

Executive Summary

The Academy's mission statement is as follows: *Lift For Life Academy (LFLA) will be a challenging and supportive learning community where all students are valued and empowered to maximize their full potential as students, citizens, and productive members of society.*

In 2000, LFLA became St. Louis' first charter middle school. The school initially attracted many students and families from Lift for Life Gym, an afterschool program focused on providing students an alternative to gangs and drugs. From the beginning, the school's mission was to create a uniquely supportive culture capable of meeting students' academic and social needs. Although the school has evolved considerably since these early days, LFLA's mission and "whatever it takes attitude" are at the heart of what we do. We take pride in the fact that we attract predominantly low-income students and families from all across the City of St. Louis (over 95% African American and over 90% free and reduced lunch).

As mentioned previously, LFLA has grown and changed considerably over the past 16 years. After seeing eighth grade graduates return to the St. Louis Public schools and experience various difficulties, LFLA expanded to include a 9-12 high school in 2008. The success of the high school as measured by state tests and annual performance metrics has demonstrated what LFLA students can achieve with time. Today the middle school serves approximately 250 students, while high school enrollment is approximately 330 students. On the other hand, academic and cultural challenges associated with 75% of incoming sixth graders consistently coming to LFLA three grade levels or more behind in reading and math persists. This is the driving factor in LFLA's proposed elementary expansion in 2017-18 with junior kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade students. The elementary would then expand each subsequent year until there are approximately 280 junior kindergarten and k-5 students. The elementary expansion represents the surest way for LFLA to grow its own cohorts of academically prepared students, while at the same time holding the organization more fairly accountable for the academic performance of all students over time.

LFLA's curriculum and instruction are standards-based, but also includes supports and interventions designed to make sure that all students learn. Our Professional Learning Community embraces collaboration, data-driven decision making, and teacher empowerment in the pursuit of excellence. We consider the nation and state's racial and economic achievement gap to be unacceptable, which drives our vision and work that all of our students graduate college and career ready.

A. Education Plan

A.1: Mission, Vision, Educational Philosophy

Mission

Lift For Life Academy will be a challenging and supportive learning community where all students are valued and empowered to maximize their full potential as students, citizens, and productive members of society.

History

When Lift For Life Academy (LFLA), the first independent charter middle school in the City of St. Louis, opened in 2000, it was the “school of last resort” for some students. Many of the school’s first students came from struggling traditional public schools and entered LFLA well below grade level in literacy, math, and science. By bringing these students together into a uniquely supportive culture, LFLA sought to create an environment that could empower students to not just “get by” in school, but flourish and maximize their potential. From the beginning, students and parents have caught on to this vision and come to LFLA from all over the city, looking for a safe and high-quality educational option. Today, LFLA continues to serve students who have traditionally struggled to find a better education, with approximately 90 percent of the charter’s students qualifying for free and reduced lunch and 99 percent being African American.

In its attempts to deliver on the core value that all students can learn, LFLA has succeeded at creating a positive, nurturing environment where students feel safe and want to come to school. As a result, average daily attendance rates are consistently above 92%.¹ By 2007-2008, a pattern for improved performance on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) among LFLA students had been achieved. However, by the same year, the school’s leadership realized a troubling trend that many of the school’s graduates would re-enter the area’s traditional public schools and struggle academically and personally. As a result, in 2008-2009, LFLA opened a high school, starting with ninth grade and expanding one grade each subsequent year.

As LFLA continued to grow, the school’s leadership recognized the need to implement new approaches and reforms. In 2010, LFLA began a ‘re-culturing’ of the school’s staff by implementing the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) model, which focused and trained staff on the necessity of data-driven decision making for effective differentiation and lesson/unit planning.² As the PLC has progressed, a more collaborative and creative environment for teaching and learning has developed. Secondly, the school has invested more resources in instructional coaching. Thirdly, the

¹ Missouri Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) District Report.

<http://mcids.dese.mo.gov/guidedinquiry/AYP/AYP%20-%20Grid.aspx?rp:DistrictCode=115902>

² Vescio, Ross, and Adams, “A review of research on professional learning communities: What do we know?” (2006).

middle and high school were formally separated in 2011-2012. This included having a middle school principal and high school principal with a dean of students at each level. In 2012-2013, the academy's administration was trained by the National Institute of School Leadership as part of the MO LEAD program. This led to further changes to LFLA's approach, such as, becoming a standards-based instructional system, expansion of our data teams, formalization of our safety nets as part of Response to Intervention (RtI), and the empowerment of teacher leaders in the areas of curriculum and assessment design. Lastly, the school has implemented a performance plan model that is driven by SMART goals for improving student performance and achievement.

The bold decision to expand LFLA from a 6-8 middle school to include a 9-12 high school has yielded positive results for students, families, and the organization. Unfortunately, LFLA's middle school continues to confront an overwhelming number of students who are significantly below grade level. Upwards of 75% of incoming sixth graders each year are three grade levels or more behind on the NWEA assessment in math and reading. This has a significant impact on both classroom learning and school culture. As part of this renewal, LFLA is seeking a k-5 elementary expansion to further transform the educational opportunity provided. The k-5 elementary expansion would also include a pre-k program (referred to as a junior kindergarten) to expose students to learning even earlier. The proposed elementary school would not begin until the 2017-2018 school year with jr. kindergarten, kindergarten and 1st grade students. An elementary grade level would then be added each subsequent year (see Table A.5.3 for an expansion timeline).

By adding an elementary school, LFLA has the opportunity to transform education for the students and families it serves by providing them with a k-12 schooling option at a singular campus location. In addition, elementary expansion represents the surest way for LFLA to develop its own cohorts of academically prepared students, while at the same time holding the organization more fairly accountable for the academic performance of all students over time. Lastly, elementary expansion will also make the organization more sustainable and appealing to parents as k-12 charter school systems expand and competition for students increases.

LFLA's Three Pillars, Core Beliefs & Vision

Since its inception, LFLA has existed to put each student on the path to success by instilling in students our three pillars of ***Educate, Empower, and Uplift***. For the academy's administrators, teachers, and staff, each of our core beliefs are directly related to bringing ***Educate, Empower, and Uplift*** to life for our students and families.

Core Beliefs

- We all count—We are committed to providing a safe, positive, nurturing environment to explore, understand, and appreciate differences. We encourage

people to share their ideas openly, have them heard, and empower them to make an impact.

- **Respect**—We are committed to practicing open and honest communication and acting ethically and acting in kindness in all that we do. We will promote the practice of being self-aware, self-managed, and self-directed.
- **Teamwork**—We are committed to empowering each individual to make a positive impact by communicating with others and sharing and combining ideas in new ways to create solutions that cannot be achieved by one person alone.
- **Excellence**—We are committed to supporting a desire for knowledge and lifelong learning: creating new solutions to help personalize teaching and learning to improve outcomes across abilities.

We Envision

By continuously striving towards our mission and building upon our core beliefs, LFLA will accomplish its vision of creating an exciting learning community where students, staff, and families work together to assure that every student soars to lifelong excellence in academics and character.

The vision in action:

- LFLA as a Professional Learning Community will embrace teacher collaboration in order to improve instruction and student learning.³
- LFLA students will understand their learning objectives and participate in the assessment of their own progress.⁴
- LFLA teachers and administrators will use data as part of instructional decision-making and to measure progress towards classroom and school performance objectives.⁵
- The community will be actively involved at LFLA, and our students will be actively involved in the community.
- Students will understand the importance of service and community.
- Students will flourish in a vigorous educational setting that is adaptive and responsive to different learners.
- Students and staff will enjoy coming to school because of the variety of experiences, both curricular and extra-curricular.
- Students will become increasingly prepared to meet their personal aspirations through their educational experiences.
- Older students will gain hands-on experience in the field of their choice.
- LFLA will increase academic achievement, as evidenced by high levels of proficiency and growth on state tests.

³ Based upon the research of Richard DuFour.

⁴ Based upon the research of Robert Marzano.

⁵ Including ACT, PLAN, EXPLORE, NWEA, EOC, MAP.

- A continuation of LFLA serving students considered to be highly at risk for school failure. We find solutions to help those who have the greatest needs to become resilient and achieve in spite of difficult situations.
- LFLA will continue to provide a small teacher-student ratio designed to meet each student's unique learning needs.
- LFLA will develop a rigorous curriculum aligned to Missouri's Learning Standards that is taught by highly qualified teachers with all needed resources and support to generate active hands-on learning experiences to expand the knowledge and understanding of students' present and future world.

Lift For Life Academy Students will...:

- take advantage of advanced courses and are college bound.
- help to create a positive behavioral environment that's safe and sound.
- be active members of the community and know the importance of education. They begin to realize the part they play within society and the changes they may have to face as productive members of society.
- be capable, self-confident learners who are ready for post-secondary endeavors. They continue to value learning in their adulthood and in turn give back to their community.
- be self-aware, self-managed, and self-directed.
- be intelligent, critical thinkers motivated to be independent learners.
- be safe and drug free.
- envision possibilities and options for a successful future.

Our Communities will be...:

- aware and engaged with the educational development at LFLA, with a desire to give back to the community through community service.
- aware that it is vitally important that students are educated in a way that's going to maximize their full potential. In doing so, it will take all stakeholders (community, parents, students, administrators and staff) working together to attain a common goal.
- proud of the students at LFLA and their accomplishments. Our communities are excited about what the students are doing and recognize what the LFLA staff does at every level.

Educational Philosophy

LFLA utilizes these best practices as part of its educational philosophy and commitment to continuous improvement.

Data-Driven Decision Making

LFLA holds that the best teachers must know where their students are in their achievement levels at all times. As a result, LFLA is aggressively pursuing high academic achievement by setting both short-term and long-term goals for each individual student and by using diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments to “drive” instruction. LFLA assesses students at the beginning of each school year using the Northwest Evaluation Association’s Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP). Principals, the leadership team {including instructional coaches} and teaching teams work together to evaluate each student’s assessment results to inform instruction. As the school year progresses, lesson and unit plans are adjusted based on both classroom and standardized assessment data. All of this activity is driven by our determination to meet each individualized learning goals by the end of the year. The expectation is that teachers use data to improve their own instruction and student learning outcomes.

Extended Learning Time and Extra Emphasis

It takes time, effort, and practice to meet the challenge of high academic standards. Additionally, research shows a direct link between extended learning time and student achievement, particularly in low-income communities, where students may not have access to enrichment activities or academic supports outside of school.⁶ In order to provide students with extended learning time and an extra emphasis in the core subject areas, LFLA middle school has developed Success Hour. The Success Hour targets the individualized needs of students during the course of the day as part of providing both enhanced and remedial learning opportunities. This strategy is key to providing students the appropriate supports as part of RtI. In addition, LFLA’s middle school daily schedule places an emphasis on increasing the amount of time students are in the core subject areas. At the high school, LFLA uses credit and non-credit bearing courses to target students in need of additional support, especially in the core subject areas. Lastly, the middle school will also continue its four week summer session for all middle school students. The goal and belief is that a program mixed with extended learning time and extra emphasis on essential academic areas will allow time for students to enhance their strengths and address learning deficits. In addition the elementary school will also continue to embed extended learning time and extra emphasis as part of its daily schedule and curriculum design.

College Bound Orientation

As soon as they walk through the doors in 6th grade, LFLA students begin to prepare themselves for college. Students are introduced to colleges in the 6th grade by referring to their groupings as the names of various colleges and universities. This is carried forward into 7th and 8th grade as well. In addition, each middle school grade level visits at least one college campus per academic year. This enables students to see that high school is not the end-point of education⁷ and that they are preparing themselves

⁶ Farbman, “Tracking an Emerging Movement: A Report on Expanded Time Schools In America. National Center on Time and Learning” (2009).

⁷ U.S. Department of Education: Office of Innovation and Improvement, “Successful Charter Schools” (2004).

for something even better. More importantly, this emphasis is carried into the classroom, where teachers work with students to set ambitious goals not only for their current classes, but also for their future academic careers and even their lives. As they set these goals, LFLA makes every effort to make future possibilities real and relatable for students, as they experience hands-on activities with their cohorts and engage in opportunities to visit, observe, shadow, and even intern in a professional setting.

Added Emphasis on Literacy

A significant piece of LFLA's vision is to serve students who require the strongest academic interventions. Many of our students enter middle and high school with poor literacy skills and face long odds against graduating and going on to postsecondary education or satisfying careers. These students often struggle to understand the increasingly complex narrative and expository texts they encounter in high school and beyond. LFLA believes strongly that no child should be expected to succeed in the next grade, in other subject areas, or beyond school without a foundation in reading and writing, which requires aggressive and continuous instruction. Due to the importance of reading, LFLA will provide more instruction in reading/literacy to all middle school and high school students. An overview of our curriculum-based literacy strategies are below:

- All middle school students that are two years or more behind in reading proficiency will have a specialized reading class incorporated into their regular class schedule.
- 9th graders will take a freshman seminar class that will focus on reading/literacy.
- 10th graders will take a Reading Seminar class in addition to World Literature to focus on higher-level reading literacy.
- 11th graders must take a mandatory writing course in addition to the American Literature.
- All 12th grade students will be enrolled in both a Senior English course and a senior composition course.

Use of Technology

As the technologies available to society expand, so do their importance within schools. Research shows that technology can provide students with visual representations for higher-order concepts. Technology can also be used to differentiate instruction, while at the same time preparing students for a broader range of careers in a technology-driven society.⁸ Many of LFLA's families have little or no access to computers and other technology that can enhance the educational experience. With the addition of the high school, LFLA has made it a point to ensure its teachers have every advantage they need to reach their goals. All core area classrooms have been equipped with Smart Boards or other interactive technology, and extensive training has been provided to advance the staff's technological pedagogy. Teachers also have ready access to laptop and Chrome Book computer carts, which students use for research

⁸ Ranasinghe, "The Benefit of Integrating Technology in the Classroom" (2009).

projects, presentations, and certain assessments. Document readers are now available in some classrooms and provide teachers with another resource for helping students “see” and better understand the content or skills being presented. In an aggressive pursuit of its goals, LFLA wishes to utilize every tool at its disposal. The curriculum also includes specialized technology courses for students at the middle and high school level. Ensuring successful implementation of various technology-based initiatives has been incorporated in the Academy’s annual performance planning. The plan includes both academic and non-academic measures, metrics, and annual targets.

Table A.1.1: Five-Year Charter Term Performance Goal Overview

During the term of this charter, LFLA’s comprehensive performance goal is to achieve an Annual Performance Rating of 70% or higher annually based on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s MSIP 5 guidelines.

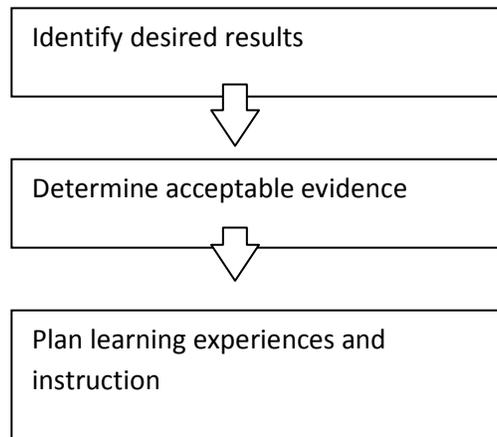
<p>Academic Achievement</p>	<p>MSIP 5: LFLA middle school will achieve MAP performance levels that are equivalent to “Approaching” status and/or “Approaching” growth in communication arts and math.</p> <p>LFLA high school will achieve EOC performance levels that are equivalent to “On-track” status and/or “On-track” progress on the Algebra I and English II tests.</p> <p>LFLA high school students will achieve EOC performance levels that are equivalent to “On-track” status and/or “On-track” progress in social studies based on EOC Government performance.</p> <p>LFLA students will meet at least the achievement targets set to earn points for “Approaching” on status and/or “Approaching” progress in science based on combined 8th grade MAP and high school Biology EOC performance.</p> <p>(Subgroup Achievement) LFLA students will meet at least the achievement targets set to earn points for “Approaching” status and/or “Approaching” growth based on MAP performance middle school in math and communication arts.</p> <p>(Subgroup Achievement) LFLA students will meet at least the achievement targets set to earn points for “Approaching” status and/or “Approaching” progress based on Algebra I and English II EOC performance.</p> <p>(Subgroup Achievement) LFLA students will meet at least</p>
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	<p>the achievement targets set to earn points for “Approaching” status and/or “Approaching” progress for 8th grade MAP science and Biology EOC performance.</p>
<p>College and Career Ready</p>	<p>MSIP 5: (CCR 3.1-3*) The percent of high school graduates scoring at or above the state standard on ACT, SAT, COMPASS and/or ASVAB will achieve at least “Approaching” status.</p> <p>(CCR 3.4*) The percent of graduates receiving college credit through advanced credit courses and/or dual college enrollment will result in “Approaching” status.</p> <p>(CCR 5-6*) The percent of graduates enrolled in a two/four-year college/university, the military, and/or technical trade school will be at least “Approaching” on status and/or demonstrate annual progress.</p>
<p>Attendance</p>	<p>MSIP 5: The percent of LFLA students who are in attendance 90% of the time or greater will meet at least the state achievement target for “Approaching” status and/or meet the target for “Approaching” progress.</p>

A.2: Curriculum and Instruction

Backward Design

LFLA’s curriculum is the result of a dynamic development process that embodies two primary research-based strategies: backward design and professional collaboration. High-quality curriculum is more than a set of state standards or a store-bought curriculum or textbook series. At LFLA, teachers and administrators work together to generate a memorable and meaningful curriculum aligned to state standards. Every curriculum includes essential and enduring learner outcomes. These learner outcomes become the foundation for articulating curriculum frameworks, building units of study, selecting daily teaching and learning experiences, and creating effective formative and summative assessments. This approach to curriculum development, teaching, and assessment is aligned to the tenets of backward design as described in *Understanding by Design*.¹ As a result, all planning follows the following sequence:



At LFLA, curriculum development is designed to reflect the Academy’s mission and our beliefs about students and the educational experience we strive to provide for them. We have established overarching or “graduate” goals and “life skills” that articulate what our students need to know and what they need to be able to do, if they are to realize the vision we have for them within our school and in their future endeavors. As a result of their learning experiences at LFLA, our students will:

- demonstrate the ability to gather, analyze, and apply information, ideas, and concepts to a variety of life situations;
- develop the reading, writing, and speaking skills necessary to communicate effectively;
- learn how to recognize and solve problems; and
- apply reason and logic in making responsible decisions that contribute to a better world.

¹ Wiggins and McTighe, *Understanding by Design* (1998).

The above expectations serve as the foundation for the curriculum at LFLA. In conjunction with the *Missouri Learning Standards*, they inform the essential learning objectives and guide teachers' daily decisions about instruction and assessment.

Alignment to Standards and Depth of Knowledge (DOK)

In developing the curriculum and units of study, teachers utilize the newly adopted *Missouri Learning Standards*, as well as all relevant national standards. Aligning the LFLA curriculum to these established expectations ensures that our teachers and students will be held to high standards for teaching and learning. Although state standards have shifted over the past several years, objectives for each course and content area are aligned to Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)'s Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) or Course Level Expectations (CLEs). See *Exhibit A.2.1 for a sample unit of study and assessment*.

With formal adoption of the *Missouri Learning Standards*, LFLA is in the process of an across the board curriculum revision. Although the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts and Mathematics were not adopted by the state of Missouri, our work with these standards will make revising our current curriculum less daunting. In the sciences, curriculum development and revision will focus on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) endorsed by DESE.

