, and stays all day, unless he or she is ill

NEU: Symbols

At EI Portal, one of the most obvious signs is our new No Excuses University logo! NEU shirts will be worn by staff members and students on Motivational Mondays (if no Monday, then Tuesday). Every classroom has adopted a 4-year university and that university's symbols are visible in and outside of the classroom of the classroom. Fridays are college spirit days, when we encourage students to proudly wear their college t-shirt or colors.

During the year, students will continue to learn about their classroom adopted college. NEU planners are used in grades 3-6, and college vocabulary will be learned at every grade level, TK-6. College themed bulletin boards and flags are in hallways and other common areas. All of this is done to get students to think about college and begin the conversation about which college they would like to attend. We truly believe that every child should begin preparing for college, starting in preschool-
NO EXCUSES! NO LIMITS!

TAKE FIVE!

Parents will take 5 minutes to review home communication (folders/agenda) when a student comes home from school. They will have conversations about student academic and character goals.

