

## *Cohort IX Graduate Reflections: Dear Dr. Elaine Ruiz Lopez*

Dear Dr. Lopez,

I would sincerely like to thank you for several things that have occurred since attending International Leadership Charter High School. I thank you for providing us with a diverse and brilliant set of teachers. Teachers, who for all their worth, taught us the best that they could and pushed their students past the limits they had for themselves. I thank you for providing us with a safe environment whether we were at the old building or the new. We have never had to fear for our lives or safety when coming to International Leadership Charter High School. You allowed us students to come to school without the fear that many other high school students in the Bronx have. I would also like to thank you for allowing people to keep our school clean and for having them keep the snow from outside of the school. Because of this, we were able to easily enter school without the fear of snow blocking our way. Additionally, unlike other students, I could honestly say that my school was cleaner than other schools I had attended previously. Finally, I thank you for the opportunities that you have provided for me personally. Whether it be the Model United Nations program or the CUNY College Now program, I thank you for allowing me to expand and broaden my horizons while coming to International Leadership Charter High School.

Sincerely,

Cartomou Feseru

Valedictorian Class of 2018

Dear Dr. Lopez,

I am thankful for the opportunities I got in International Leadership Charter High School, for all of the people I met, but I am mainly thankful for the experiences I shared with every single person that was there for me throughout these past three years. Here at ILCHS, I met amazing wonderful people, who taught me that no matter what life goes on, that every obstacle we face we can overcome. I am especially thankful for the amazing new friendships I made here that will go on with me forever. I am also thankful for people like Ms. Gonzalez.

She gave me the opportunity to complete my internship at the school, which I am thankful for. It was an amazing experience to work here at the school and interact with the staff, the students, and the parents. They also gave me the opportunity to get involved in a summer program, Scales of Justice Academy. The program helped me develop my love for law even more than ever before and made me sure of what I want to be in life. It also helped me experience different things and gave me the opportunity to go to Washington D.C. Overall my years here at ILCHS will be ones I will never forget.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Nunez

Salutatorian Class of 2018

Dear Dr. Lopez,

During my time in ILCHS I have learned a great deal of things. One of the most important things that I have become accustomed to is the hour and half classes that we had here in ILCHS. In college these type of classes occur on the regular and it is good to start experiencing these long classes. For example while I was attending one of my college classes, one that was provided for me by you Dr Lopez and staff, I wasn't bothered by the length of the class which was one hour and forty minutes. I had adapted to those type of long classes which is one of the skills that I was able to pick up on during my time at ILCHS. I would also like to say thank you for the SAT prep classes that you provided for us in order to help us get a better score and give a better impression on the colleges that we choose to apply to. Thank you very much for giving us this safe and loving environment to get our education and for opening doors to new opportunities. My time at ILCHS will truly be one of the most memorable times in my life. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joldy Bautista

Dear Dr. Lopez,

Words cannot describe my immense gratitude for the opportunity that has been given to me. ILCHS was definitely not an easy road to take. However, the more challenging roads reap the greatest rewards. My journey throughout this school has taught me many things. Things that I will keep with me for the rest of my life. In my time here, I have developed character, which will follow me wherever I go. I have matured exponentially with the nearly four years I have spent at ILCHS. The academics pushed me to go farther than I have ever gone before. I was encouraged to be the best version of myself, and to chase greatness because nothing is given; everything we accomplish is earned. Things were never easy at this school. I will always appreciate the opportunities that have been provided in order for me to strive. Whether it was Model UN or Tae Kwon Do, the activities that ILCHS has available are engaging, motivational, and most importantly, fun. High school is more than simply a cliché rollercoaster ride. It is a long, challenging adventure filled with happiness, tough times, and glory. This was a major chapter of my life. I am incredibly grateful for my experience at ILCHS.