Standards-Based Instructional System

As part of the curriculum development process, the expectation is that every curriculum, unit of study, and daily lesson plan align to a Standards-Based Instructional System. The Standards-Based Instructional System expects that learner outcomes be specific and measurable. When paired with focused and purposeful assessments, student performance can be tracked and monitored more closely. Adjustments to instruction based on student performance data can occur more regularly and with greater fidelity. Ultimately, the standards-based instructional approach has helped to strengthen LFLA's curriculum by placing a stronger emphasis on mastery of essential content and skills.

Depth of Knowledge (DOK)

In their identification of the major objectives for each course of study, teachers establish learning outcomes that are not simply low level behaviors, but rather those that call for higher order thinking. Teachers refer to the four levels of performance from Norman Webb's "Depth of Knowledge" to ensure students not only acquire the necessary factual knowledge, but even more importantly that they engage in experiences that develop critical thinking and the ability to apply learning.²

² Webb, "Alignment, Depth of Knowledge, and Change" (2005).

Table A.2.1: Norman Webb’s Four Levels of Performance

Level of Performance	Description
Level One: Recall	Level One tasks involve recall of facts, information, or procedures. They ask students to: identify, memorize, recite, match, calculate, recognize, label, answer “who, what , where, and when,” etc.
Level Two: Skill/Concept	Level Two requires students to use information or conceptual knowledge, or to engage in two or more steps to do a task. Key terms in Level 2 tasks are: compare, organize, predict, interpret, summarize, show, collect and display, construct, infer, graph, estimate, use context clues, identify patterns, etc.
Level Three: Strategic Thinking	Level Three performance activities involve reasoning, developing a plan or a sequence of steps; involve some complexity, and may have more than one answer. Students must be able to: develop a logical argument, construct, critique, formulate, hypothesize, draw conclusions, differentiate, assess, or explain phenomena in terms of concepts, etc.
Level Four: Extended Thinking	Level Four learning and performance requires an investigation, time to think and process, multiple conditions of the problem, and usually results in a significant product. Samples of terms that characterize Level 4 tasks are: apply concepts, analyze, synthesize, create, prove, and design.

Principals, instructional coaches, and others who observe teaching and learning at LFLA utilize DOK levels to guide feedback and evaluation. Evaluators and observers expect that instruction emphasize students being challenged in their class work. Teachers also meet as PLC teams to review one another’s assessments and performance data. The primary focus of both curriculum and assessment at LFLA is on Level 2 and higher.

The “Depth of Knowledge” construct fits well with *Understanding by Design*, where the intended emphasis is on understanding. Curriculum that is well designed facilitates student understanding and a deeper level of knowledge about the content and world in general. This is the intent for using these models in tandem in developing, implementing, and assessing curriculum at LFLA.

Two major documents comprise the written curriculum for each course offered at LFLA. The Curriculum Framework document shows the alignment of major learning objectives, learner expectations, and the Units of Study to the Missouri Learning Standards and GLEs/CLEs (See *Appendix* for an example). The Units of Study flesh out the Framework with more details about the content, essential goals, objectives, assessments, and learning activities/teaching strategies for each course. Each Unit of

Study also includes the alignment of expected learner outcomes to state (or, in some cases, national) standards. Assessments are described along with the major learning activities/experiences/lessons that will comprise the instructional approach within the course. Information about differentiation, integrations with other courses, and the use of technology are also summarized within the Unit of Study document.

Curriculum Alignment and Revision

During the course of the 2015-2016 school year, LFLA generated a comprehensive curriculum revision plan to align all curriculum with the newly adopted Missouri Learning Standards. Through preparation for adoption of the Common Core State Standards, the foundation for curriculum revision was already set. In addition, many subject area curriculums, especially middle and high school electives will need minimal revision. The curriculum revision plan presented to teachers in the spring of 2016 focused on the following three activities:

- Write and revise our current curriculum to align to Missouri's New Learning Standards (especially in math and English/com Arts)
- Incorporate and transfer units of study or revise and eliminate units from the curriculum
- Standardize our curriculum format documents so that frameworks can be both "guaranteed and viable" in terms scope and sequence.

Curriculum review is ongoing at LFLA. This practice is intended to keep the teaching and learning vital, current, and relevant. Along with its connection to assessment, curriculum is a major focus of professional development time and resources. As either grade level or departmental teams, teachers and administrators work together to ensure the curriculum is standards-based and assessed regularly. Currently, as a 6-12 charter LEA, vertical and horizontal alignment is a priority. This will also be an important part of the curriculum development and review at the elementary level. In conjunction with the school's administration, the Curriculum Coordinator has established the goal of all core content area curriculums being revised/realigned and completed by the Spring of 2017.

Development of New Curriculum at the Elementary Level

The expansion of LFLA to include a junior kindergarten/k-5 elementary program began with exploratory meetings that included participation from board members, administrators, teachers, and outside experts. As part of these meetings and subsequent curriculum sub-committee meetings, the mission and guiding principles of the elementary school curriculum were developed. These guiding principles focused on two primary principles: a standard-based approach to instruction and expeditionary learning.

The standards-based approach will align closely to the standards-based systems already implemented at the middle and high school levels. The expeditionary approach to learning represents a blending of several curriculum principles. These principles are intended to move students beyond the foundations of math, reading, and writing literacy by also focusing on their inquiry/critical thinking skills along with their *Habits of Mind*³ as learners. The expeditionary approach to learning is hands-on, most often thematically-based, and expects students to demonstrate a constructivist approach to student understanding and learning. This transformative approach to elementary education in St. Louis' urban core does not currently exist and will elevate both the quality of students and educational experience at LFLA's middle and high school. The elementary school's curriculum design is intended to accomplish two primary goals: First, proficiency and/or exceeding growth in communication arts and math for all students. Second, teach and grow the *Habits of Mind* that will prepare students for successful school experiences in middle, high school, and post-secondary.

Although the development of the curriculum at LFLA's elementary school will be primarily teacher driven, the need to support teachers and students with the appropriate resources, especially in reading, writing, and math, is essential. These foundational resources are intended to make sure students meet the state's elementary standards. The table below represents an overview of the curriculum's foundations with the expectation that all learner outcomes/objectives align fully to the scope and sequence included in the Missouri Early Learning Standards and Missouri Learning Standards. In addition, the projected minutes of instruction for k-3 are identified. Please note, the identified minutes per subject areas are derived from a weekly average as opposed to a fixed daily schedule (6.5 hours per school day).

Table A.2.2 Proposed Elementary Curriculum Overview

Subject Area	Curriculum Supports
English/Language Arts 120 minutes per day	k-3, <i>Open Court Reading</i> from McGraw-Hill emphasizes phonics, phonemic awareness, and fluency. Leveled sets allow for differentiation. k-5, <i>Ready Gen</i> by Pearson, supplemental reading series that provides cross-discipline and thematic texts.
Math 90 minutes per day	k-5, <i>Eureka Math</i> from Great Minds emphasizes relevant problem solving, computational fluency, and explaining the why. <i>Study Island</i> computer-based practice and benchmarking.
Science 45 minutes per day	k-5, Teacher Designed Curriculum with units of study aligned to Missouri Learning Standards. In addition, the science curriculum will be inquiry-based and hands-on with textual support available on-line.
Social Studies	k-5, Teacher Designed Curriculum with units of study

³ Costa, Arthur and Kallick, Bena. See *Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind* (2008) and other works.

45 minutes per day	aligned to Missouri Learning Standards with an emphasis on reading/writing literacy as part of social science inquiry. Textual support will be available on-line.
Art and Physical Education 90 minutes per day	In addition to aligning to the state's standards for Art and PE instruction, specials or elective classes will support the school's expeditionary focus. For example, students in Art may complete projects that describe the School as Museum.

Instructional Practices

In addition to the backwards design model and continual curriculum revision, LFLA is emphasizing the following research-proven teacher practices across content areas:

- **Constant Use of Data:** Assessment data, both formative and summative, is to be used by teachers to inform their instructional decisions. Being responsive to data and the differences in the learning styles and needs of students requires LFLA teachers to develop and utilize a wide variety of instructional practices. Routinely, in the classroom, formative assessments consist of mini-quizzes, classroom observations, exit slips, student self-reflections, and other activities that are part of the instructional process. Benchmarking through the use of tools like the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and Study Island provide formative assessment data in the areas of Reading, Language Arts, and Mathematics.
- **Increasing Student Responsibility for Learning:** As part of their instructional practice, teachers at LFLA help students understand the expected learning outcomes for each course. Teachers are purposeful in articulating how each unit of study and daily lesson relates to the larger learning goal(s). This helps students better connect learning experiences one to the other. LFLA teachers are working with students, so that they have a clearer understanding of where they are in their progress toward mastering each established goal and what they still need to do to reach each target.
- **Differentiated Materials and Assignments:** LFLA holds to the conviction that “one size fits all” does not lead to success for all students. Curriculum Units of Study incorporate and teachers employ a variety of strategies based on the needs of their students. Some examples of differentiated instructional practices include: using and/or creating varied levels of reading materials on the same subject, adjusting assignments to support or challenge, modifying assessments, providing graphic

organizers to increase comprehension, offering tutorial assistance, and extending learning through enrichment projects.

- **Use of Technology:** Technology is increasingly becoming an integrated tool for learning in LFLA's classrooms. It affords students immediate access to a broad range of information, takes them to places around the world, provides practice of newly learned or still unstable skills, and is a tool which engages the minds of learners today. Teachers and students use Smart Boards, laptop computers, graphing calculators, and document readers to expand and enrich learning.
- **Cooperative Learning:** When students leave LFLA for post-secondary education and the world of work, they will be expected to work in groups, problem solve with others, and be effective contributing members of teams. Keeping this in mind, teachers employ cooperative and team groups within their classrooms to facilitate learning in the present and for the future.
- **Hands-On, Relevant Learning:** As teachers develop units of study and specific lesson plans to achieve the articulated essential learning outcomes, they incorporate learning experiences that are pertinent not only to students' academic needs, but also to increasing students' cultural engagement and interest in the world around them. Field experiences, as well as in-classroom labs, demonstrations, and exhibitions are familiar instructional practices at LFLA.
- **Connecting Content Areas:** In an effort to keep teaching and learning vital, current, and relevant, grade-level teams look for opportunities to integrate topics addressed in one subject area with other disciplines. This interdisciplinary approach to learning further develops students' conceptual understandings of subject areas, as they see how small subjects fit together into larger wholes.
- **Teacher Collaboration:** As part of their own growth at LFLA, teachers are supported in their use of a variety of instructional strategies. In this environment of creativity and teaching innovation, teachers study educational research and collaborate with other teachers as they interpret formative and summative assessment data, share effective lesson plans and teaching strategies, develop assessment rubrics, and brainstorm ideas for effective differentiation and literacy development.⁴

Literacy Emphasis

⁴ Gerver, *Creating Tomorrow's Schools Today* (2010).

Reading, writing, and communicating effectively is at the very heart of learning at LFLA. Teachers at every grade level and in every discipline incorporate learning objectives in the “core” competencies of reading, writing, and speaking into their written curricula (Units of Study) and into their regular classroom and assessment practices.⁵ Communication Arts teachers have worked with colleagues in other disciplines to further this emphasis and build their colleagues’ understanding of how they can meaningfully and effectively incorporate reading and writing into their classes. The NWEA, MAP, and other assessment data have helped inform what interventions could prove useful to each student. As a result of current efforts to improve student performance, LFLA students even write in Physical Education, as they assess their progress toward fitness goals. Students read in Visual Arts to learn about art theory and the contributions of significant artists. Students are even required to connect the written word to speech by articulating persuasive arguments in the form of classroom debates in Social Studies classes. For example, the Claim-Evidence-Warrant approach to students explaining their thinking and citing textual evidence is used across the disciplines.

Discussion of Core Disciplines

Communication Arts

At LFLA, we recognize that effective communication skills provide students the freedom to acquire knowledge, manipulate ideas, connect with others, and engage in the higher order thinking necessary to solve complex problems, generate new learning, and enrich their own personal lives. Although elementary expansion will provide LFLA more opportunity and influence over the development of our student’s literacy skills, it is important that we continue to implement strategies designed to maximize achievement within our current 6-12 model. We recognize that improving reading and writing among disadvantaged and underserved students remains our biggest challenge in closing the economic and racial achievement gap that impacts our state and our nation.

Because many of our incoming sixth grade students enter LFLA below grade-level in reading and English language usage skills, LFLA has increased middle school communication arts instruction. In grades 6-8, each grade level has two communication arts teachers and periods. This interventionist approach to our curriculum is intended to target the literacy needs of our students. This includes the fact that approximately 75% of incoming sixth graders under our current model are regularly assessed 3 grade levels or more behind in reading on the Northwest Evaluation Assessment.

In addition to a “doubling-up” of communication arts instruction in the middle school, students also have a period in their day, Success Hour, which is devoted to extended learning experiences in reading and mathematics. Success Hour supports and enhances reading and writing interventions based on the needs of students. No matter what level students are at in their reading or math, the focus is on improving proficiency among all students.

⁵ Brown University, “Supporting Adolescent Literacy Across the Content Areas” (2001).

At the high school level, the curriculum is both traditional in scope and sequence, but also designed to enhance and support the learning needs of our students. For example, the tenth grade reading seminar provides additional literacy practice to students who are also taking World Literature. The freshman and junior seminars are a bit broader in scope, but also focus on literacy development at the high school level. These courses are taken consecutively by most freshmen and juniors with English I and American Literature respectively. Lastly, all seniors are required to take two Communication Arts/English courses to better prepare them for the post-secondary transition: Senior Literature and Senior Composition.

In order to engage students' curiosity with relevant ideas and connect those ideas across content areas, units of study in Communication Arts are generally built around larger life themes, e.g. tolerance, survival, or personal identity. As mentioned previously, *Habits of Mind* will also be a focus at the elementary school level. Literature and various forms of non-fiction texts that correspond to these themes are read, studied, and analyzed to build comprehension skills. Similarly, writing pieces are tailored to address themes through varying formats, including journaling free writes, personal narratives, persuasive or expository essays, poetry, or other forms of creative or informational forms. Teachers at all grade levels utilize the *Six Traits of Writing* model as articulated by Vicki Spandel and the research of the Northwest Educational Regional Lab⁶ to inform both the teaching and assessment of writing. While direct instruction informs knowledge of the *Six Traits*, students' development as writers is grounded in application and practice. Students also participate and learn by evaluating their work and those of classmates by applying the *Six Traits* rubric. This *Six Traits* rubric emphasizes to students the importance of viewing writing as a process that can always be improved upon through revision, collaboration, and reflection.

To continue to improve the quality of its Communication Arts instruction, LFLA hired a full-time instructional coach at the middle school and a part-time instructional coach at the high school for the 2015-16 school year. The coaching model at LFLA includes collaborative lesson planning, demonstration teaching, professional book study, and continuous observation and one-on-one feedback. LFLA has also built in communication arts/literacy professional development in the form of annual summer learning institutes. These institutes focus on assessment and curriculum analysis, best-practice for literacy instruction, and collaborative planning for the upcoming school year.

Table A.2.3: Communication Arts Course Offering

Grade	Course Offering
6 th	Double-block of Communication Arts
7 th	Double-block of Communication Arts
8 th	Double-block of Communication Arts
9 th	English I/ Freshman Seminar
10 th	*English II (World Literature); Reading Seminar

⁶ Spandel, *Creating Writers through 6-Traits Writing Assessment and Instruction* (2009).

11 th	American Literature; Junior Seminar
12 th	Senior Literature; Senior Composition; Public Speaking; SLU 1818 College English

*The English II EOC is required for all graduating student cohorts

Mathematics

Effective mathematical learning should include opportunities for students to solve problems, provide insight and inventiveness, and demonstrate computational proficiency. The math curriculum’s standards-based approach ensures conceptual learning and student mastery. The LFLA Mathematics curriculum focuses on four primary strands that align to the Missouri Learning Standards: numbers and operations, geometry and measurement, data analysis and probability, and algebra.

At the middle school level, the approach to learning blends skill recovery and grade level teaching. The middle school utilizes resources, such as, Study Island, Kahn Academy, and teacher designed units to provide students a standards-based approach to math education that can also be individualized according to students’ learning needs. The middle school approaches math from a problem-based perspective, which effectively opens the classroom to exploring, conjecturing, reasoning, and communicating. At each grade level, a small, select set of important mathematical concepts, ideas, and related procedures are studied in depth, rather than skimming through a larger set of ideas in a shallow manner. Students are expected to think and apply mathematically, rather than simply engage in rote computing or memorized formulas. Teachers do utilize supplemental materials as needed to reinforce certain skills, such as computational fluency, but the primary emphasis is on helping students understand mathematical processes and procedures and how the use of math can be applied to everyday situations, as well as textbook problems.

At the high school level, the coursework follows a traditional sequence. However, there is considerable flexibility in the program to meet students where they are and, at the same time, provide every student with a minimum of four years of mathematics prior to graduation. High school teachers draw from several mathematical text series and programs to develop learning experiences that teach fundamental concepts, algorithms, and procedures outlined in the Curriculum Frameworks, while continuing to emphasize students’ understanding of mathematics. The primary sources for the development of the learning experiences that align to the *Missouri Learning Standards* and DESE CLE’s. Among the math curriculum and text-based resources are the following: *Connected Mathematics Project* and *College Preparatory Mathematics*. These series are research-proven and align to the national standards in mathematics.

Table A.2.4: Mathematics Course Offerings

Grade	Course Offering
6 th	fractional numeracy, probability, angle relationship, data,

	number sense, area & perimeter
7 th	proportional reasoning, spatial visualization, linear relationships, similarity, data , integers, fractional relationships, volume, area and perimeter
8 th	algebra equations, Pythagorean theorem, data interpretation, linear relationships;
9 th	**Pre-Algebra; Algebra I; Geometry; Algebra II
10 th	**Algebra I; Geometry; Algebra II; Discrete, Pre-Calculus
11 th	** Geometry; Algebra II; Discrete, Pre-Calculus; Statistics; Calculus, College Algebra
12 th	Algebra II;, Pre-Calculus; ***Statistics; ***Calculus

**Students are placed in courses according to their math learning needs; many students take more than one math course per year

***Courses available for advanced college credit through partnership with St. Louis University's 1818 program

Science

LFLA strives for its students to expand their understanding of scientific concepts and their world through observation, experimentation, analysis, and problem solving. Student learning in science cannot be acquired in the passive consumption of information and vocabulary alone. Science teaching and learning must emphasize the use and application of scientific tools and the scientific method in posing questions, developing hypotheses, designing experiments, collecting and interpreting data, drawing conclusions, and interpreting results for a variety of scientific issues – all in a manner that stimulates curiosity.

At the middle school level, teachers have participated in professional development through Washington University's Institute for School Partnership program (MY SCI). As part of this program, teachers have worked to revise and develop a new Next Generation Science standards aligned curriculum. To improve instructional practices, teachers have been engaged in the 5 E's of effective science teaching (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate). Lastly, the program emphasizes using differentiated assessments, including performance-based tasks.

At the high school level, LFLA has adopted *the Physics First* model as the structure for the sequencing of science courses. The Physics First model emphasizes scientific inquiry and alignment with Algebra I skills and concepts.⁷ The Physics First model emphasizes an engaging and hands-on approach to science for students transitioning from middle to high school. Chemistry follows in the tenth grade and builds upon the fundamentals of Physics. In the eleventh grade, Biology is required. Elective science offerings include Forensics, Anatomy and Physiology, and Environmental Science.

⁷ Hake, "Physics First: Opening Battle in the War on Science/Math Illiteracy?" (2002).

Within the course offerings themselves, there has also been an emphasis on the relationship between technology and science in the classroom. With assistance from a grant award from Monsanto, LFLA teachers have participated in professional development from Washington University’s Department of Science and its Institute for School Partnership. The grant also included the addition of equipment, materials, and supplies to the science department. Other grants have provided students and teachers access to work station computers and 25 Chromebook computers housed in a mobile cart dedicated to the science department.

Table A.2.5: Science Course Offerings

Grade	Course Offering
6 th	6 th grade science: variables, measurement, populations and ecosystems; scientific inquiry
7 th	7 th grade science: weather and water, force and motion, planetary science; scientific inquiry
8 th	8 th grade science: chemical interactions, earth science, diversity of life; scientific inquiry
9 th	Physics First; Concepts in or Applied Physics*
10 th	Chemistry
11 th	Biology
12 th	Advanced Biology; Earth Science; Forensics; Anatomy and Physiology

Social Studies

LFLA holds that all students should become informed, responsible, and contributing citizens of the world community. The school respects cultural diversity and teaches positive interaction with all people to achieve a knowledgeable and balanced understanding of society, encouraging all students to explore, experience, reflect on, and develop a purposeful sense of the world.

Students learn to see that history is not filled with isolated incidents, but makes up a unified timeline of connected and interdependent events. They begin to see that they are actually a part of history themselves and can be influencers in the outcomes of the story. Research is a critical component of the Social Studies program beginning with small questions and projects in the middle school and moving into more major research investigations and papers in high school. Social Studies and Communication Arts teachers often collaborate with these research projects.

Although acquisition of background knowledge is an essential part of any successful Social Studies program, LFLA endeavors to not only fill students’ minds with historical facts, but also to engage them with opportunities to analyze historical events in a critical manner. Reading both fiction and non-fiction and writing are closely intertwined with conceptual learning. Although Advanced Placement courses at the high

school level are not offered, students have the opportunity to earn advanced college credits as part of St. Louis University’s 1818 program. These include Introduction to Economics, Philosophy and Modern World History.

Table A.2.6: Social Studies Course Offering

Grade	Course Offering
6 th	Theme-based approach in conjunction with communication arts. Example, geography and the relationships between peoples and places
7 th	Ancient/Early Civilizations
8 th	United States History: Early Colonial Settlement through Civil War and Reconstruction
9 th	World History
10 th	American History: Since Reconstruction through the modern day.
11 th	*Civics and Government (which includes passing a US and Missouri Constitution test)
12 th and Elective Offerings	African American History; Geography; **Economics; **Introduction to Philosophy; and **Modern World History

*All LFLA students are required to complete the Government EOC prior to graduation

**Courses available for advanced college credit through partnership with St. Louis University’s 1818 program

***Personal finance is a required standalone elective course. See Table 14

Vertical Alignment of Curriculum

Administration and teaching staff at LFLA will ensure that curriculum and lessons are aligned both horizontally and vertically. Framework documents for each discipline when taken as a whole provide a scope and sequence of knowledge and skills students are to acquire as they move from grade to grade or course to course. Vertical alignment ensures that curriculum objectives build upon one another. There is an increasing sophistication and rigor to teaching concepts, processes, and skills across grades and from one level of a course of study to another. Teachers will continually refine units of study and daily lessons and assessments to ensure a logical progression in every subject area.

Professional Development

In addition to offering teachers the opportunity to work within an educational community that values professional collaboration, LFLA offers its teachers and leaders extensive and ongoing professional development opportunities to enrich the school’s culture and further develop the school’s academic program. Professional development

is tied to strengthening teachers’ knowledge and skills relative to effective implementation of the written curriculum along with maximizing student engagement in the classroom. .

LFLA’s professional development, school-wide and at the individual level, is geared towards three primary areas: strengthening teachers’ content knowledge; improving use of assessment and data analysis; and maximizing student engagement in the classroom. The school utilizes the PLC model as the foundation for professional development. Valuing the teacher-to-teacher relationship as one of interdependence, the PLC model values data-driven decision making and maintains a consistent focus on student performance. It recognizes the power of teachers working together and sharing responsibility for student success. LFLA’s PLC discussions are based on the guiding questions formulated by Richard DuFour, Robert Eaker, and their colleagues.⁸

Table 7: PLC Guiding Questions

Category	Guiding Question
Learning Outcomes/ Measurable Goals	What do we want students to learn, to know, and be able to do?
Formative and Summative Assessment	How will we know if they have learned and met expectations?
Instructional Practice	What will we do if they have not learned or met expectations? What will we do if they have already learned or met expectations?

In addition to PLC activities that center on curriculum content and assessment, LFLA has also embedded strategies from Doug Lemov’s *Teach Like a Champion* to maximize student engagement and strengthen the school’s culture⁹. *Teach Like a Champion* strategies are embedded in both new teacher training and academy-wide professional development. These research-based strategies emerged from Lemov’s work as part of the Uncommon Schools charter network. These strategies have been especially helpful in making LFLA classrooms more engaging and more structured for teachers and students alike.

Making sure that Academy staff has enough quality time for Professional Development and collaboration has led to significant revision of the school’s calendar over the years. At LFLA, teachers and administrators can expect to have at least one full-day of professional development most months. In addition, both middle and high school staffs have early release days that result two to three additional meeting times per month that are at least two hours in length. In addition, the team model at the middle school allows core content area teachers more team time and collaborative opportunities. More specifically, this time is focused on assessment data and lesson

⁸ Dufour and Eaker, *Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement* (1998).

⁹ Lemov, Doug, *Teach Like a Champion* (2010).

planning. In addition, designating Responses to Intervention (RtI) to better support the academic, emotional, and social needs of students is largely team directed and monitored with assistance from various support personnel and administrators. Planning for professional development is an on-going process and is a primary focus of the Academy's Professional Development Committee. The Professional Development Committee is comprised of administrators, department/team leaders, and instructional coaches.

Sample Professional Development Activities

- Teachers and administrators examine student work as a means of determining the effectiveness of teaching practices.
- Reviewing units of study and strategic lesson planning.
- Tracking students' performance and the designation of RtI strategies.
- Best-practices training in assessment, literacy, and classroom use of technology.
- Supporting the needs of disadvantaged and at-risk youth, including trauma training.

Individual Teacher Professional Learning Plans

Each teacher at LFLA develops an annual individualized professional learning plan. Prior years' plans are reviewed as part of the process for formulating new or updated personal professional goals for growth and improvement. Plans must be submitted to and approved by the building Principal. Yearly plans are incorporated into a teacher's evaluation portfolio. These plans are aligned to larger school goals and objectives, but also reflect the individual needs of teachers. Plans are discussed between teachers and administrators/coaches at various points in the year as part of classroom observation and teacher evaluation. The process represents a systematic approach to establishing clear targets for improvement through the identification, monitoring, and reflection of personal professional development goals.

Teaching Mentoring

LFLA holds teachers accountable for their work, but also supports them in every way possible. Both team/department leaders and instructional coaches are charged with mentoring teachers new to the profession and to Lift For Life Academy. Mentors assist mentees with understanding and implementing the curriculum along with assessment strategies.¹⁰ Not only is mentoring at LFLA intended to meet various state certification requirements, but it is a primary strategy for building trust and collaboration among teachers and staff.

¹⁰ Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, "The Role of Teacher Mentoring in Educational Reform" (1997).

A.3: Assessment

At LFLA, assessment keeps the mission and beliefs of the school in focus. Assessment identifies learning priorities for individuals, groups, grade levels, subject areas, and total school programs. Assessment provides the means to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of our curriculum and teaching methods. This philosophical and practical approach to assessment reflects both best practices in education and Missouri statutory requirements (R.S.Mo 160.518, 160.405.5, {2 & 6}). As required, LFLA participates in both the MAP (6th-8th grade) and End of Course (EOC) exams (9th-12th) as applicable.

Valuing and empowering all students to reach their full potential as students and citizens is central to the mission at LFLA. Assessment is the key to identifying where each student is, and it is also a tool used to plan where they need to go. The foundation of our assessment plan reflects four basic but essential questions based upon PLC strategies and research:

- 1) What do we want our students to learn?
- 2) How will we know they are learning?
- 3) What are we going to do if they don't learn it?
- 4) What are we going to do if they already know it?

The PLC model is LFLA's approach for evaluating student and program progress. It is the framework by which almost all professional development and teacher learning is facilitated. The theme of "whatever it takes" dominates this approach, as both formal and informal assessment measures are applied. The MAP/EOC, NWEA, and additional standardized tests, such as Study Island, assist teachers in targeting specific skills, adjusting their methods and implementing a plan of success for each student. The teachers learn a "protocol" (through PLC professional development) that gives them the ability to use data as it applies to the delivery of instruction. Individual student progress results are reported by the school's administration and instructional consultants. This data helps teachers establish individual and small group goals, tutoring sessions, guided study programs, and instructional strategies. A growing portfolio of student data is developed and expanded upon each quarter. It is regularly communicated to teachers through weekly grade level PLC meetings and Academy-wide professional development days. The data is also incorporated into instructional coaching facilitated by administrators and consultants.

Summative and formative classroom data is not only regularly shared with teachers, but with parents and students as well. Our plan for assessment recognizes the need to regularly share with parents information about their child's progress over time. Results are periodically distributed via mail and expanded upon by teachers over the phone and during parent teacher conference days. Parents have access to classroom assessment data 24 hours a day through the internet-based Teacher Ease grading program. The school also believes that sharing assessment data with students promotes students' ownership over their own learning and can be an effective motivational tool. These often come from quizzes, exit slips, and assigned work that

teachers can evaluate daily and share results with students. Teachers and administrators want students to know their performance objectives and scores. Teachers and administrators then use intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that make students want to improve upon their previous scores and increase learning.

The ultimate goal of our assessment plan and subsequent data is continuous school improvement designed to meet the learning needs of more students more consistently. The process of continuous school improvement includes the regular identification of curriculum essentials and the monitoring of individual student progress. The LFLA curriculum is in the process of being aligned to the newly adopted *Missouri Learning Standards*. The curriculum essentials are the “must learn” priority concepts that have been identified for each grade level and subject area. The “must learn” priority concepts were developed in vertical and horizontal curriculum committees at LFLA. The data gathered from the disaggregation of state results, and scale data from the Northwest Evaluation Association is used to monitor, measure, and adjust curriculum essentials, as well as to identify individual student progress.

In accordance with state law, charter LEAs must develop performance plans that are submitted to and agreed upon by the charter’s sponsor. Upon approval of the charter, the Missouri Charter Public School Commission and LFLA will generate a performance contract that incorporates existing performance data and develops academy-wide goals as the basis of continuous school improvement.

The Academy’s leadership envisions a school culture committed to data-driven decision-making and research-proven instructional practices. Administrators and teacher leaders expect that students will show significant continued progress the longer the students attend the school. Ambitious, yet attainable goals for student learning and supportive professional development are all derived based on student performance data. Measurable student achievement data has also been incorporated into meaningful teacher evaluation practices. As part of this process, there is an emphasis on student growth, not just state assessment proficiency. These practices align to DESE’s *Seven Principles of Effective Teacher Evaluation*.

Assessment data at LFLA “drives” decision-making as it pertains to curriculum development, instructional planning, professional development needs, and identification of best instructional practices and individual student achievement. Assessment at LFLA “shows” us where we are and “guides” us to where we want to be. In the descriptions and tables below are the formal assessments utilized by LFLA, our formal assessment schedule for 2016-2017, our plan for reporting assessment results and progress for the years leading up to the 2015-2016 school year, and our approach to reporting grade level and cohort performance over time.

Formal Assessments Utilized

- LFLA participates in the statewide administration of the ACT in April of each year

- MAP (Communication Arts and Math) for grades 6,7,8 – administered each Spring. The first year of elementary MAP testing would not take place until the inaugural first grade class reaches third grade in the 2019-20 school year.
- MAP (Science) for grade 8 – administered each Spring
- Administration of the WIDA-ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners). ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and Alternate ACCESS to be assessed based on need.
- End of Course Exams (Algebra 1, English 2, Biology, & American Government) for high school students as required by the state’s assessment plan.
- Northwest Evaluation Association (Reading and Math) for all elementary, middle and high school students – administered in the fall and spring for middle and high. For k-2, NWEA will be administered 3-4 times per year.
- Study Island Benchmark assessments in Math and Communication Arts.

Table A.3.1: Formal Assessment Schedule for 2016-2017

August 2012	Stanford Test of English Proficiency (ESL students)
August-September 2016	NWEA (Reading & Math) for grades 6-10
September/October	MAP and EOC Benchmark 1
December/January 2016-17	MAP and EOC Benchmark 2
February/March 2017	LAS Links Testing (ESL students) MAP and EOC Benchmark 3
March/April 2017	NWEA (Reading & Math) for grades 6-10
April/May 2017	High School EOC Exams and Middle School MAP Testing
June 2017	NWEA (Reading, Language Usage, Math) all grades

Table A.3.2: Performance & Progress Reporting

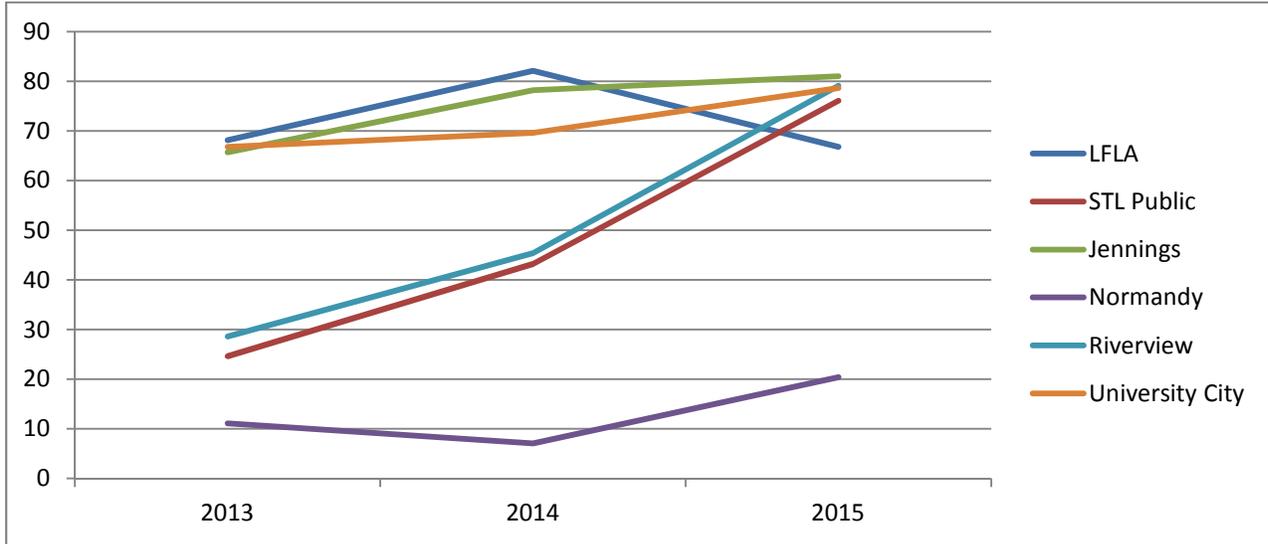
August 2016	Preliminary APR/ MAP/ EOC report to the Board of Education
September 2016	2016-2017 Performance Plan presented to board and submitted to charter sponsor
September 2016	Individual MAP and EOC results to parents
September 2016	MAP and APR results presented on Parents’ Night
September 2016	Classroom and NWEA Progress Reports to parents
October 2016	Parent Conferences and Report Cards NWEA and EOC/MAP benchmark data

	presented to education committee and to board as part of monthly dashboard
November 2016	Progress Reports to parents
December 2016	Mandatory Parent Conferences for selected students
December 2016	Mid-year Comprehensive Performance Plan updates reported to Board of Education
January 2017	Report Cards mailed to Parents
February 2017	Classroom and 2 nd NWEA Progress Reports to parents
March 2017	Parent Conferences and Report Cards
April 2017	Progress Reports to parents
May 2017	Mandatory Parent Conferences for selected students
June 2017	End of year Report Cards and final NWEA progress reporting to parents
June 2017	Progress Reports for Summer Session
July 2017	Report Cards for Summer Session
July/August 2017	Final Presentation 2012-2013 Performance Plan Results

Annual Performance Report (APR)

The fifth version of the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP 5) was adopted by the Missouri State Board of Education for use beginning in 2013. As a result, new performance standards and metrics were used to evaluate district/LEA performance as part of the Annual Performance Report (APR). In the last three years, state test results along with post-secondary placement, attendance, and college and career readiness measures have contributed to Annual Performance Report scores for LFLA that have been on par or outperformed school districts with similar student populations in the St. Louis area (See Figure A.3.1). It should be noted that LFLA is the only school district, or local education agency, that does not serve elementary school students; therefore, LFLA's interventionist structure and approach is unique among the comparable districts. All the districts represented are predominantly Black/African American and free and reduced lunch (approximately 85% or more in both categories).

Figure A.3.1. St. Louis Area APR Comparison, 2013-2015



In addition, Table A.3.3 describes the three year APR averages of the comparable districts identified in Figure A.3.1. Although MSIP 5 metrics allow districts/LEA's to earn points for progress and growth as part of evaluating their performance in relation to the standards, this can also result in some fairly dramatic spikes and drops in the accumulation of points from year to year. By using a three year APR average, consistency in district/LEA performance can be examined more closely. As the table below shows, LFLA's three-year APR is on par or outperforms comparable districts/LEAs. All APR data presented in chart or table form is publicly available through DESE's Missouri Comprehensive Data System (MCDS).

Table A.3.3 Three-Year Average of Annual Performance Report Scores, 2013-2015

District/Charter LEA	APR Average
<i>Lift for Life Academy</i>	72.3
<i>St. Louis Public</i>	48
<i>Jennings</i>	75
<i>Normandy</i>	12.9
<i>Riverview</i>	51
<i>University City</i>	71.7

Middle School MAP Performance

Since the State of Missouri has undergone significant changes with regards to its state learning standards and assessment tools, comparing historical MAP results is difficult and not advised by DESE. New statewide tests in grades 3- 8 were administered in both 2015 and 2016 with a newly revised assessment to be administered as part of 2017-2018 school year testing. Despite changes in the state’s assessments, DESE has been able to calculate gains in individual student achievement using normal curve equivalents from one year to the next. This is referred to as growth and is described on both the school and district’s Annual Performance Report. As Table A.3.4 indicates, LFLA has been able to achieve “Exceeding” growth in math consistently, while consistent growth in communication arts performance is a priority.

Table A.3.4 DESE Annual Performance Report Growth Ratings for LFLA, 6-8

	Math	Com Arts
2013	Exceeding	Floor
2014	Exceeding	Approaching
2015	Exceeding	Floor

High School End of Course (EOC) Exam Performance

Although new state standards and assessments have led to some adjustments to the high school end of course (EOC) exams, these changes have been less profound in comparison to the 3-8 MAP. As a result, EOC comparisons have been made easier. Several tables illustrate LFLA’s EOC performance. The first compares LFLA’s 2015 performance to the St. Louis Public Schools along with the statewide averages for free and reduced lunch students and Black/African American students. As table A.3.5 illustrates, LFLA outperformed the St. Louis Public Schools’ performance in all EOC areas in 2015 as well as the statewide average for African American students. In addition, LFLA’s Algebra I performance exceeded the state wide average for free and reduced lunch students by approximately 10 percentage points. Gains such as these indicate that over time LFLA students are becoming more proficient and working towards closing both the racial and economic achievement gap that persists.