Sincerely,

Bradley Belliard

**Dear Dr. Lopez,**

**I am writing to thank you for the outstanding work and contributions that you made to our school. I appreciate all the hard work that you put into this school and the dedication in your everyday work. Everything that you do is because you want to see our school and the students within it prosper. I am so grateful you are always there when we have special moments in our high school days such as when you are present to witness our Tae Kwon Do belt promotions and our holiday celebrations. I look forward to making another great memory with you when it is our turn to graduate. I am thankful for what the school you founded has taught me throughout the years I have been here as a student. I have learned the value of hard work and discipline and respect. I also want to thank you so much for all of the hard work that you put into the school in order to see us succeed. Again, I am thankful for your generosity. I feel blessed and honored to be able to attend and keep learning from what the school has to offer.**

**Sincerely,**

**Gina Chimbo**

**Dear Dr. Lopez,**

**Although we have not shared many encounters through the years, I still appreciate and miss our little moments when you would take time out of your busy day to say “good morning” or give a motivational thumbs up. You might not even know my name, but I hope you remember my face because I am confident that once I graduate from Fordham University, I will become a leader in some capacity, as you always intended. You are truly a remarkable woman. My senior year would not be complete if I failed to acknowledge you for the mentorship you have provided for the Class of 2018.**

**Now since our journey is now finally ending, we will all go our separate ways. We are truly going to miss each other. In fact, some of us will never see each other again or ever be all in the same room together. Whatever we decide to do, wherever we may go, let us be sure to use the skills and knowledge we picked up at International Leadership Charter School. Remember that this chapter has only ended, but the you are real story, our real story has just begun and we still have a long way to go. I am very proud of you, my graduating class and my CEO.**

**Sincerely,**

**Gerald De La Cruz**

**Dear Dr. Lopez,**

**First, I would like to thank you for creating a strong foundation of a school so that my peers and I can enter knowing that we are safe. Throughout these four years, we were introduced to many teachers, reviewed by you to make sure that we were given the best education possible that we will carry on through college and the rest of our lives. Living in New York State taking regents exams are required, so I would like to thank you for making sure that we had regents prep to ensure that we pass our regents and become college ready.**

**I am extremely grateful for your efforts to make sure we have college experiences.**

**Participating in College Now has given me a head start entering as a Freshman in College by taking College courses and earning credits for them. Throughout my four years at International Leadership Charter High School I have learned how to better manage my time and be more responsible; qualities that I would need for college and the rest of my life entering a nursing career. Without ILCHS, I would not have so many open doors when it comes to being prepared for college and for my upcoming future.**

**Sincerely,**

**Bianca Dickerson**

Dear Dr Lopez,

After spending four years at International Leadership Charter High School, I have learned a lot. During my four years at International Leadership Charter High School, I have learned discipline and respect for others and myself. The classes at International Leadership Charter High School has helped me become globally aware and made me cognizant of my actions. I am more aware of how our actions effect our daily lives. International Leadership Charter High School has taught me time managing skills that I will take into college. International Leadership Charter High School helped me transition from middle school to high school and now college. International Leadership Charter High School has laid the foundation to becoming a successful doctor in the future. Attending to International Leadership Charter High School has been a challenging time, and I appreciate you so much for giving me the opportunity of attending International Leadership Charter High School. You have no idea how much this has helped. I could never thank you enough but this is a start.

Now that I will soon graduate High School and go into college, I would like to thank you for welcoming me warmly to International Leadership Charter High School. There was nothing random about your acts of kindness. Thank you for all you have done. For all the little and big ways you have pitched in...thanks!

Thank You,

Leslie Dominguez

**Dear Dr. Lopez,**

**There are many things that as a student I should thank you for. The first thing I would like to thank you for is being a leader; your dream has grown by creating this successful charter school. The reason why I am thanking you for this is because you have created a learning environment where a student can feel safe from anything that could affect them. The high school experience you have accomplished would give any student the desire to create a school that is successful like this one we attend today. International Leadership Charter High School is home for any dream that a teenager could have. The dream does not only apply to the ones that wish to have their own school, but also the students that wish to be successful in life. Thank you for showing that women have the same potential that men have to be successful as a leader. Thank you once again.**

**Sincerely,**

**Sanibel Felipe**

Dear Dr. Lopez,

I am writing this letter to thank you for all the help and guidance you given me throughout my four years of high school. Your guidance as well as your help have encouraged me to make the final decision to attend medical school while minoring in art science. Which is something I could not have been able to decide on my own. Despite the lack of resources for art, the International Leadership Charter High School institution has managed to offer students like me the opportunity to show off their talent and creativity. Such opportunity has inspired me to continue developing my artistic skills while still focusing on the growth of my intellectual subjects, which plays an important part on my admiration for medicine.

Your teachers as well as administration and staff, have also influenced my life. I believe that the basis of an efficient high school experience depends on whom you surround yourself with. I would like to thank you for choosing upon such great staff and teachers. Because of your amazing effort to make our high school environment healthy as well as friendly, I have been able to figure out what is best for me; not only school wise but as well as an individual. Once again thank you for your guidance.

Sincerely,

**Zairy Fernandez**

**Dear Dr. Lopez,**

**I would sincerely like to thank you for several things that have occurred since attending International Leadership Charter High School. I thank you for providing us with a diverse and brilliant set of teachers. Teachers, who for all their worth, taught us the best that they could and pushed their students past the limits they had for themselves. I thank you for providing us with a safe environment whether we were at the old building or the new. We have never had to fear for our lives or safety when coming to International Leadership Charter High School. You allowed us students to come to school without the fear that many other high school students in the Bronx have. I would also like to thank you for allowing people to keep our school clean and for having them keep the snow from outside of the school. Because of this, we were able to easily enter school without the fear of snow blocking our way. Additionally, unlike other students, I could honestly say that my school was cleaner than other schools I had attended previously. Finally, I thank you for the opportunities that you have provided for me personally. Whether it be the Model United Nations program or the CUNY College Now program, I thank you for allowing me to expand and broaden my horizons while coming to International Leadership Charter High School.**

**Sincerely,**

**Cartomou Feseru**

**Dear Dr. Lopez,**

**I want to thank you for all of the learning opportunities that you have offered me these past four years and for providing me with a safe school environment. Every learning opportunity that we received resulted in us being one step closer to a more successful college experience and career. While I attended International Leadership Charter High School, I felt so much gratitude towards the fact that it was a bully-free zone. Students were always encouraged to be kind to each other and to support each other. This was one of the best characteristics that ILCHS students developed throughout their four years here. Your institution has given me the chance to grow academically and personally in a safe learning environment.**

**My first year in this school I felt overwhelmed because of the immense amount of assignments that we were given by our teachers. However, throughout the years I noticed that this was necessary to prepare me for my future in college and I now know that it was beneficial for me because it exposed me at an early age to the life of a college student. The strict norms of International Leadership Charter High School have also helped me develop as an individual. They taught me how to behave and portray myself professionally because the way you appear to someone determines how successful you'll become and I want to thank you for letting me attend your institution and reminding me of this every day for the past four years.**

With much gratitude,

Crismairy Gonzalez

Dear Dr. Lopez,

Throughout these four years, I have greatly improved who I am as a person, and that is thanks to attending your school, International Leadership Charter High School. Because of the implementations of extremely strict regulations in your school, I have become more responsible. I am very thankful for the existence of your school, because in the present I am able to accomplish everything that I am supposed to. This is due to knowing that if I do not do what I have to, then I will be facing negative consequences later on in life.

Furthermore, although it was a challenging task to go through the four years in your high school, I am still able to say that it was worth it, because I was able to learn important life skills. Aside from being responsible, another imperative life skill I learned while coming to your school is being dedicated, and having determination to accomplish what I want in life. Honestly, during the first year of attending International Leadership Charter High school I wanted to transfer to another school, because I found that it was difficult to stay focus in school everyday until four o'clock, but my mom spoke to me. My mom expressed to me her opinion on your school by saying that the school was excellent, and that if I keep on coming I will graduate well prepared to start my life as an adult. My mom was right, because after having that conversation with her, even though it was hard to stay focus in school, I was still able to become determine to do well and finish high school in your school with all my hard work and dedication in order to be ready for college.

Overall, I want to give you, Dr. Lopez, my overall gratitude for creating a school like International Leadership Charter High School.

Sincerely, Olga Martinez

Dear Dr. Lopez,

My four years at International Leadership Charter High School (ILCHS) have been interesting, and these years have taught me many important life lessons that I will value in college. As a senior, I am required to complete a tremendous amount of community service hours and this experience has been truly enlightening. I am a volunteer page at Riverdale Library and one of the most important life lessons that it has taught me is the importance of remaining calm and not becoming anxious, or stressed over things that are out of my control. Moreover, if you do not feel like doing something, then do not do it unless you know it will negatively affect you. Life is a journey that involves learning from your mistakes and being able to incorporate what you have learned into your life in order to become a better person. I am thankful for this experience, as it has taught me the importance of a calm and collected mind, and the destructive power of stress and anxiety. ILCHS has made these life lessons possible, and I am glad. Attending ILCHS was truly a unique experience that I will remember forever. It helped become the person I will need to be in order to survive in the real world.