Table A.3.5 2015 End of Course Exam (EOC) Proficiency Rate Comparison
(LFLA to St. Louis Public and Statewide Averages for the Black and Free and Reduced Lunch Subgroups¹)

	2015 LFLA High School (Proficient & Advanced Percentage)	2015 St. Louis Public Schools (Proficient & Advanced)	2015 Statewide Average for Free & Reduced Lunch (Proficient & Advanced)	2015 Statewide Average for Black/African American Students (Proficient & Advanced)
Algebra I	71.4%	46.7%	61.8 %	31%
English II	55.6%	50.9%	73%	53.4%
Biology	55.4%	46.2%	74.8%	48.2%
Government	48.5%	38.8%	63.4%	39.4%

Table A.3.6: LFLA High School End of Course Exam Performance, 2011-15

EOC Subject Area	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Biology	55.4%	28.6%	35%	n/a	10.6%
Government	48.5%	37.7%	24.7%	n/a	n/a
English II	55.6%	53.5%	40.8%	49.3%	58.1%
Algebra I	71.4%	50.9%	44.9%	54%	74

MAP/EOC Growth Performance Analysis for Continuously Enrolled Students by Graduating Class

The data points below describe growth in MAP and EOC performance of students by graduating class. For this analysis, there was an emphasis placed on the performance of incoming sixth and seventh grade middle school students compared to their eventual performance in the eighth grade and in high school. Please note that the reported graduates in Table A.3.7 may not align completely to the class data points based on

¹ Data obtain through DESE's *Missouri Comprehensive Data System*. Please note that data is not available through MCDS that combines the Free and Reduced Lunch and Black/African American subgroups.

students' entrance and exit dates prior to actual graduation or if a student may have graduated late. It is also important to note that this analysis focuses only on the MAP and EOC categorical achievement levels of "Below Basic, Basic, Proficient and Advanced." Although helpful in describing broad trends in performance, an achievement level analysis may not fully indicate the amount of learning that may take place within a given year or over time among individual students.

Table A.3.7: Overview of Graduates Enrollment by Entry Grade Level 2012-2016*

Graduation Year	Number of Graduates	Number of Graduates by Grade First Enrolled @ LFLA						
		12	11	10	9	8	7	6
2016	74	3	6	0	13	4	7	41
2015	67	1	2	2	16	7	14	25
2014	83	4	5	0	11	9	9	45
2013	66	3	4	4	11	4	12	28
2012	73	3	0	8	12	6	9	35

Class of 2016 Data Points

- 58% (18 of 31) of students who achieved a Communication Arts achievement level of "Basic" at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve "Proficient or Advanced" on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school English II end of course exam.
- 88% (7 of 8) of students who achieved a Communication Arts achievement level of "Below Basic" at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve "Basic or Proficient" on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school English II end of course exam.
- 60% (26 of 44) of students who attended LFLA at the 6th or 7th grade achieved "Proficient or Advanced" on the high school English II end of course exam.
- 70% (19 of 27) of students who achieved a Math achievement level of "Basic" at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve "Proficient or Advanced" on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school Algebra I end of course exam.
- 75% (9 of 12) of students who achieved a Math achievement level of "Below Basic" at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve "Basic or Proficient" on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school Algebra I exam.
- 65% (30 of 46) of students who attended LFLA at the 6th or 7th grade achieved "Proficient or Advanced" on the high school Algebra I end of course exam.

Class of 2015 Data Points

- 41% (11 of 27) students who achieved a Communication Arts achievement level of “Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve “Proficient or Advanced” on the 8th grade MAP or high school English II end of course exam.
- 100% (7 of 7) students who achieved a Communication Arts achievement level of “Below Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade level on the MAP went on to achieve “Basic or Proficient” on the 8th grade MAP or high school English II end of course exam.
- 46% (16 of 35) students who attended LFLA at the 6th or 7th grade levels achieved “Proficient or Advanced” on the high school English II end of course exam.
- 67% (18 of 27) students who achieve a Math achievement level of “Basic” in the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve “Proficient or Advanced” on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school Algebra I end of course exam.
- 100% (5 of 5) students who achieved a Math achievement level of “Below Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade level on the MAP went on to achieve “Basic or Proficient” on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school English II end of course exam.
- 55% (18 of 33) students who attended LFLA at 6th or 7th grade levels achieved “Proficient or Advanced” on the high school Algebra I end of course exam.

Class of 2014

- 50% (18 of 36) of students who achieved a Communication Arts achievement level of “Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve “Proficient or Advanced” on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school English II end of course exam.
- 92% (11 of 12) of students who achieved a Communication Arts achievement level of “Below Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve “Basic or Proficient” on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school English II end of course exam.
- 46% (24 of 52) of students who attended LFLA at the 6th or 7th grade achieved “Proficient or Advanced” on the high school English II end of course exam.
- 63% (24 of 38) of students who achieved a Math achievement level of “Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve “Proficient or Advanced” on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school Algebra I end of course exam.
- 86% (12 of 14) of students who achieved a Math achievement level of “Below Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve “Basic or Proficient” on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school Algebra I exam.
- 50% (26 of 52) of students who attended LFLA at the 6th or 7th grade achieved “Proficient or Advanced” on the high school Algebra I end of course exam.

NWEA Performance Analysis by Graduating Class

The Northwestern Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) is a computerized adaptive assessment that produces both growth and achievement data that teachers utilize in their planning process. The MAP assessment produces a RIT score that aligns with an equivalent grade-level range that can be utilized for longitudinal growth analysis. This test is administered two to three times per year from grades 6 – 10. The RIT scores or grade-level equivalencies do not have a 1:1 correlation to Achievement Levels on State Exams but they are useful in determining individual student growth and cohort progress.

Class of 2016 Data Points

- The number of students performing at Grade Level in Reading increased from 13 to 26(100% increase) over the four-year test administration window.
- 78% (37 out of 47) of students made at least four years' worth of growth and/or tested on grade level by the 10th Grade in Reading.
- The number of students performing at Grade Level in Math increased from 12 to 26 (116% increase) over the four-year test administration window.
- 57% (27 out of 47) of students made at least four years' worth of growth and/or tested on grade level by the 10th Grade in Math.

Class of 2015 Data Points

- The number of students performing at Grade Level in Reading increased from 14 to 27(93% increase) over the four-year test administration window.
- 75% (33 out of 44) of students made at least four years' worth of growth and/or tested on grade level by the 9th Grade in Reading.
- The number of students performing at Grade Level in Math increased from 7 to 28 (300% increase) over the four-year test administration window.
- 68% (30 out of 44) of students made at least four years' worth of growth and/or tested on grade level by the 9th Grade in Math.

Assessing Proficiency, Growth, & Promotion for Elementary & Middle School Students

Proficiency, growth, and promotion determinations are made using a combination of standardized benchmark test data from the NWEA in addition to classroom assessments that become part of a student's grades on his/her report card. At the middle school level and elementary level, a standards-based approach to instruction includes standards-based grading. At the middle school and elementary school, report cards describe performance relative to specific standards as opposed to the assigning

of letter grades. At the high school level, the grading of performance standards is embedded into classroom assessment practices, but a letter grade is assigned at the end of quarterly and semester periods.

At the elementary and middle school level, when students fall short of assessed expectations, an overall analysis of student learning is performed. This analysis may include standardized test data (MAP, NWEA , etc.) as well as classroom and benchmark performance data. In addition, overall progress and growth in meeting the curriculum standards as described on the report card will take place. In addition, students may be required to successfully complete summer school prior to becoming eligible for grade level promotion. Overall, the promotion and possible retention of students at the elementary and middle school level encompasses data from several sources along with individualized student information (such as Individualized Education Program, 504 plan, etc.). This process is intended to provide an objective and consistent approach to evaluating student learning over time as opposed to letter grades assigned by a classroom teacher alone. In the table below, the standardized assessment content strands from the NWEA used to evaluate proficiency, growth, and promotion are identified.

Tables A.3.8 and A.3.9, identify how NWEA and End of Course exam data along with more traditional assessments of classroom learning are used at the high school level in American Government and Civics.

Table A.3.8: NWEA Content Strands Used to Determine 7th Grade Proficiency and Track Growth

Math Grade 7	Communication Arts Grade 7
Data and Probability	Phonics and Vocabulary
Measurement	Reading Processes
Numbers and Operations	Nonfiction
Algebraic Relationships	Fiction/Poetry/Drama
Geometric Relationships	

Table A.3.9: Determining Proficiency for High School American Government/Civics

Criteria	Method(s) of Assessment
American Government Course Level Expectation Strands for the state of Missouri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives based grading where students must demonstrate mastery of the content through teacher designed assessments. • Three Study Island EOC benchmarks during the year • MAP End of Course exam in American Government
Social Studies Show-Me Standards for Missouri	
Nonfiction Reading Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school social studies teachers

	are charged with improving the nonfiction reading comprehension of students. High school NWEA results are used to identify proficiency and track growth.
Formal Writing and Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course requirements state that American History students must produce formal writing works, including a research paper. • Social Studies teachers assign and evaluate student writing using elements of the Six Traits framework along with a content rubric.
Formal Speaking and Computer Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school social studies students are expected to be able to communicate effectively their knowledge about a topic and present the information as part of a Power Point presentation.

Proficiency and Graduation for High School Students

For the charter’s high school students, the core value communicated, that *accepting failure is not an option*, is the same, but the credit system results in a significantly different process for evaluating the academic standing of students. The state of Missouri requires by law that students earn a minimum of twenty-four credits for them to be awarded a high school diploma. In addition, the state requires a certain amount of credits by subject area. It is up to individual districts to establish their own graduation requirements beyond the minimum twenty-four. At LFLA, the number of credits students must earn to receive their high school diploma is twenty-six. As previously mentioned, the necessity of providing our students additional Mathematics and Communication Arts classes is essential to closing academic achievement disparities by race and class. Lastly, EOC exams are incorporated into the final exams of tested subject areas. Student results are subsequently incorporated into the assigning of final grades (especially second semester when most students test). By incorporating these results into final exam grades, the EOC is made relevant for students and teachers and administrators are able to determine student proficiency relative to Missouri’s standards.

Table A.3.10: LFLA Credit Requirements Compared to the State of Missouri

Subject Area	LFLA	State of Missouri
Communication Arts	4	4
Social Studies	3	3
Mathematics	4	3
Science	3	3
Fine Arts	1	1
Practical Arts	1	1
Physical Education	1	1
Health Education	0.5	0.5
Personal Finance *	0.5	0.5
Public Speaking	0.5	0
Virtual Learning Elective	.5	0
Senior Composition	1	0
Electives	6.0	7
Total	26	24

*Indicates personal finance is required for all students as a standalone elective.

A.4: School Calendar and Daily Schedule

LFLA's school calendar demonstrates our commitment to empowering students to fulfill their highest potential. The academic priority of the middle school is to establish a solid foundation in the core subjects of Mathematics and Communication Arts, while LFLA's high school focuses on intellectual progression with the intent of giving our students the background they need for advanced education and success post-high school. Education throughout the middle and high schools revolve around a core focus of literacy and reading with classroom time set aside in each grade for teaching the comprehension of advanced narratives and texts.

In compliance with R.S.Mo 160.041, LFLA will provide at least 174 days and 1,044 hours of regular instruction for all students. For 2016-2017 and the years moving forward, both the middle and high schools will have 176 scheduled session days with two inclement weather days built into the calendar over the course of the academic year. The elementary calendar will reflect the session days for the middle school most closely. Additional inclement weather days are designated in the calendar for Spring Break and the week after the regular school year ends and/or other days in which the students are not in attendance excluding holidays. Inclement weather/school breaks/holidays are identified as SB/IW--School Break/Inclement Weather on the Academy's calendar--(R.S.Mo 171.033). See Exhibit A.4.1 for board 16-17 school calendar.

Middle School

For the 2016-17 school year, LFLA's middle school will be in session 1154 scheduled hours, which includes the required summer session. The school day for the regular school year is 6.5 hours per day. Students typically come to LFLA performing significantly below grade-level expectations. The extended learning opportunities built into our schedule allow staff more time to focus on individual student needs and targeted remediation where necessary.

Middle school students also receive twice the amount of learning time in Mathematics and Communication Arts. 6th graders take two 60-minute Mathematics and Communication Arts classes daily, while 7th and 8th graders receive two extra periods of communication arts instruction. In addition, "Success Hour" provides even more time dedicate to literacy and meeting standards in the core areas. The middle school utilizes a flexible "drop-schedule" on a weekly basis. The drop schedule allows teacher to see students regularly during the week, but at different times of the day.

High School

Like the middle school, LFLA high school uses a drop schedule as well. For the 2016-2017 school year, high school students are to be in session 1066 hours. The high school has a school day length of 6.5 hours per day. Students have significant access to after-school tutoring and one-on-one time with teachers. Summer school is required for incoming 9th graders who attended LFLA as eighth graders. Summer school is available for 10th – 12th graders if they are in poor academic standing based upon

teacher and course availability along with funding considerations. The E-20/20 online educational program also provides an opportunity for credit recovery to students (See section on A.9.3, Virtual Programs). Students also can apply to summer school programs in the St. Louis Public Schools and transfer earned credits. Lastly, the high school's scheduling structure allows students to earn up to eight credits per regular school year, which means students who have failed multiple classes can remain on a path to graduation in four years.

Sample Daily Schedules

LFLA's high school is in session each day from 7:20 to 2:25, while the middle school's schedule will be 8:25 to 3:40. Each school day at the Academy starts out with breakfast for our students. We provide these meals as part of our holistic approach to education that emphasizes both healthy minds and healthy bodies. Many of our students might not have breakfast if it weren't provided at school. This ensures our students have a healthy start to their day.

See the tables below for illustrations of middle school, high school, and elementary daily schedules (Also included as Exhibit A.4.2).

Table A.4.1: LFLA 6th Grade Daily Schedule

6th Grade Daily Schedule

<i>CULTURE HOUR</i>	8:00-8:25
BREAKFAST	8:30-8:55
1 ST HOUR	9:00-10:00
<i>2ND HOUR</i>	10:05-11:05
<i>3RD HOUR</i>	11:10-12:10
4 TH HOUR	12:10-1:10
<i>LUNCH</i>	1:12-1:37
ELECTIVE	1:40-2:40
SUCCESS HOUR	2:45-3:40

Table A.4.2: LFLA 7th Grade Daily Schedule

<i>BREAKFAST</i>	8:00-8:25
<i>1ST HOUR</i>	8:25-9:35
<i>SUCCESS HOUR</i>	9:40-10:30
ELECTIVE	10:35-11:45

LUNCH	11:45-12:12
2ND HOUR	12:15-1:25
3RD HOUR	1:30-2:35
4TH HOUR	2:40-3:40

Table A.4.3: LFLA 8th Grade Daily Schedule

BREAKFAST	8:00-8:25
1ST HOUR	8:25-9:35
2ND HOUR	9:40-10:50
3RD HOUR	10:55-12:10
LUNCH	12:10-12:35
ELECTIVE	12:35-1:45
4TH HOUR	1:50-3:00
SUCCESS HOUR	3:05-3:40

Table A.4.4: LFLA High School Daily Schedule

Period	Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	7:20-8:35	1	6	3	7	4
2	8:40-9:55	2	7	4	8	5
3	10:00-11:15	3	8	5	1	6
Lunch 1, 11:20-11:45	Class, 11:50-1:05	4*	1*	6*	2*	7*
Lunch 2, 12:40-1:05	Class, 11:20-12:35	4*	1*	6*	2*	7*
5	1:10-2:25	5	2	Culture Hour, PD Early Release Time	3	8

The above daily schedules demonstrate the basic structure of a student's day. LFLA offers many extra-curricular and after-school activities to customize each student's overall education to meet their unique interests and aspirations.

Proposed Elementary Expansion Daily Schedule

The school day for LFLA’s proposed elementary will be similar in the length and duration to the middle and high in many respects. What will be different is how the day is organized. Although core area instruction will be segmented and identifiable, there will be an emphasis on expeditionary learning, which encompasses intellectual inquiry, physical exploration, and community service. Lastly, in accordance with the needs of the parents and families we serve, LFLA has plans to create a before and after care program for all of its junior kindergarten and kindergarten students (before school care 7:00-8:30 and after-school care 4:00-6:30). The before and after school program will provide these young students with learning and recreational time in a safe and positive environment.

Junior Kindergarten-Sample Daily Schedule

	Monday-Thursday		Friday
8:45-9:10	Breakfast	8:45-9:10	Breakfast
9:10-9:20	Morning Meeting	9:10-9:20	Morning Meeting
9:25-10:10	Play-based Learning Centers and Art	9:25-10:10	Play-based Learning Centers and Art
10:10-10:30	Morning Circle Time (Language Development, Phonics, Calendar, Listening Skills, Welcoming, and Songs	10:10-10:30	Morning Circle Time (Language Development, Phonics, Calendar, Listening Skills, Welcoming, and Songs
10:30-10:40	Morning Snack	10:00-10:45	Morning Snack
10:40-11:10	Reading/Literacy Activities	10:40-11:10	Reading/Literacy Activities
11:10-11:35	Math	11:10-11:35	Math
11:35-12:00	Lunch	11:35-12:00	Lunch
12:00:12:30	Music Movement, Academic Games and Sharing	12:00:12:30	Music Movement, Academic Games and Sharing
12:30-1:30	Quiet Rest Time	12:30-1:00	Quiet Rest Time
1:30-1:40	Afternoon Snack	1:00-1:20	Weekly Celebration
1:40-2:05	Science/Social Studies	1:20-1:30	Dismissal
2:05-2:30	Play Based Learning Centers and Art		
2:30-2:50	Music Movement, Academic Games and Sharing	2:00-4:00	Staff Professional Dev
2:50-3:10	Theme/Group Work		
3:10-3:40	Outdoor Exploration and Fitness		
3:45-4:00	Afternoon Meeting/Dismissal		

Kindergarten-5th Grade Sample Daily Schedule

	Monday-Thursday		Friday
8:45-9:10	Breakfast	8:45-9:10	Breakfast
9:10-9:20	Morning Meeting	9:10-9:20	Morning Meeting
9:25-10:10	Literacy Skills	9:25-10:10	Literacy Skills
10:10-10:50	Math Enrichment/Activities	10:10-10:50	Math Enrichment/Activities
10:50-11:05	Recess	10:50-11:05	Recess
11:10-11:40	Service Learning	11:10-11:40	Science Exploration
11:40-12:20	Science Exploration	11:40-12:05	Lunch
12:20-12:45	Lunch	12:05-12:20	Recess
12:45-1:00	Recess	12:25-1:05	Reading Workshop
1:05-1:30	Response to Intervention-Small Group	1:05-1:30	Weekly Celebration
1:30-1:55	Reading Workshop	1:30-1:40	Dismissal
1:55-2:20	Writing Workshop		
2:20-2:25	Snack	2:00-4:00	Staff Professional Dev
2:30-3:10	Fitness(M&W) Fine Arts (T&TH)	2:30-3:10	
3:15-3:45	Theme/Group Work	3:15-3:45	
3:45-4:00	Afternoon Meeting	3:45-4:00	

A.5: Target Population

Middle and High School Enrollment

LFLA has operated as a six through twelve charter school LEA since 2012. Historical enrollment and attendance data suggests that the charter's future enrollment projections are realistic for the enrollment and retention of students in grades six through twelve. *Table 19* lists LFLA's historical enrollment numbers, which are based on past years' data.

Table A.5.1: Historical Enrollment Data*

Year	Grade							Total	Avg. per Grade
	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th		
2011-12	85	92	83	85	82	74	74	575	82.1
2012-13	89	86	86	83	85	83	67	579	82.7
2013-14	79	85	88	76	78	75	81	562	80.2
2014-15	81	86	89	86	80	76	67	565	80.7
2015-16	79	83	77	86	87	70	74	556	79.4

****Student enrollment numbers for 2011-2012 were based on attendance as of September 1. For 2013-14 and subsequent years, the end of year attendance numbers were utilized for comparative purposes in tracking LFLA's stable enrollment.

Table A.5.2: Anticipated Enrollment Data for Grades 6-12 (5-Years)

Year	Grade							Total
	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	
2016-17	82	85	85	90	85	80	75	582
2017-18	82	85	85	90	85	80	75	582
2018-19	82	85	85	90	85	80	75	582
2019-20	82	85	85	90	85	80	75	582
2020-21	82	85	85	90	85	80	75	582
2021-22	82	85	85	90	85	80	75	582

Table A.5.3: Anticipated Enrollment Data for the Elementary Expansion

Year	Grade							Total
	Jr. K	K	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	
2016-17	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2017-18	40	40	40	X	X	X	X	120
2018-19	40	40	40	40	X	X	X	160
2019-20	40	40	40	40	40	X	X	200
2020-21	40	40	40	40	40	40	X	240
2021-22	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	280

LFLA is a free, not-for-profit public school serving St. Louis City students and their families. In accordance with state law, LFLA students must reside within the geographic boundaries of Saint Louis City in order to attend the school. The overwhelming majority of the school's students are African-American and low-income. Over the past two years, the middle and high school student populations have been approximately 99% African-American. The free and reduced lunch (FRL) rate, an indicator of low socioeconomic status, is consistently around 90%. Due to the high FRL count, student homelessness and transience are more likely. If a student is identified as being in a difficult situation, such as living in a homeless shelter, the Academy's administrators, social worker and counselors coordinate resources for the students and their families. Historically, the school has served very few students classified as English Language Learners (ELL) or Migrant, but policies and procedures are in place to ensure these students' needs are met as well. See *Table 22* for a breakdown of performance scores of other schools that serve a student demographic that is similar to LFLA.

Based upon the high FRL percentage alone, the Academy's target population is well within the "at-risk" category, and the charter's comprehensive educational program is designed with these needs in mind. The overwhelming majority of students come from families who are considered impoverished or working poor. Many of these same students live in neighborhoods where drugs, crime, and gang violence are common aspects of daily life. *Table A.5.4* describes an enrollment analysis based on the 2011-2012 school year. The four most represented zip codes of where our students are coming from are areas of high poverty (which is not used interchangeably with free and reduced lunch eligibility). The poverty rates for these areas are as follows: 63104 – 26.9%, 63106 – 46.3%, 63115 – 23.0%, and 63118 – 29.0%¹.

Table A.5.4: Percentage of Students Attending LFLA by Home Zip Code

Zip Code	% of Students	Zip Code	% of Students
	2011-2012		2011-2012
63101	0.6%	63113	6.1%
63102	0.4%	63115	12.3%
63103	0.6%	63116	8.1%
63104	9.5%	63118	12.1%
63106	10.5%	63119	0.2%
63107	6.1%	63120	5.5%
63108	1.1%	63137	0.7%
63109	0.6%	63139	0.9%
63110	4.4%	63143	0.2%
63111	5.7%	63146	0.2%
63112	7.2%	63147	7.3%

¹ Data from the "2009-2010 Children of Metropolitan St. Louis Report to the Community" by Vision for Children At Risk.

In 2016, a more recent LFLA enrollment analysis conducted that was cross-referenced with a St. Louis Schools Needs Assessment, approximately 33% of LFLA's students are from zip codes that ranked in the top five in terms of service gap (demand for a quality school seat compared to access). Over 50% of LFLA students were from zip codes that ranked in the top ten in terms of the service gap². Driven by a passion to serve these communities, LFLA understands how social conditions and living experiences associated with urban poverty can negatively affect student learning and academic achievement. The school's ultimate goal is to reverse the cycle of generational poverty that affects so many of our students and their families through a high-quality public education.

Meeting Students' Social and Learning Needs

Driven by its mission, all LFLA staff members make a commitment to being a "supportive learning community." In order to fulfill the mission, LFLA believes that the physical, social, and emotional needs of students must be addressed along with their intellectual needs. For example, LFLA's community partnerships have provided students with vision screenings and free eyeglasses. Students have also received free dental services, including cavity fillings, through the school. The school social worker, counselors, and administrators work collaboratively to coordinate professional counseling and mental health services for students and their families. These and other efforts ensure students are physically and emotionally prepared to learn and promote family connectedness within the school. Lastly, survey results indicate that a primary motivation for parents choosing LFLA is the belief that the school is a safe alternative to their neighborhood school. We believe that if students are safe and healthy, then the effectiveness of the curriculum and teachers is likely to increase.

According to NWEA and MAP data, approximately seventy-five percent of students or more enter LFLA as sixth graders at least two to three grade levels behind in reading and math. This fact has strong implications for the design and teaching of our curriculum. As previously mentioned in section A.2, the school utilizes PLC, "Depth of Knowledge", and *Understanding by Design* principles in the design of our curriculum. The curriculum is teacher-designed and aligned to the *Missouri Learning Standards*. To best serve the needs of our students, our curriculum is very direct in what students are expected to know and do. By identifying specific curriculum "essentials" fully aligned to the standards, our students work towards specific content and skill masteries versus textbook coverage. Students who grow up in economic and cultural poverty are often at skill and content deficits in their comprehension, vocabulary, and overall background knowledge. These deficits become progressively more severe as students age, which results in a widening of the achievement gap through high school. This is why the Academy attempts to supplement the curriculum by sponsoring activities for students,

²St. Louis Schools Needs Assessment (2014). <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/mayor/initiatives/education/education-documents.cfm>

such as camping, leadership training, high school work study and internships, and community volunteering.

A school's curriculum is only as strong as the teaching methodology used to teach it. For teachers, the foundation for improving learning is based upon two guiding principles designed to meet the needs of our students. First, students learn best by doing. Inquiry based-science, readers and writers workshops, and math labs all emphasize the importance of student centered learning. Classrooms that are teacher-centered with extended amounts of time dedicated to lecture and direct instruction are less likely to close the achievement gap. Secondly, serving our student population effectively means that building caring relationships with students must be part of the teaching methodology. Researcher Jon Saphier emphasizes that narrowing the achievement gap requires teachers to convey relevance, student confidence, and an "I won't give up on you, even if you give up on yourself" attitude.³ Harvard economist and education researcher Ron Ferguson found that students of color learned more in classes identified as "High Help and High Perfectionism." Teachers at LFLA are expected to construct classroom learning environments that reflect the following "High Help and High Perfectionism" characteristics: creating enjoyable and measurably effective learning for students, engaging low achievers as much as high achievers, waiting extended amounts of time for students to answer, and encouraging and minimizing students' fear of asking questions.⁴ Lastly, so many of our students are considered "at-risk" that the charter must provide additional opportunities for learning as part of a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework.⁵ A few of these interventions include special reading classes, extended learning after school as part of the "MAP Attack" program, and guided study classes led by certificated teachers. It is also a driving consideration in our decision to add an elementary school.

LFLA is convinced that its holistic approach to education and restructuring efforts are going to mean more learning and higher achievement levels for the city's neediest students. From the growing emphasis on continual assessment and data-driven decision-making to the selection of techniques based on educational research to the school's positive environment filled with teacher collaboration, teamwork, and effective professional development, LFLA is dedicated to improving its educational program and meeting the needs of more students every year.

³ Saphier, Jon. Research for Better Teaching, Inc. Power Point Presentation www.rbteach.com

⁴ Ferguson, Ron. "Helping Students of Color to Meet High Standards" 2008.

⁵ Buffin, Mattos, and Weber. "Pyramid Response to Intervention" 2008.

A.6: Special Student Populations

LFLA is committed to serving students that might be considered part of special student populations, including students that have disabilities, limited English proficiency, and/or are homeless. This commitment is reflected in the school's policy of non-discrimination, which states:

“The Lift For Life Academy public school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability in its programs, activities or employment practices.”

Special Education Students

LFLA is dedicated to serving the full range of students with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 and its policy of non-discrimination. This range includes everything from Attention Deficit and Asperger's Disorders to severe mental and physical disabilities that require intensive supports and services. For example, the Academy will provide special transportation for wheelchair bound students or a dedicated paraprofessional to students who are unable to function independently. The Academy follows the rules, regulations, and guidelines described in the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Procedural Safeguards regarding initial evaluation, parental notification and correspondence, placement, and monitoring.

Students at LFLA are identified for special education services in three primary ways. First, students are identified as having an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as part of the enrollment application completed by parents and guardians. The IEP is then sent to the charter school from the child's previous school as part of a general records request. The second way special education students are identified is through Local Education Agency (LEA) referral. Lastly, parents may initiate the referral process. Students that are identified as having a disability are then provided special education services that align to the student's IEP goals.

The Academy currently has four full-time special education certified teachers and one full-time special education paraprofessionals on staff. The school provides special education services to students directly for most students, but does contract with outside providers for diagnostic testing and low-incident disability needs such as speech pathology. The special education staff is responsible for developing, monitoring, and measuring progress towards a student's IEP goals in accordance with the expectations set forth in the state's Special Education Compliance Plan. Close collaboration in the development and implementation of the IEP with the regular education teachers is required. Special and regular education teachers observe, collect, and analyze classroom and standardized assessment data as part of the IEP evaluation process and in the writing of IEP goals following placement. Special and regular education collaboration continues throughout the school year, as IEP goals and progress are measured and evaluated. LFLA's special education teachers also strive for a high level of parent involvement with these students by sharing concerns, providing written and verbal progress reports regularly, and providing parents with learning and practice

strategies that can be implemented at home. The special education teachers' goal is for parents of IEP students to be informed and engaged throughout the school year, not just at the annual IEP evaluation.

English Language Learners and Migrant Students

LFLA is likewise committed to serving the unique learning needs of all English Language Learners (ELL) and Migrant students. This commitment corresponds to the legal requirements outlined in Title I-C and Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and reauthorization under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). LFLA believes that the goal of an effective ELL/Migrant program is to provide high-quality instruction that will promote English proficiency and overall student achievement. Some of the keys to achieving this goal include the early and effective identification of ELL/Migrant students, successful program placement and monitoring, and the consistent notification of parents.

The identification of ELL/Migrant Students begins with the enrollment application, but also extends to first-contacts between teacher and student in the classroom. Accordingly, the school administers the research-proven WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test as applicable.¹ After ELL students are identified, the Academy develops an individualized learning plan for every ELL/Migrant student with measurable learning objectives. These objectives include outcomes associated with the student's participation in the MAP, as all ELL and Migrant students set goals in and participate in the MAP. In order to maximize ELL/Migrant student achievement, the Academy believes that parent involvement is crucial and works to keep the parents of ELL and Migrant students regularly informed and connected to their child's placement and progress within program.

LFLA has a Board-approved policy regarding the education of ELL and Migrant Students. Although the school does not currently service any ELL or Migrant students, the board policy does identify the positions of English Language Learner Coordinator and Migrant Contact.

504 Plan Student Accommodations

All LFLA school-aged children and their parents are 504 eligible because the district receives federal funds. The district is committed to the rules, regulations, and procedures that provide a free and appropriate education to students identified with disabilities or impairments. This commitment is reflected in the school's policy of non-discrimination. According to DESE, one of the following conditions must exist in order for a student or parent to qualify: a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities; a record or history of impairment; or the impairment is regarded as having the potential to impair. To ensure that students and parents have access to 504 plan protections and services, the school district will have an identified 504 Coordinator. The 504 Coordinator ensures that grievances and disputes from employees, students,

¹ Short and Fitzsimmons, "Double the Work: Challenges and Solutions to Acquiring Language and Academic Literacy for Adolescent English Language Learners" (2007).

or parents are followed according to procedure. The 504 Coordinator also informs parents as to how the district will fulfill its 504 responsibilities and distribute 504 procedural safeguards.

Transportation Accommodations for IEP and 504 Plan Students

In accordance with an IEP or 504 Plan, LFLA recognizes that these students may require special transportation accommodations. Specialized accommodations may extend to the transportation of wheelchair-bound students. Currently, LFLA operates its own buses and transportation services. The school currently does not have a bus that could provide specialized transportation to a wheelchair-bound student. Recognizing that some permanently or temporarily disabled students may require special transportation accommodations, if a situation arises in which special transportation is required, then the school will contract out the transportation to an outside firm.

Homeless Students

Under the McKinney Vento Homeless Act (M-V), originally part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and reauthorized under Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015 (ESSA), homeless students are guaranteed immediate access to a free and appropriate education (FAPE). Under this law, a qualified homeless child is guaranteed the right to attend one of two schools: the school of origin and the local attendance area school. The school of origin is defined as the “school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school which the child or youth was last enrolled” [M-V: 722(g)(3)(G)]. The local attendance area school is “any public school that non homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend” [M-V: 722(g)(3)(A)(ii)]. In addition, homeless enrollment decisions at LFLA will take into account a student’s best educational interest in accordance with the law and U.S. Department of Education guidelines. This guidance states, “In determining a child’s or youth’s best interest, an LEA must, to the extent feasible, keep a homeless child or youth in the “school of origin” unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child or youth’s parent or guardian. If an LEA wishes to send a homeless child or youth to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian, the LEA must provide a written explanation of its decision to the parent or guardian, together with a statement regarding the right to appeal the placement decision.”² In accordance with the federal compliance guidelines, LFLA will use the following feasibility factors in determining the best interests of a homeless student: age of the child or youth; travel distance and time and its impact upon the student’s education; student safety issues; special instructional needs, including special education; amount of time of an anticipated stay in a temporary housing or other temporary location; and time left in the remainder of the school year.

² *Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, Title VII-B of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act, (p 14)*
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/guidance.pdf>

LFLA follows federal law along with compliance guidelines from the federal and state government in identifying qualified homeless students. This means “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence will be considered homeless” [M-V: 725). In addition, the Missouri Department of Education outlines additional homeless circumstances in their brochure titled, *Educating Missouri’s Homeless Children*.³ Some of these circumstances include the following: the sharing of housing due to a housing loss or economic hardship; children and youth living in temporary housing including, but not limited to motels, hotels, emergency and transitional shelters; students living in public or private places that were not designed for regular sleeping and living; those children living in public places, such as, cars, parks, public places and abandoned building; and lastly those migratory children living in circumstances described above and expanded upon in compliance guidelines.

LFLA also adheres to the rights of homeless children Under the McKinney-Vento Act. These rights are outlined in the *Educating Missouri’s Homeless Children* brochure previously referenced. These rights include the following:

- The right to immediate enrollment in school even if they lack the paperwork normally required for enrollment.
- The right to attend school at their school of origin (if feasible and requested by the parent) or at the school in the attendance area where the family or youth is currently residing.
- The right to receive transportation to the school of origin if requested by the parent.
- The right to services comparable to those received by housed schoolmates including transportation and supplemental educational services.
- The right to attend school along with children not experiencing homelessness. Segregation based on a student’s status as homeless is strictly prohibited.
- The right to have their rights posted in all schools and in other places in the community.

The implementation of McKinney-Vento requires that school districts have a board approved homeless coordinator. LFLA’s board approved homeless coordinator is also the academy’s Deputy Director. As homeless coordinator, it is the deputy director’s responsibility to ensure the following: appropriate identification of homeless children by school personnel and other support entities and agencies; enrollment and “equal opportunity” of homeless children to succeed in the school; eligibility and receipts of all educational services provided by the local educational agency and referral to other appropriate support services; providing information and opportunities for the parents and guardians of homeless children to participate in their education; notice of the rights of homeless students and parents is disseminated and displayed in appropriate and relevant locations; enrollment disputes are appropriately mediated in accordance with the law; and homeless students are provided the appropriate transportation services.

³ *Educating Missouri’s Homeless Children*, <http://dese.mo.gov/qs/gr/homeless/documents/11-homeless-brochure.pdf>

LFLA recognizes it has a legal and moral responsibility to remove barriers to the educational success of homeless students. When it comes to transportation, students identified as homeless will be provided travel accommodations when it is in the best interest of the student to continue his/her education at LFLA. In addition, transportation will be provided to students when their homeless identification is in dispute or when there is an appeal to a determination that continuing educational services at LFLA is not in the best interest of the child's education. In addition, the school does not prevent an incomplete or missing immunization history from preventing homeless students from attending. It is one of the primary responsibilities of the homeless coordinator to assist homeless students and families in obtaining required immunizations. A formal board policy on immunizations for homeless children is in development. LFLA attests that homeless children and youth will have full access to all LFLA programs and activities. In addition, Title I funds will be used to help assist homeless students in overcoming challenges often not faced by housed students. Lastly, LFLA has a board adopted policy for the resolution of disputes in the education of homeless children. LFLA recognizes that decisions regarding the education of homeless children are subject to appeal. The policy describes procedures for the resolution of disputes based upon guidance from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.⁴

⁴ DESE Guidance on Resolution of Disputes Procedures, <http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/fedprog/documents/qs-fedprog-hmls-complaint-resolution-process.pdf>

A.7: School-Specific Goals and Objectives

LFLA sets high standards for student performance by aligning the academic goals of all schools to Missouri's assessed standards in the form of MAP and EOC testing. As mentioned previously in the curriculum section, the middle and high school are in the process of revising and aligning curriculum and instruction to the newly adopted *Missouri Learning Standards*. The elementary school curriculum is in the beginning stages of development. Based on the work of the elementary committee, the school will have an expeditionary learning and standards-based focus. LFLA is committed to continuous improvement of its educational program through the setting of measurable objectives in all its schools and at each grade level. As a public charter school, student proficiency on the MAP and EOC are the most significant measures of evaluating the Academy's overall performance and improvement. This includes yearly performance data, but also the tracking of students and/or graduates over time.

In addition to the goals described in this charter, LFLA has worked with its previous sponsor to develop a performance contract pursuant to state law. The performance contract included both academic and organizational expectations. The performance contract has been used to set ambitious, yet attainable targets intended to yield continuous school improvement. The school measures its level of success in relation to both attainment and progress towards the performance targets included in the contract. With the adoption of the fifth version of the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP 5), LFLA and sponsor goals were aligned to MSIP 5 metrics. These standards and metrics were included in LFLA's most recently approved charter and this charter renewal document.

Effective goal setting and performance planning requires using all available student and school performance data in developing and evaluating charter-sponsor performance contracts. Meeting and/or demonstrating progress toward performance contract expectations will mean that LFLA students are consistently achieving and growing academically. In addition, this achievement and growth will mean that students are meeting or progress towards expectations that regularly meet or exceed the performance of demographically similar schools and districts, including charter LEAs.