Sincerely,

Raven Quesada

**Dear Dr. Lopez**

**I am writing this letter today to thank you for this opportunity. Attending your high school for four years has made me grow into a better person. I have learned to always stay professional throughout your school environment because it showed me to always dress professional at all times. In addition, I have grown throughout your school environment since I have learn to be responsible and organized. Being responsible is one of the most important trait an adult should have and I am glad that I learned it from an early age. Organization is also very important for an adult and a student going to college. If you are organized, you can prevent many mistakes and avoid forgetting anything that you had to do.**

**Moreover, studying in International Leadership Charter High School has helped me grow academically. With the ability to attend the United Nations by being part of Model UN. I represented Morocco and fought women's right to get education. This experience was very educational and allowed me make connections with many people. Model UN has created me into a great leader and sparked the advocate personality in me. Thank you very much.**

**Sincerely**

**Dayanara Rodriguez**

Dear Dr. Lopez,

I first would like to thank you for allowing me to attend International Leadership Charter High School; I am a transfer student and you allowed me to enter this school with no questions asked. At your school, I was accepted with open arms and given the best opportunities that I could receive. I would like to thank you for hiring the best quality teachers and faculty who have helped me throughout this long four-year journey of high school.

I am also grateful that you have believed in me enough to send me to Model United Nations where I was able to meet with other scholars around the world to find a solution to poverty. It was an amazing experience that I will never forget and that would not have been given to me if I was not attending ILCHS. Another experience that I am thankful for is the Six Flags trip that our class took to get a better understanding of Physics; it was really fun and one of the best trips that I attended during the last four years.

I would like to conclude by saying thank you once again for this school that has opened many doors for me in the future. I have learned a lot here; one of the most important lessons being that even if you do not like the situation you are in, if you just push through you will be able to succeed. This lesson is what I have used to finish high school and what I will continue to use throughout my life. Thank you.

Sincerely,

**Mariah Tavarez**

**Dear Dr. Ruiz Lopez,**

**I would like to thank you for all the great benefits that were provided for me throughout my high school experiences. I am thankful for meeting great teachers such as my 9th grade math teacher Ms. Ma, my 10th grade math teacher Mr. Velez and my 11th grade math teacher Mr. Baffour. All of these three teachers inspired me to become who I am today. They were able to bring the best of me in their classes. I was able to grow a love for Math; I became passionate about this subject because of my teachers at ILCHS. Mr. Baffour would always start the class with a quote to inspire us; that is something I will never forget. All of these three math teachers taught me to reach out for goals but that it is important to struggle a little bit. Most importantly, I was able to find myself great friends. These friends helped me strive for more and brought out the best in me.**

**Having the opportunity to participate in an internship and completing 200 hours was a great way to learn as a person. In my internship, I was able to learn many skills that would help me in the future. It is a great resource in order to see how people communicate with others and how you would envision yourself in a specific working community. Making me prepared for my college experiences, thank you for helping me reach my goals and helping me reach the college readiness level.**

**Sincerely,**

**Darlene Torres**

Dear Dr. Lopez,

My four years at International Leadership Charter High School have been an incredible experience. Throughout high school, I have gone through many obstacles and challenges, all of which I have learned something valuable from. Community service was definitely an obstacle at first but after managing my time and getting used to juggling my responsibilities, it has taught me to be more independent. Every year on the holidays, we were able to bring in food and snacks to share throughout our grade. This sharing has made me feel closer to those around me, as well as to the school itself, which I could not be more thankful for.

In this school, I have completely grown as a person. Throughout these four years, I have overcome multiple challenges and have achieved things that I may not have thought to be possible. The teachers and students play a role in that, as many of them have motivated me by pushing me to be a better person and assuring me that I can do anything that I set my mind to. With a big help from them, as well as the development of a better mindset, I was able to achieve many things. I have received high honors two years in a row, entered into the College Now program, and now am on my way to graduate and enter a new chapter of my life.