One method for evaluating LFLA's student achievement is to compare its MAP and EOC Index scores to St. Louis Public Schools. The table below describes LFLA's MAP Performance Index (MPI) scores compared to the St. Louis Public schools for 2013 and 2014. Since new MAP assessments were administered in 2015, this data has been omitted. Beginning in 2013, MSIP 5 guidelines calculated MPI scores by weighing the performance of students by achievement level with a strong emphasis on minimizing the number of students who scored in the below basic category. Although LFLA's data begins with newly enrolled sixth graders for which the academy has minimal educational influence over, the data demonstrates that LFLA was able to outperform SLPS' k-12 performance in 2013 and 2014.

Table A.7.1 MAP Performance Index Scores of LFLA Students Compared to St. Louis Public School Students (SLPS), 2013-2014

	2014 ELA	2013 ELA		2014 Math	2013 Math
LFLA (Gr. 6-12 Only)	311.6	301		304.6	289.2
SLPS (Gr. 3-12)	293.9	292.7		279.5	278.7

In addition to overall MPI performance, LFLA high school students are generally outperforming SLPS students at the high school level. Where the performance of LFLA students has been lower than those in SLPS, the proficiency rates of LFLA students have been improving. The table below shows the proficiency rates of LFLA and SLPS high school students on the state’s end of course exams in Algebra I, English II, Biology, and Government.

End of Course (EOC) Performance Comparison of LFLA to SLPS, 2013-2015

	Lift for Life Academy				St. Louis Public Schools		
	2015	2014	2013		2015	2014	2013
Alg 1	71.2%	50.9%	44.9%		46.7%	28.8%	35.3%
Eng. II	55%	53.5%	40.8%		50.9%	52.9%	41.6%
Bio.	55.6%	28.6%	35%		46.2%	30%	43.7
Govt.	48.5%	37.7%	24.7%		38.8%	31.3%	25.8%

LFLA’s middle and high school exist to end the cycle of generational poverty that affects so many of our students and their families by providing them with a quality educational experience. Our academic goals and performance targets align directly to our mission of being “a challenging and supportive learning community where all students are valued and empowered to maximize their full potential as students, citizens, and productive members of society.” We understand that our student population predominantly consists of economically disadvantaged African American students. Our student population also includes students with disabilities, and we are committed to providing all of them with the best educational experience possible as well (see section A.6: *Special Student Populations* for additional information).

Closing national achievement gap trends that affect almost all of our students means improving student learning among students who often test several grades below. As mentioned previously, LFLA’s current model of beginning with the sixth grade results in minimal educational influence over students in the years leading up to middle school

MAP testing. Based on NWEA data, upwards of 75% of our incoming sixth graders regularly test 3 grade levels or more behind in reading and mathematics. This data has been consistent and aligns to MAP performance. Even going back to 2011, DESE’s growth project trend data indicated that only 15% (12/78) of our students tested in the sixth grade had earned a score of proficient or advanced on the 5th grade MAP test in Communication Arts. Only 10% (8/78) of our sixth grade students achieved proficiency or above on the 5th grade MAP test in math. In 2012, this same cohort of students improved their proficiency rate to 16.5% in communication arts and 35.3% in Mathematics. LFLA believes that these gains indicate growth in individual students’ learning and improvement in the overall instructional program. Data such as this also illustrates the impact that LFLA could have in closing the achievement gap for more students by teaching them at the elementary level.

The school understands that the mission and work of Lift for Life Academy to close the achievement gap is difficult, yet essential. The school expects to meet the performance expectations of the Missouri Charter Public Schools Commission (MCPSC) as its sponsor. This includes performing well on metrics that align to the state’s evaluation criteria, but also setting ambitious, yet attainable goals that account for academic and organizational growth and progress over time. The consequences for goals, growth and progress not achieved is that MCPSC may initiate various levels of intervention, such as, probationary status or the development of various “school turn-around” strategies.

LFLA has summarized its goals in the table below. These goals and objectives are aligned to MAP and EOC performance expectations as described in the MSIP 5 guidelines. Additional goals and objectives may be designed in collaboration with the school’s sponsor and based on new data trends associated with the state’s implementation of a newly revised MAP assessment in 2017-2018. The elementary expansion timeline may also require additions and /or revisions to the existing goals based on when students begin MAP testing within the five-year window. For example, the first projected elementary class of LFLA first graders would not start school until the 2017-2018 school year. This means that this cohort would not begin MAP testing until the end of their third grade year in 2020. With that being said, the goals as presented align closely with the state’s APR targets as described in the MSIP 5 guidelines. Consistently meeting and/or showing progress towards the goals described below would result in LFLA earning at least 70% of the possible Annual Performance Report (APR) possible and thus meeting the state’s benchmark for public school district accreditation.

Table A.7.1: Summary of Five-Year Charter Term Performance Goals Based on APR Targets

Academic Achievement	<p>MSIP 5: LFLA middle school will achieve MAP performance levels that are equivalent to “Approaching” status and/or “Approaching” growth in communication arts and math.</p>
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	<p>LFLA high school will achieve EOC performance levels that are equivalent to “On-track” status and/or “On-track” progress on the Algebra I and English II tests.</p> <p>LFLA high school students will achieve EOC performance levels that are equivalent to “On-track” status and/or “On-track” progress in social studies based on EOC Government performance.</p> <p>LFLA students will meet at least the achievement targets set to earn points for “Approaching” on status and/or “Approaching” progress in science based on combined 8th grade MAP and high school Biology EOC performance.</p> <p>(Subgroup Achievement) LFLA students will meet at least the achievement targets set to earn points for “Approaching” status and/or “Approaching” growth based on MAP performance middle school in math and communication arts.</p> <p>(Subgroup Achievement) LFLA students will meet at least the achievement targets set to earn points for “Approaching” status and/or “Approaching” progress based on Algebra I and English II EOC performance.</p> <p>(Subgroup Achievement) LFLA students will meet at least the achievement targets set to earn points for “Approaching” status and/or “Approaching” progress for 8th grade MAP science and Biology EOC performance.</p>
<p>College and Career Ready</p>	<p>MSIP 5: (CCR 3.1-3*) The percent of high school graduates scoring at or above the state standard on ACT, SAT, COMPASS and/or ASVAB will achieve at least “Approaching” status.</p> <p>(CCR 3.4*) The percent of graduates receiving college credit through advanced credit courses and/or dual college enrollment will result in “Approaching” status.</p> <p>(CCR 5-6*) The percent of graduates enrolled in a two/four-year college/university, the military, and/or technical trade school will be at least “Approaching” on status and/or demonstrate annual progress.</p>

Attendance	<p>MSIP 5: The percent of LFLA students who are in attendance 90% of the time or greater will meet at least the state achievement target for “Approaching” status and/or meet the target for “Approaching” progress.</p>

Table A.7.2: Financial Performance Goals

Goal/Performance Target	Metric	Time-Frame
LFLA will end each operating year with a 3% cash reserve by dividing the school's ending fund balance by its operating expenses.	Monthly reports from Westbrook Accounting and DESE's Annual Secretary of the Board Report (ASBR).	2017-2021
LFLA will be financially managed, per the approved budget, to result in a budget surplus at the close of each fiscal (minus fiscal commitment associated with facilities expansion).	Same as above.	2017-2021
LFLA 's governing board will complete and approve a balanced budget based on valid evidence-based assumptions for revenues and expenditures 30 days prior to the end of the fiscal year.	Board vote and Budget Submission	2017-2021
LFLA will receive an independent auditor's report absent of material findings.	Westbrook Accounting	2017-2021

Promotion Criteria Middle and High

LFLA's philosophy and dedication to student achievement requires LFLA staff to do whatever it takes to ensure that students have the opportunity to progress to the next

grade level and eventually graduate. At the middle school level, promotion determinations reflect a student’s cumulative performance using all available data.

Promotion determinations are made using the following criteria:

- Successfully meeting curriculum content and skill objectives as taught and assessed by the classroom teacher. Each student’s level of success is assigned a grade that appears on the student’s report card quarterly.
- Current and historical performance trends assessed by the standardized NWEA assessment for reading and mathematics;
- An analysis of IEP goals and progress, when applicable, that are measured using the standardized NWEA assessment for reading and mathematics; and
- An analysis of current and historical performance on the middle school MAP.

When students fall short of performance expectations, an overall analysis of student learning is performed to determine if the student is growing academically. Any student who fails any core subject area twice during the school year garners a promotion review. Following a data review and prior to a final retention determination, a student might be required to complete additional coursework independently or as part of mandatory summer school. A student may also be retested using the NWEA assessment or another standardized benchmark in order draw as accurate a conclusion as possible about the student’s skills and content knowledge in relation to their grade level prior to retention.

At the high school level, the core value of teachers and administrators that accepting failure is not an option for our students is the same, but the credit system results in a significantly different process for evaluating the academic standing of students. LFLA students must earn twenty-six credits in the appropriate content areas in order to graduate. The state of Missouri requires a minimum of twenty-four credits (the table below replicates the graduation table in section A.3). In addition, student EOC results are incorporated into students’ final grades in tested subject areas. This ensures students demonstrate their level of mastery towards state standards.

A student who does not earn the LFLA minimum of required credits in the required subject areas will not be permitted to graduate. The high school utilizes several strategies to ensure that students who are behind in credits have an opportunity to graduate. First, the school attempts to provide several summer courses at LFLA that offer credit recovery opportunities for students. Secondly, counselors and administrators assist students and parents in the enrollment of summer school programs offered at other locations throughout the city. Lastly, the school may use a virtual learning program, such as E-20/20 from Edgenuity, to provide students the opportunity to work and learn independently and eventually earn the required credit(s) to graduate within four years timeframe.

Table 26: LFLA Credit Requirements Compared to the State of Missouri

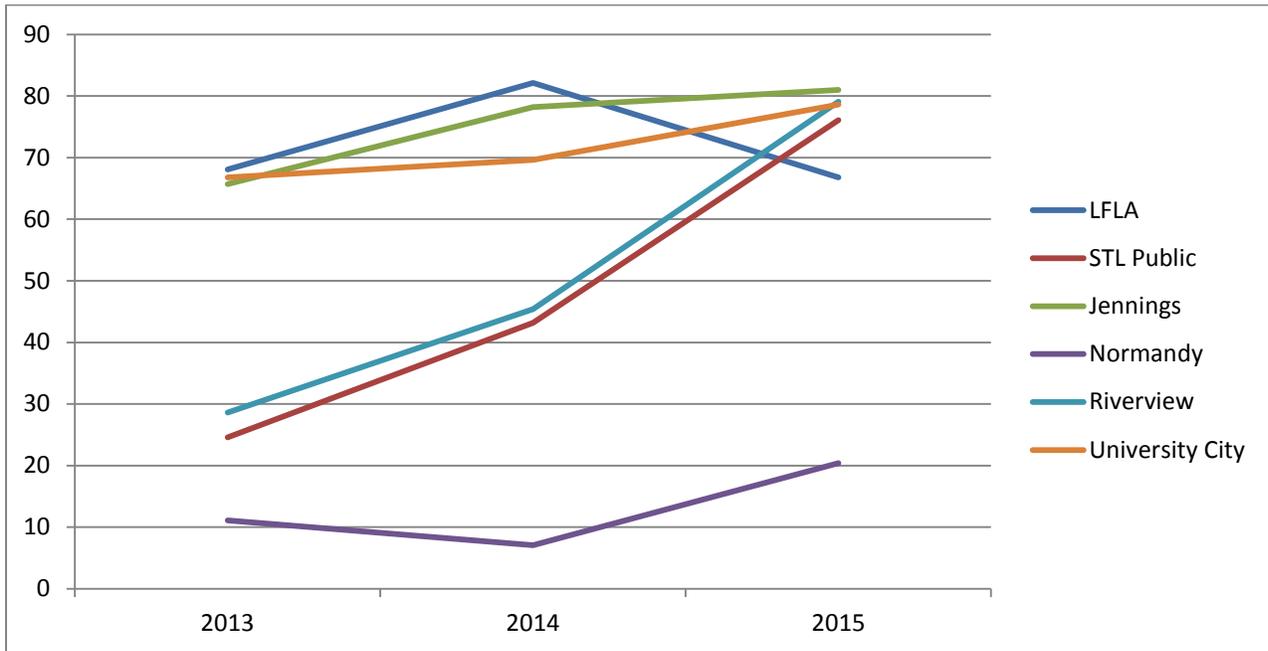
Subject Area	LFLA	State of Missouri
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Communication Arts	4	4
Social Studies	3	3
Mathematics	4	3
Science	3	3
Fine Arts	1	1
Practical Arts	1	1
Physical Education	1	1
Health Education	0.5	0.5
Personal Finance *	0.5	0.5
Public Speaking	0.5	0
Senior Composition	1	0
Electives	6.5	7
Total	26	24

*Indicates personal finance may count as meeting half a unit of credit for social studies, practical art or as an elective.

The data presented in this exhibit reflects charts and tables that have been previously included in the application's text narrative along with explanation and analysis.

St. Louis Area APR Comparison, 2013-2015



Three-Year Average of Annual Performance Report Scores, 2013-2015

District/Charter LEA	APR Average
<i>Lift for Life Academy</i>	72.3
<i>St. Louis Public</i>	48
<i>Jennings</i>	75
<i>Normandy</i>	12.9
<i>Riverview</i>	51
<i>University City</i>	71.7

MAP Performance Index Scores of LFLA Students Compared to St. Louis Public School Students (SLPS), 2013-2014*

	2014 ELA	2013 ELA		2014 Math	2013 Math
LFLA (Gr. 6-12 Only)	311.6	301		304.6	289.2
SLPS (Gr. 3-12)	293.9	292.7		279.5	278.7

*with the introduction of a new middle school MAP assessment in 2015, this data was omitted from the table.

DESE Annual Performance Report Growth Ratings for LFLA, 6-8

	Math	Com Arts
2013	Exceeding	Floor
2014	Exceeding	Approaching
2015	Exceeding	Floor

End of Course (EOC) Performance Comparison of LFLA to SLPS, 2013-2015

	Lift for Life Academy				St. Louis Public Schools		
	2015	2014	2013		2015	2014	2013
Alg 1	71.2%	50.9%	44.9%		46.7%	28.8%	35.3%
Eng. II	55%	53.5%	40.8%		50.9%	52.9%	41.6%
Bio.	55.6%	28.6%	35%		46.2%	30%	43.7
Govt.	48.5%	37.7%	24.7%		38.8%	31.3%	25.8%

Table A.3.5 2015 End of Course Exam (EOC) Proficiency Rate Comparison

(LFLA to St. Louis Public and Statewide Averages for the Black and Free and Reduced Lunch Subgroups¹)

	2015 LFLA High School (Proficient & Advanced Percentage)	2015 St. Louis Public Schools (Proficient & Advanced)	2015 Statewide Average for Free & Reduced Lunch (Proficient & Advanced)	2015 Statewide Average for Black/African American Students (Proficient & Advanced)
Algebra I	71.4%	46.7%	61.8 %	31%
English II	55.6%	50.9%	73%	53.4%
Biology	55.4%	46.2%	74.8%	48.2%
Government	48.5%	38.8%	63.4%	39.4%

LFLA High School End of Course Exam Performance, 2011-15

EOC Subject Area	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Biology	55.4%	28.6%	35%	n/a	10.6%
Government	48.5%	37.7%	24.7%	n/a	n/a
English II	55.6%	53.5%	40.8%	49.3%	58.1%
Algebra I	71.4%	50.9%	44.9%	54%	74

Overview of Graduates Enrollment by Entry Grade Level 2012-2016*

Graduation Year	Number of Graduates	Number of Graduates by Grade First Enrolled @ LFLA						
		12	11	10	9	8	7	6
2016	74	3	6	0	13	4	7	41
2015	67	1	2	2	16	7	14	25
2014	83	4	5	0	11	9	9	45
2013	66	3	4	4	11	4	12	28
2012	73	3	0	8	12	6	9	35

¹ Data obtain through DESE's *Missouri Comprehensive Data System*. Please note that data is not available through MCDS that combines the Free and Reduced Lunch and Black/African American subgroups.

Improved Academic Performance for LFLA Graduates

Class of 2016 Data Points

- 58% (18 of 31) of students who achieved a Communication Arts achievement level of “Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve “Proficient or Advanced” on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school English II end of course exam.
- 88% (7 of 8) of students who achieved a Communication Arts achievement level of “Below Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve “Basic or Proficient” on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school English II end of course exam.
- 60% (26 of 44) of students who attended LFLA at the 6th or 7th grade achieved “Proficient or Advanced” on the high school English II end of course exam.
- 70% (19 of 27) of students who achieved a Math achievement level of “Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve “Proficient or Advanced” on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school Algebra I end of course exam.
- 75% (9 of 12) of students who achieved a Math achievement level of “Below Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve “Basic or Proficient” on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school Algebra I exam.
- 65% (30 of 46) of students who attended LFLA at the 6th or 7th grade achieved “Proficient or Advanced” on the high school Algebra I end of course exam.

Class of 2015 Data Points

- 41% (11 of 27) students who achieved a Communication Arts achievement level of “Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve “Proficient or Advanced” on the 8th grade MAP or high school English II end of course exam.
- 100% (7 of 7) students who achieved a Communication Arts achievement level of “Below Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade level on the MAP went on to achieve “Basic or Proficient” on the 8th grade MAP or high school English II end of course exam.
- 46% (16 of 35) students who attended LFLA at the 6th or 7th grade levels achieved “Proficient or Advanced” on the high school English II end of course exam.
- 67% (18 of 27) students who achieve a Math achievement level of “Basic” in the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve “Proficient or Advanced” on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school Algebra I end of course exam.

- 100% (5 of 5) students who achieved a Math achievement level of “Below Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade level on the MAP went on to achieve “Basic or Proficient” on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school English II end of course exam.
- 55% (18 of 33) students who attended LFLA at 6th or 7th grade levels achieved “Proficient or Advanced” on the high school Algebra I end of course exam.

Class of 2014

- 50% (18 of 36) of students who achieved a Communication Arts achievement level of “Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve “Proficient or Advanced” on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school English II end of course exam.
- 92% (11 of 12) of students who achieved a Communication Arts achievement level of “Below Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve “Basic or Proficient” on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school English II end of course exam.
- 46% (24 of 52) of students who attended LFLA at the 6th or 7th grade achieved “Proficient or Advanced” on the high school English II end of course exam.
- 63% (24 of 38) of students who achieved a Math achievement level of “Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve “Proficient or Advanced” on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school Algebra I end of course exam.
- 86% (12 of 14) of students who achieved a Math achievement level of “Below Basic” at the 6th or 7th grade on the MAP went on to achieve “Basic or Proficient” on the 8th grade MAP and/or high school Algebra I exam.
- 50% (26 of 52) of students who attended LFLA at the 6th or 7th grade achieved “Proficient or Advanced” on the high school Algebra I end of course exam.

NWEA Performance Analysis by Graduating Class

The Northwestern Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) is a computerized adaptive assessment that produces both growth and achievement data that teachers utilize in their planning process. The MAP assessment produces a RIT score that aligns with an equivalent grade-level range that can be utilized for longitudinal growth analysis. This test is administered two to three times per year from grades 6 – 10. The RIT scores or grade-level equivalencies do not have a 1:1 correlation to Achievement Levels on State Exams but they are useful in determining individual student growth and cohort progress.

Class of 2016 Data Points

- The number of students performing at Grade Level in Reading increased from 13 to 26(100% increase) over the four-year test administration window.
- 78% (37 out of 47) of students made at least four years' worth of growth and/or tested on grade level by the 10th Grade in Reading.
- The number of students performing at Grade Level in Math increased from 12 to 26 (116% increase) over the four-year test administration window.
- 57% (27 out of 47) of students made at least four years' worth of growth and/or tested on grade level by the 10th Grade in Math.

Class of 2015 Data Points

- The number of students performing at Grade Level in Reading increased from 14 to 27(93% increase) over the four-year test administration window.
- 75% (33 out of 44) of students made at least four years' worth of growth and/or tested on grade level by the 9th Grade in Reading.
- The number of students performing at Grade Level in Math increased from 7 to 28 (300% increase) over the four-year test administration window.
- 68% (30 out of 44) of students made at least four years' worth of growth and/or tested on grade level by the 9th Grade in Math.

A.8: School Climate and Discipline

Paired with its devotion to improve student achievement, LFLA is committed to providing a quality educational environment that is safe and secure.¹ It is also a commitment of LFLA to value all students and empower them to maximize their full potential as citizens and productive members of society. As students grow towards responsible citizenship and independence, they must develop acceptable behavior traits that show progress toward an understanding of both the respect for authority and the rights of others. As part of this learning process, students must be held accountable for their actions and recognize that there are consequences for their choices, both good and bad. The following behavior infractions and consequences have been developed with the participation, views, and advice of parents, teachers, school administrators, and students. This section is a collaborative effort that defines the behavioral expectations for students and provides information to them and their parents relating to these expectations and the penalties for violations. Please note that the following policy is a guideline, subject to any mitigating or aggravating circumstances. In all cases, each principal preserves the right to make the final decision regarding any disciplinary action at the school. Ultimately, school discipline and culture are supported by our three pillars of ***Educate, Empower and Uplift***.

At Lift For Life Academy, we...

- Wear our uniforms properly and proudly
- Come prepared and on time to class everyday
- Treat everyone with respect no matter how we might feel at the time
- Take pride in doing our own work and succeeding
- Take responsibility for our actions and recognize there are consequences.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support

Lift for Life Academy utilizes many elements of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support systems. First and foremost, students are taught school-wide expectations (beginning with the three pillars of ***Educate, Empower, and Uplift***), all designed to increase student engagement and achievement. Teachers are trained and also collaborate to design these lessons prior to the school year beginning. Students that continuously demonstrate these appropriate behaviors are celebrated and rewarded throughout the year. Lift for Life Academy provides tiered levels of support for all students. These supports often reflect an intersection of PBIS and Rtl strategies and supports. Some supports are part of school wide systems, including group rewards and interventions. At the same time, it is also important to provide students individualized supports as part of systematic intervention and behavioral reinforcement.

¹ Strong feelings of safety and climate were conveyed in both parent and student survey's from LFLA's biennial program evaluation in 2016 through University of Washington's Center for Strong Schools.

Teacher Discipline

It is expected that the first level of student discipline will come from the teacher within the classroom. LFLA teachers utilized a variety of school-wide strategies derived from Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion*. Since 2014, teachers have received differentiated professional development to effectively train in these techniques. The techniques are designed to help classrooms run efficiently, engage students in learning, and increase student achievement. The "Best Practice" techniques are designed to re-engage students in the learning and maximize valuable classroom time. This training is led by teacher leaders as well as administrative staff.

Other teacher-driven discipline strategies include parent phone calls and behavioral conferences, time-out (or buddy) rooms, among others. Any misbehavior that results in the aforementioned consequences is documented by the teacher as a Student Incident Report (SIR). When the student accumulates 3 SIRs, a referral is written and submitted to administration. This purpose of the SIRs is to document and track the effectiveness of teacher interventions and monitor overall student behavior. This data is utilized by teachers and administration to determine appropriate supports and interventions for students. It is also an important tool for teachers and administrators in communicating behavioral concerns effectively to parents.

Administrative Action

When inappropriate behavioral patterns continue and/or escalate, this warrants administrative action that may include the following consequences:

In-School Suspension

An administrator, as a result of certain disciplinary or attendances violations, assigns in-school suspension. While in In-School Suspension, students complete a reflection about their behavior, a writing prompt, and work from their classes. Students who fail to behave appropriately are enlisted for a mandatory parent meeting, and reassigned In-School Suspension for the next day.

Out of School Suspension

Missouri statute provides clear direction regarding discipline policies (R.S.Mo 160.261), including the suspension and expulsion of students (R.S.Mo 167.161, 167.164, 167.17, also see the Missouri Safe Schools Act). LFLA follows all applicable guidelines in state law regarding school discipline policies, including the notification of criminal conduct (R.S.Mo 168.071). LFLA makes every effort to avoid removing students from the school and limiting their learning time but will base its most severe interventions on the guidelines provided in state law.

The general term “suspension” refers to out-of-Academy suspension. The number of days assigned refers to days in which the academy is in session. When suspended, the student is deprived of all the privileges of attending the Academy. This includes participating in classes, participating in or attending any extracurricular activities, or attending or participating in any Academy-sponsored functions whether on campus or at another facility for a determined number of days up to and including 180 Academy days (JGD). Students have the opportunity to make up missed work due to out-of-school suspension. The Academy reserves the right to request a mandatory conference following any out-of-school suspension, and the student may not return to class until the conference takes place. Students who have been suspended may not be on any Academy property or attend any Academy function whether on campus or off campus during the period of the suspensions, unless authorized to do so by a principal or the Executive Director.

Success Academy

As an alternative to suspensions, some students are assigned to Success Academy. Students are assigned to Success Academy rather than a suspension consisting of many days out of school. While in Success Academy, students have the opportunity to work towards various curriculum goals through online Edgenuity program and under the supervision of LFLA faculty and staff. The online curriculum provides students with guided lessons (including videos), practice assignments, and assessments (see section A.9.3 for additional information). LFLA may also develop an individualized learning plan for students that utilizes both the Edgenuity program and classroom resources.

Expulsion

When all other means of correction have failed or the continued presence of a student causes a danger to the physical safety of others, LFLA will consider expulsion (see Missouri Safe Schools Act). As stated in the Missouri statutes, only the Board of Education can authorize expulsion. State law provides for full due process rights as part of the expulsion process. As described in the statutes, an expulsion represents full removal of the student from a school or district’s educational program.

Overview of Disciplinary Guidelines

In an effort to build and maintain a consistent environment for all students, LFLA teachers and staff follow procedures and guidelines regarding behavior and discipline outlined in the student and parent handbook. The parent and student handbook is distributed at the beginning of each school year. Table A.8.1 represents an overview of disciplinary guidelines from the handbook. For additional information, see the Student and Parent Handbook, including the student discipline policy, in the exhibit section (Exhibit A.8.1).

Table A.8.1: LFLA Disciplinary Procedures

Student Behaviors	Definition	Teacher Responses
<i>Cheating</i>	Using, submitting or attempting to obtain data or answers dishonestly or by means other than those authorized by the teacher	1 st offense-Students will receive a zero until alternate assignment is completed. Parental contact will be made. 2 nd offense-Office referral, a parent conference will probably be required
<i>Class Disruption</i>	action that disrupts the orderly and safe environment of a classroom	1 st offense – Verbal direction/student conference 2 nd offense – loss of privileges/student conference/parent contact 3 rd offense – Discipline Referral Form to Dean.
<i>Computer Misuse Level 1</i>	engaging in non-educational or non-approved use of school computers.	1 st offense – Student Conference/Parent notified 2 nd offense – Student prohibited from future use of school computers
<i>Computer Misuse Level 2</i>	hacking, loading/unloading unauthorized programs, unauthorized entry into teacher/student files, unauthorized manipulation of software and/or hardware configurations, etc.	1 st offense-Referral to Dean/Administrator
<i>Dress Code</i>	Dressing or grooming in a manner that disrupts the teacher and learning of others: short shorts, midriff revealing tops, muscle shirts, fishnet shirts, sagging pants, headgear of any kind, sunglasses, shirts with inappropriate designs or wording.	1 st Offense- Student conference/re-direction; Refusal to comply will result in automatic referral to an administrator/dean. 2 nd Offense-Referral to an administrator/dean
<i>Electronic Devices</i>	See Student Handbook where applicable. Electronic devices are not to be used in the classroom unless otherwise stated by the classroom teacher for educational purposes. Teachers should confiscate the item and turn it into the Dean.	HIGH SCHOOL 1 st offense – Teacher ask for device and refusal to comply will be immediate administrator referral. Student may pick up device at the end of the day. 2 nd offense – Turned into an administrator and parent may be required to pick it up. 3 rd offense – Turned into an administrator and parent may be required to pick it up. MIDDLE SCHOOL 1 st offense- Teacher asks for device and refusal to comply will be immediate administrator referral. Parent must pick

		up device
<i>Forgery</i>	Writing the name of another person or altering times, dates, grades, or passes.	1 st offense- Teachers should confiscate the forged item and turn it into the Dean with a discipline referral form.
<i>Gambling</i>	Playing any game of chance or skill for money or items of value.	1 st offense- Teacher should confiscate the gaming devices and any money on sight, write a discipline referral form and refer student to the Dean.
<i>Littering</i>	Throwing of paper, trash, or other materials on the floor inside of the school or on the grounds outside of the school.	1 st offense-Referred to Dean for Campus Clean Up
<i>Profanity</i>	Swearing, cursing or making obscene gestures.	Any profanity used in the classroom should be reported immediately to an administrator. Disciplinary action may vary behavioral history and incident context
<i>Tardiness</i>	Arriving at class after the designated time	1 st offense – Friendly reminder, loss of classroom privileges (true for all offenses) 2 nd offense – loss of classroom privileges (true for all offenses) 3 rd offense –Call home to parents 4 th offense- Disciplinary Referral to the Dean of Students.
<i>Verbal Abuse/Bullying</i>	Engaging in name-calling, derogatory statements or gestures toward other students or staff	Depending on severity: 1 st offense – Verbal warning/student conference 2 nd offense – Phone call to parent/student conference 3 rd offense – Disciplinary referral by administrator/dean
<i>Extortion/Coercion</i>		Immediate Referral to an Administrator
<i>Fighting</i>		Immediate Referral to an Administrator
<i>Gang Behavior</i>		Immediate Referral to an Administrator
<i>Gross Insubordination</i>		Immediate Referral to an Administrator
<i>Intoxication or Possession Illegal Substance</i>		Immediate Referral to an Administrator
<i>Smoking</i>		Immediate Referral to an Administrator

<i>Sexual Misconduct</i>	Misconduct in a sexual nature	Immediate Referral to an Administrator
<i>Theft</i>	Stealing	Immediate Referral to an Administrator
<i>Threats</i>		Immediate Referral to an Administrator
<i>Vandalism</i>	deliberately mischievous or malicious destruction or damage of property	Immediate Referral to an Administrator

In implementing the above protocols, LFLA staff are encouraged and trained to be proactive by staying consistent, keeping parents informed, staying calm, developing relationships, and, above all, working together.

Special Education

Students with disabilities may be suspended for violations described in the school’s discipline policy. In compliance with federal and state guidelines, the suspension of students with disabilities for more than ten days will result in an IEP manifestation to determine whether or not the exhibited behavior is a result of the disability. Parents will be informed of the IEP manifestation and invited to participate in meetings prior to any determinations. To determine if a pattern of suspension exists the following criteria are considered: if days removed from school add up to more than ten cumulatively; if the behavior which resulted in suspension is similar to previous behaviors that resulted in removals; and additional factors such as, number of days for each removal, total amount of removal time from school, and correspondence in time of the removals.² For special education students, a suspension in excess of 10 consecutive days or in excess of 10 days cumulatively where a pattern of suspension is created is considered a long-term suspension. The school follows the steps outlined in DESE’s Special Education Discipline Documentation Form to ensure due process and the protection of a student with disabilities’ education.³

Following the appropriate due process, if a long-term suspension is assigned to a special education student, school administrators and special education teachers will work with child’s teacher(s) to determine how educational services will be provided and aligned to meet IEP goals and services.⁴

Family Involvement

LFLA holds that successfully engaging families and increasing their involvement is a critical element to maintaining a positive and safe learning environment. The role that parents play in the education of their child has the potential to strengthen the

² DESE, Special Ed Compliance, <http://dese.mo.gov/se/compliance/Q&A/Discipline.html#one>

³ DESE Special Ed. Discipline Form, dese.mo.gov/se/compliance/MOSample_Forms/documents/Discipline.doc

⁴ DESE, Special Ed Compliance, <http://dese.mo.gov/se/compliance/Q&A/Discipline.html#one>

support provided by schools in improving the educational outcomes of students. When the relationship between the school and family is trusting and collaborative, there are benefits for all but most importantly the student.

In building relationships with current LFLA families and building new relationships with incoming families, LFLA is committed to adhering to Joyce Epstein's six types of parental involvement⁵ as a framework to help educators develop a more comprehensive program of school-family-community partnerships:

- Parenting
- Communicating
- Volunteering
- Learning at Home
- Decision Making
- Collaborating with the Community

Parenting

LFLA strives to assist families by providing parents the resources necessary to better understand child and adolescent development; reinforce the importance of education; and plan for future educational opportunities. In addition, LFLA is committed to working with parents to strengthen a family's home situation in whatever ways possible, such as, access to family counseling and emergency services related to food, shelter, and clothing. By helping parents take care of their families.

By providing services and assistance to parents and families, LFLA is working to promote better understanding and trust amongst families and the school, increase attendance, build parents' knowledge of student development, and integrate both an awareness of the importance of school and self-confidence about parenting.

Communicating

LFLA communicates with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home communications. In doing so, LFLA carries out the following:

- Conferences with every parent at least once a year with follow-ups as needed
- Folders of student work sent home daily at the middle school
- Parent and student pickup of report cards
- Regular broadcasts of important information and dates to parents using the School Reach message service
- Quarterly newsletters
- Parent meetings focused on the post-secondary transition, including financial aid training and assistance
- Surveying of families on students' needs and parent perceptions of LFLA

⁵ Epstein, *Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement* (1995).

Volunteering

LFLA is actively working to improve recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programs. In doing so, the Academy is implementing the following:

- Annual survey to identify interests, talents, and availability of volunteers
- Class parent, telephone tree, or other structures to provide all families with needed information
- Annual review of schedules for students' performances, games, and assemblies to encourage all families to attend as daytime and evening audiences

Through these steps, LFLA's goals are that parents will understand the job of an educator, increase their engagement with their children's academic progress, and have increased opportunity to engage with teachers.

Learning at Home

LFLA provides opportunities to involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-linked activities and decisions. In doing so, LFLA provides the following:

- Information for families on required skills in all subjects at each grade, including standards-based report cards at the elementary and middle school levels.
- Information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home
- Electronic monitoring of student performance through the online Teacher Ease
- Website calendars with daily or weekly activities for parents and students to do at home or in the community

The goal is that students will become self-confident in their ability to learn and will gain a positive attitude about school, parents will understand the curriculum and how they can help, and teachers and staff members will recognize that single-parent, dual-income, and low-income families can all encourage and assist in student learning.

Decision Making

LFLA will make a conscious effort to include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through LFLA's Parent University organization.

- School and district-level advisory from the Parent University
- Parent representative to the board
- Communication of resources designed to improve parent advocacy, including groups to lobby for school reform and improvements

Through the above strategies, investment and awareness are both increased among parents and students. Parents can also become actively involved in LFLA as an organization attempting to meet the needs of its students and larger community.

Collaborating with the Community

Lastly, LFLA makes the effort to coordinate resources and services *for* families, students, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and at the same time provides services *to* the community. In doing so, LFLA provides:

- Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs or services
- Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students
- Participation of alumni in school programs for students
- School-business partnerships

Through such efforts, students become self-confident and feel valued by the community, parents are given the opportunity to interact with and contribute to their community, and teachers and staff gain knowledge on the community they're serving.

A.9.3: Virtual Programs

Introduction to Edgenuity

In accordance with Missouri state statutes (R.S. 162.1250.1-7), Lift for Life Academy has contracted with Edgenuity (formerly known as E-20/20) to provide its students virtual, or online, educational opportunities. The Edgenuity curriculum and instructional program was reviewed and approved by DESE in 2013 for use in grades 6-12 throughout Missouri. LFLA has access to over 100 different courses as part of the Edgenuity program. The school utilizes approximately 40 licenses that provide enough access to all middle and high school students assigned to online classes. Lift for Life Academy has designated the use of the Edgenuity program primarily in the following three ways:

1. **High School Credit Recovery:** Edgenuity is used by LFLA to provide high school students in need of credit recovery the opportunity to take select courses virtually. As a relatively small school, the primary factor in allowing students to participate in the Edgenuity program is course availability at the school and students' individual credit needs. By using the program in this manner, Edgenuity is an extremely valuable tool in making sure that "at-risk" students have the opportunity to advance towards LFLA's graduation requirements.
2. **High School Credit Enhancement:** Edgenuity is used by LFLA to provide high school students wanting to take additional coursework to enhance their depth and breadth of knowledge. Students can take virtual courses that are not part of the regular curriculum or course offerings in a given year. For example, a student may desire to take Art History or French III, which are offered at LFLA.
3. **Alternative Education:** Edgenuity is used by LFLA to provide students the opportunity to supplement or replace regular classroom learning in certain situations. For example, when certain disciplinary consequences have been assigned, such as extended in-school suspension or extended out of school suspension, students may be provided education alternatively through the Edgenuity program. In addition, students who may be disabled or prohibited from coming to school, including extended hospitalization or home bound care, may utilize the on-line program to meet various course and credit requirements. Again, the Edgenuity program represents a valuable tool in making sure that "at-risk" students continue to have access to learning opportunities and progress towards LFLA's graduation requirements.

Technology Access

The Edgenuity program is Internet based and can be accessed virtually anywhere. It is accessible through a variety of mediums that include, but are not limited to the following: PC desktop/PC laptop, iPad, tablet, Chrome Book, and certain Smart phones. The

Edgenuity program is compatible with a variety of operating systems that include, but are not limited to the following: Apple, Microsoft, and Google. Students who have been assigned to the program as part of in-school suspension will be provided daily access to a compatible computer. If the student is participating in the program out of school on a regular basis, then the student may utilize technologies available to them at or near their residence. If there is no technology available to the student to participate in the program, then an equipment contract may be utilized to provide the student access to a school laptop.

Expectations for Virtual Students

The pacing of the Edgenuity program is based on the student's ability to show proficiency relative to the curricular objectives. Proficiency is demonstrated by the student passing assessments that are built into the units of study. Students are expected to achieve 70% accuracy on a unit's assessments before moving forward in an assigned course; however, modifications to this 70% benchmark may periodically take place. The most common reason for modification to the 70% benchmark is to meet various individualized education program (IEP) requirements. Prior to the enrollment of an IEP student in an on-line course, the program coordinator, special education teacher, and classroom teacher of record will meet to discuss the curricular objectives and plan for monitoring performance.

Although the program is self-paced, the program coordinator monitors the performance of participating students. This monitoring is focused on two primary criteria: course completion and accuracy (overall grade). The program coordinator works with teachers, counselors, and principals in communicating success and concerns to students and their parents. Grades are entered on report cards and transcripts that reflect the student's participation and grades within the Edgenuity program. In addition, the program generates individualized progress reports that help describe the student's online participation more accurately. These progress reports are mailed to parents at the end of quarters and at the time in which quarterly progress reports are issued. The program coordinator is the primary point person in working with students and parents in communicating progress and providing technical support as needed. The program coordinator provides students and parents with a cell phone contact so that support can be requested during the regular school day, but also on evenings and weekends.