Sincerely,

Katelyn Torres

**Dear Dr. Ruiz Lopez,**

**First, it has been a pleasure during these four years in my enrollment at International Leadership Charter High School. I have accomplished so much and have shaped my knowledge in this school. From the first day of school, the faculty have shown their willingness to make the students thrive in the world. In my four years of high school, ILCHS has served as a guide academically but as well as in life. I am immensely thankful for the high-level education my classmates and I have received. During the beginning of my senior year, I have successfully participated in College Now and I am prepared for my transition from high school into college. College Now was an experience allowed me to enroll in a college class while attending high school. This experience has helped me learn to balance work and be time efficient. For that, I am more than grateful.**

**Furthermore, my appreciation to the staff and their patience for transforming us from capricious teenagers into responsible and mature young adults. I thank you for all the hard work you do to provide us with the best possible educators. It is through them and you that we have come this far. My high school life is ending, but my gratitude for this school will always be present. It is during this moment that I remember a day in middle school where one of my teachers stated “Education is a matter of building bridges” and this school has set up a foundation for me to begin crossing my bridge.**

**Sincerely,**

**Michelle Trejo**

**Dear Dr. Lopez,**

**International Leadership Charter High School has been an amazing experience. Thanks to you, I was able to make friends and become a big fish in a small pond. Many of the people I have met have influenced my life one way or another, teaching me valuable lessons; this includes both teachers and students. The school's atmosphere helped shaped me. I have developed important skills that I will need to further myself in life. I learned the importance of connections and how to form strong bonds. I can use this skill for my personal gain or selflessly to help others. I learned how and when to be submissive and when to be a nonconformist and lead a new path. These are qualities of a leader. I am grateful to have become the leader I am.**

**This school has also helped me academically. Because of the lack of any outside distractive culture, I am focused on my schoolwork and furthering my future. Thank you for allowing me to participate in a SAT prep class that helped me pass my original score. My career plan is laid out and I feel like I have an advantage against others who are not aware of what they want in life. So once again, thank you.**

**Sincerely,**

**Amber Santos**

**Dear Dr. Lopez,**

**I am thankful. I am thankful for the things you have done for me and giving me the opportunity to let me express my feelings through this letter. Let me first begin by saying this; Thank you for admitting me to this amazing school. I have met a very diverse and interesting amount of people. I thank you for the four years of top quality education I doubt I would have gotten in any other high school other than International Leadership Charter High School.**

**I am grateful for the variety of classes we have taking and the teachers that taught them. To this day, my favorite classes remain to be Physics and Pre-Calculus. I have always been someone that is really interested in math and have always enjoyed it. These classes ended up expanding my love for the subject and my interest in it. The teachers were a great factor too, this is because Mr. Medrano, and Mr. Baffour always explained things at their best capabilities. They were both enjoyable and always made math problems be fun and entertaining.**

**I have enjoyed my stay and I will be very sad when I go, but I guess we all have to go at some point. I thank you for everything Dr. Lopez.**

**Sincerely,**

**Joan Urbaez**

**Dear Dr. Lopez,**

**Over the four years that I have attended this school, I learned how to overcome many challenges. This school has shaped me into the person I am today. I am thankful for the high standards that were set because they taught me to strive for better. I was able to not limit myself and go for what I wanted. This school also allowed me to meet some of the most important people in my life today. I have made friends here that I would have never imagined when I first walked in here in 9th grade. The teachers were amazing as well. I took so much from the knowledge and dedication they showed us. This has also been an environment where I feel safe and ready to learn. I did not have to worry about being bullied because both the teachers and students made me feel safe to be who I am. With the long school days and rigorous classes, I feel that I have properly been prepared for college. International Leadership Charter High School has taught me many lessons that I have applied to my life and for that I am very grateful.**

**Sincerely,**

**Johana Vancamper**

Dear Dr. Lopez,

Being chosen to go to International Leadership Charter High School was a very meaningful thing to me. I have to admit that it looked like a place where I did not belong at first. However, after just a few months at this school, I realized that I did have a special place after all. I met a lot of interesting and fun individuals; a lot of people who were like me. I felt very recognized for my school work as well. After all, who would not like to be acknowledged for high scores in all of your classes and for such perfect attendance? This school taught me about consistency and patience. Life will not wait to catch up with you which is why we have to be willing to make an effort to push through obstacles. This is true because of the fact that life is what you make it and if you choose to make it without trying to then you are set up for some failure. Nevertheless, school is not supposed to be easy so we have to try to not be so aggravated if the results on one test do not say what we want them to say. This school also taught me about self-motivation and pride. One must always be proud of what they have achieved. Anyone can go a long way with just being in school daily and by copying down notes for exams.

**Sincerely,**

**Daeli Vargas**