Students participating in the online program are expected to do so honestly. The program coordinator monitors student performance for various discrepancies that may call into question a student's academic honesty. For example, a student has completed 5% of a given course and within two days the number jumps to 25% completion. Based on the student's previously demonstrated abilities, this may indicate someone else may be doing the work for the student. If a student is suspected of cheating in some form or manner, a teacher-designed assessment that aligns to the content and format of the Edgenuity assessment may be administered to check the student understanding. Students who have demonstrated academic dishonesty in their use of the Edgenuity program may face a variety of consequences that include, but are not limited to the

following: assignment of a failing grade, removal from a course, and/or permanent removal from the Edgenuity program.

Meeting State Requirements and Guidelines for Virtual Programs

LFLA intends to meet the following state requirements and guidelines for the operation of virtual programs by enacting the following procedures:

- As mentioned previously, utilizing a virtual curriculum and instructional program that is aligned to the state's learning standards and approved by DESE ensures students are progressing in ways that aligns to the state's performance standards.
- In the awarding of high school credit, students are required to complete 50% of a course for ½ a year's credit and 100% of a course for a full year's credit.
- Certified teachers who meet highly qualified teacher requirements are assigned to the on-line courses in which a student is enrolled. The assigned teacher is to serve as the student's subject area contact, which includes providing guidance and support.
- The Edgenuity program coordinator will serve as technical monitor and work with classroom teachers to provide training and professional development. In addition, the coordinator may work with the classroom teacher in selecting units of study that align to the regular classroom's curriculum scope and sequence.
- The Edgenuity coordinator will serve as a technical monitor and thus responsible for assisting students with technical issues related to the program (including student logins and passwords). Technical monitoring will also include working with teachers, counselors, and administrators in the monitoring of student progress and assigning of grades to the report card or transcript as long as the student is participating in the on-line program. In addition, the technical monitor is also responsible for monitoring irregularities associated with the program that may indicate inappropriate participation by the student. This was previously mentioned in the section on student expectations.
- The on-line course requirements and/or resources may be supplemented or added to as part of the program's construction. Teachers, administrators, and the program's coordinator are expected to work together to monitor student performance and ensure grade and course level expectations are met.

B. OPERATIONS

B.1: Missouri Non-Profit

Lift For Life Academy (LFLA), was the first independent Charter middle school in the City of St. Louis which opened in 2000. Many of the school's first students came from struggling traditional public schools and entered LFLA well below grade level in literacy, math, and science. By bringing these students together into a uniquely supportive culture, LFLA sought to create an environment that could empower students to not just "get by" in school, but flourish and maximize their potential. From the beginning, students and parents have caught on to this vision and come to LFLA from all over the city, looking for a safe and high-quality educational option. Today, LFLA continues to serve students who have traditionally struggled to find a better education, with approximately 90 percent of the charter's students qualifying for free and reduced lunch and 99 percent being African American.

Lift For Life Academy is organized as a Missouri nonprofit corporation incorporated pursuant to the Missouri Nonprofit Corporation Act (R.S. MO §355). The School's Articles of Incorporation are included as *Exhibit B.1-1*. A copy of the school's IRS Determination Letter is included as *Exhibit B.1-2*. The governing board of directors has adopted a set of corporate by-laws which are included as *Exhibit B.1-3*. The by-laws set forth the method of election of officers of the Board, consistent with R.S. MO §355.326.

The Board will be accountable to The Missouri Charter Public School Commission, the School's sponsor, for the success of the School. Board members will share an unwavering belief in the School's mission, a thorough understanding of the School's charter and its promise to deliver academic excellence and an effective plan governing oversight of the School's academic performance and financial status. Board members understand that they serve as stewards of public finances and public trust and that they are decision-making public servants as defined in R.S. MO §105.450 for purposes of the financial disclosure requirements.

In order to provide a quality education to all students, Lift For Life Academy and the Board of Directors operates as a local education agency (LEA) and works in compliance with all state statutes regarding charter school governance and administration, including the following:

- 105.450 (conflict of interest, decision-making public servants)
- 105.483, 105.485, 105.487, 105.489 (financial disclosure)
- 160.400 (charter school definition)
- 160.405 (charter application, operation, and oversight)
- 160.410 (admissions and public information)
- 160.420 (employment, contracts, and certification)
- 355, R.S.Mo (non-profit corporation)
- 355.326 (election of officers)

- 537.700 – 537.756 (MO public entity risk management fund)
- 610.010 – 610.035 (quasi-public government body, Sunshine Law)

The focus of LFLA's Board of Directors is to uphold the mission of the school, provide governance to the organization, represent the school in the community, and ensure the Academy fulfills all legal obligations. Board members' responsibilities include, but are not limited to: setting the school's strategic direction, setting policy, evaluating the school's leadership and overseeing planning, management, operations and finance.

The Board of Directors' roles and responsibilities are explained in further detail under *B.2 Governing Board Composition*.

To maintain the safety of all students and uphold the integrity of the Academy, LFLA conducts criminal background and Family Care Safety Registry (child abuse) checks on all future and current board members and employees as required by R.S. MO §160.400. All board members file annual forms to the Missouri Ethics Commission. See *Exhibit B.2.3* for copies of all Family Care Safety Registry and Criminal Background Checks on all Board Members.

The governing board adheres to the Missouri Sunshine Law in conducting board and committee business. All board meetings are posted to the Public in accordance with the Missouri Sunshine Law.

LFLA will send a copy of the application to the St. Louis Public School District, as it applies for renewal at the state level.

Please see *Exhibit B.1.1* for LFLA's Articles of Incorporation, *Exhibit B.1.2* for a 501(c)(3) IRS Determination Letter of confirmed legal not-for-profit status and *Exhibit B.1.3* for Board of Directors Handbook and Bylaws.

B.2: Governing Board Composition

Lift For Life Academy's Board of Directors

Scott R. Dolan – President – is the Managing Director of US Bank's Private Client Reserve, where he manages money and provides family office services for high net worth families domestically and internationally. Prior to working with US Bank, Scott held executive and officer level positions at leading financial institutions including Wells Fargo, Midwest Bank Centre and Commerce Bank. Scott received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Iowa and his Master's in Business Administration from Washington University in St. Louis.

Tami Fernandez – Vice President – currently volunteers with *Town Meeting for Tomorrow*, where she conducts interviews with high school students for scholarships. She graduated with a Master's degree in Social Work from Washington University in St. Louis, specializing in Family Therapy and Hospital based practice. She earned a second graduate degree in Master of Arts in Jewish Communal Service at the Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles, CA. She has participated and chaired at a variety of organizations including: Clayton Public Schools PTO, St. Louis Hadassah Chapter Board, and the Central Agency for Jewish Education Board.

Gina Wischmeyer – Secretary – is the former Assistant Director of the College School of Webster Groves, which served 300 children from pre-school to 8th grade. She has engaged in a variety of volunteer educational opportunities in the community including: The Family Support Network, The Missouri Botanical Garden, Discovering Options, and President of the Parents Association and member of the Board of Trustees of The College School. Gina earned two Bachelor's degrees (History and Education) from Webster University.

Brian Liberman – Treasurer – is currently serving as Vice President of Commercial Lending at Central Bank of St. Louis. Brian is the past Chairman of the Board for Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri and credits his work ethic and business experience for his success and was recognized by the St. Louis Business Journal in their "40 Under 40" list in 2005. He is a graduate of University of Missouri, Columbia where he received his Bachelor's in Accounting.

Jeff Bensky – is currently the President of JMB Associates, a strategic marketing and development consulting firm focused on integrated health solutions and experience design. He has managed a variety of businesses and projects, specifically focusing in the area of health care. He received his Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Hartford. He earned his Master's and Doctorate in Educational Psychology at the University of Connecticut.

Debbie Champion Snyder – is a founding partner in the firm Rynearson, Suess, Schnurbusch and Champion. She received her Bachelor of Science at Murray State University as well as completing two years of graduate training in clinical psychology.

She received her law degree at Washington University in St. Louis. She founded and oversees “Tools for Schools,” a not-for-profit corporation which distributes supplies to schools; she was also a founding member of “Kids’ Inc.,” which serves underprivileged children in East St. Louis.

Kate Hatfield – is currently a Consultant in clinical effectiveness providing customized support to healthcare organizations, facilities and integrated systems in the area of clinical effectiveness and patient safety. She received her Bachelors and Master’s in science and a Master’s in Health Services Management at Webster University in St Louis and attended George Washington University, Washington DC, Law Preview. She is a member of the Board of Directors of St. Louis Altnheim, American College of Healthcare Executives and National Association of Healthcare Quality.

Laura Kathleen Baker – is currently a Professor at Washington University in Fashion Design helping students create new designs that inspire ready-to-wear. Ms. Baker received her Bachelor of Science in Design, Merchandising and Textiles from Western Kentucky University and completed studies in Art and Fashion Design at Accademia Italiana in Florence, Italy. She also was the founder of the Fashion Design program at Lift For Life Academy in 2008.

Mary Jo Liberstein, Ph.D. – is currently a Coordinator for Professional Learning and Curriculum Development at Lift For Life Academy to help advance the effort to improve student performance and achievement. She worked for the School District of Clayton for 30 years as Assistant Superintendent, Director of Student and Family Services and Director of The Family Center. Mary Jo has a Bachelor of Science, Speech and Language Pathology, Masters of Arts Communication Disorders, has received a certification in School Administration and a Ph.D. in Education, Emphasis in Individual, Marriage and Family Therapy from St. Louis University.

Ernest Banks – is currently a Performance Excellence Manager at Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals. He received his Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering at the Missouri University of Science and Technology, Rolla, MO and his Master of Science in Chemical Engineering at Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, GA. He is a past Board of Director of DeSales Community Housing Corporation and past coach for St. Margaret of Scotland Parish.

John Burke – is the past President of the Board of Directors at Lift For Life Academy. He is a retired Professor of Sociology in the department of urban specializations at Harris-Stowe State University. While teaching Jack participated on and chaired a number of committees focusing on the design and development of urban education. He obtained his Bachelor’s in Philosophy and Doctorate in Sociology from St. Louis University.

Sanford J. Boxerman – is currently a shareholder of the law firm Capes, Sokol, Goodman & Sarachan, P.C. He received his B.S. in Business Administration at Washington University and his J.D. at Harvard Law School. He is a former officer and current board member of Shaare Zedek Synagogue in University City, Missouri. He and his wife were active volunteers at the Solomon Schechter Day School in Creve Coeur, where their children formerly attended. Mr. Boxerman also served as the attorney-coach of the Lafayette High School Mock Trial team, which placed ninth in the State of Missouri.

All board members are aware of their duties and responsibilities as a public servant in accordance with R.S.Mo 105.450. Together, they have a thorough understanding of their roles and how they can best oversee the Academy. In 2010-2011, MCPSA Director Douglas Thaman was enlisted to train the board regarding their roles and responsibilities. Subsequently, the Board changed its schedule from bi-monthly meetings to monthly meetings but the board members continued to participate in MCPSA seminars. In 2015, our school subscribed to Great Boards training, an online program through which our board can access Charter Board Partners' extensive set of governance best practice tools, templates, webinars, expert tips, and additional resources - all aligned with their six Standards for Effective Charter School Governance.

Each month, a board member presents at a designated board meeting on a topic of their choice from Great Boards and share what they have learned. Within each Standard there are numerous different articles, white papers, videos etc. from which to choose. Recently the board has completed updating the board by laws, employee handbook, Strategic Plan and the Master Plan.

Assisted by this extensive and intentional training, LFLA's Board has demonstrated it has the capacity to oversee the successful implementation of the educational program, the effective and responsible management of public funds, and the school's compliance and legal obligations. The Board of Directors implemented a performance plan for The Academy with a focus on: Student Academic Achievement, Curriculum Development, Parent and Community Engagement, Finances, Technology Development and Board Governance. Annually, the Board's Executive Committee, Administrators and Team Leaders present to the Board of Directors pertaining to the current goals/objectives being met/in progress or not met and future planning and goal setting for the upcoming school year.

In managing its fiscal responsibilities, the Board over the past year has taken us from a budget surplus of 436,555 for FY14 to a budget surplus of over 1,052,000 for FY15, which equates to a reserve of 15.57 percent. (This includes the resolution and financial settlement in our favor of a several-year long litigation with the City of St. Louis regarding funds owed to LFLA during the early years of operation.) The Board

additionally receives monthly budget reports and oversees adjustments, as needed, at each meeting. Additionally, as part of its obligation to comply with its legal obligations, LFLA's Board has incorporated a review of all related local, state, and federal regulations into internal board development and training, and each monthly meeting incorporates the identification of related regulatory deadlines.

The board President shall from time to time appoint standing, special or advisory committees as are authorized by the Board of Directors. Each committee shall consist of such number of persons as the Board of Directors deem advisable. All acts of such committees shall be subject to approval of the Board of Directors.

The current Committees are;

Executive Committee; shall ascertain the needs of the board, recruit potential board members, and present possible new members to the Board of Directors at least once a year. This committee consists of Board President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Executive Director.

Education Committee; shall be responsible for the review of education programs of the Corporation.

Operations Committee; shall oversee the operational and technology capabilities, risk management or elimination, and facilitate oversight of the business strategy including facilitating review and update of the strategic plan for full Board approval.

Finance Committee; shall oversee all financial affairs of the organization including reviewing and recommending to the full Board the annual operating and capital budgets.

Development Committee; shall oversee, develop, implement and assist with public relations and fund-raising activities of the Corporation.

Elementary Exploration Committee; shall be responsible for the review of elementary education programs and exploring feasibility planning for facilities and staffing.

Most committees meet monthly or bi-monthly. Other than the Executive Committee, all other committees are comprised of board members, faculty and community leaders that have expertise within the committees need. For example, the Finance Committee has several bank officers, treasurers and accountants that have experience in finances.

Dashboards have been created for each committee to report the progress of their goals. The board receives a committee report that shows the top three to five goals that are color coded to inform the board of trends and if goals are being met or not met.

Diagram 1: Dashboard Sample

FINANCE DASHBOARD FINANCIAL METRICS FY16 FYTD MAY 2016			
Goal Number	Goal Defined	Status	Color Code
<u>Goal#1</u>	<i>LFLA will be financially managed, per the approved budget, to result in a budget surplus at the close of each fiscal year</i>	<i>Within reach, but dev rev low; add'l instructor, bus maint, 1700 rehab high; no pooled FOCUS revenue</i>	
<u>Goal #2</u>	<i>LFLA Governing Board will complete & approve a balanced budget based on valid, evidence-based assumptions 30 days prior to the close of the fiscal year</i>	<i>On Target</i>	
<u>Goal #3</u>	<i>LFLA will always ensure accurate, timely & sufficient filing of required financial reports</i>	<i>On Target</i>	
<u>Goal #4</u>	<i>LFLA will receive an unmodified independent auditor's report with no material findings</i>	<i>Achieved</i>	

Board Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Directors meets monthly; these meetings are open to the public. The overall roles and responsibilities of LFLA's Board of Directors include:

Strategic Planning

- Approve the organization's mission/philosophy and review management's performance in achieving set goals.
- Develop a strategic plan for the organization, which is consistent with the organization's philosophy, and review management's performance in implementing it.

- Annually assess the school’s environment and approve the organization’s strategy in relation to it.
- Regularly review and approve the organization’s plans for funding.
- Review and approve the organization’s long-term financial goals.
- Approve major organizational policies.

Personnel /Board Development

- Hire, monitor, appraise, advise, support, reward and, when necessary, change lead administrators.
- Ensure that the organizational strength and manpower coincide with both the short and long term goals.
- Approve appropriate compensation and benefit policies and practices.
- Propose a slate of directors to members and fill vacancies as needed.
- Annually approve the Performance Review of the principals and top administrators/management. Establish their compensation based on recommendations of the Executive Committee.
- Determine eligibility for and appoint Board Committees.
- Annually review the performance of the Board and take steps to develop it in unison with school needs.

Operations

- Review the results achieved by management as compared with the organization’s philosophy, annual and long range goals, and the performance of similar schools/organizations.
- Analyze the financial structure of the organization to ensure longevity and alignment with long term goals.
- Provide candid and constructive criticism, advice, and comments.
- Approve major actions of the organization, such as capital expenditures and major program and service changes.

Finance/Audit

- Review and approve the organization’s annual budget.
- Stay informed through reports and other financial statements of the condition of the organization and its operations.
- Ensure that financial reports properly reflect the operating results and financial condition of the organization.
- Ascertain that management has established appropriate policies to define and identify conflicts of interest throughout the organization and is diligently administering and enforcing those policies.
- Appoint independent auditors subject to approval by members.
- Review compliance with relevant material laws affecting the company.

For information on specific director roles, please see *Exhibit B.1.3: Board Handbook*.

Terms

Except with respect to the Board position filled by the Founder/Executive Director, the full term of office of directors shall be three (3) years. To the extent practicable, taking into account increases or decreases in the number of Directors constituting the Board of Directors, one-third of the Board of Directors shall be elected each year, in a self-perpetuating manner, at the designated meeting of the Board of Directors, the directors elected filling the place of retiring Directors. In the event of a change in the number of Directors, the resolution effectuating such change shall specify the years in which the terms of the directorships thereby created shall first expire. The terms of office of *all* Directors and officers shall commence upon the date of their election and shall end on the date of the Annual Meeting of the Directors in the year in which such Director's respective term of office expires. Vacancies occurring in the Board of Directors, including vacancies due to an increase in the number of director's, may be filled by the directors then in office. There shall be no limit to the number of terms that may be served by a Director.

Any director may be removed, with or without cause, by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the whole Board. Any such resignation or removal shall take effect at the time specified therein.

Recruitment

In collaboration with the development team, board members recruit volunteers through a variety of avenues, such as: networking at community events, word-of-mouth and speaking with local businesses. Once an individual expresses interest in becoming a board member, the development team and current board members assess the individual's level of commitment and qualifications in filling the open board position. For approximately six months, board members and the development team work alongside the potential board candidate to affirm commitment and determination in fulfilling the board and school's mission. Typically, prospective board members are required to serve on a committee (e.g. development, finance or education), during this six month period, to determine their potential contributions and effectiveness as a member of the board. If a candidate satisfactorily concludes this period and has the desire to continue, they will be elected at the formal meeting of the Board by a majority of those Board members present.

B.3: Management and Operation

LFLA is confident that it has the right leaders and structure in place to see its vision come to full fruition. Its recent decision to expand the middle and high school by adding an elementary school in 2017-18 will continue to require dynamic leadership and effective collaboration at all levels (see elementary expansion timeline in Section A.5).

Executive Director

The position of Executive Director at LFLA is concentrated upon daily operations, financial management, and overseeing the overall academic program. For the past fifteen years, the Executive Director has been Mr. Marshall Cohen. Mr. Cohen's educational experiences began as the founder of the Lift For Life Gym. Mr. Cohen started the Lift For Life Gym to provide inner-city teens a safe and positive after-school program. The gym's programs focused upon improving the body through weight training and the mind through after-school tutoring. This is where Mr. Cohen gained first-hand knowledge of how the traditional school district was not serving the academic and social needs of many students. He and his wife became inspired to start the City of Saint Louis' first Charter school, Lift For Life Academy, in 2001. Mr. Cohen is the driving spirit behind LFLA's mission. Since its founding, the school has transformed from a single room warehouse on the city's north side to an entire city block campus just south of downtown St. Louis in the Soulard neighborhood. He has been recognized numerous times for his work with the Lift For Life Gym and the school itself. Mr. Cohen has received the Colin Powell Medal for Community Service, the Jewish Light's Unsung Hero Award, and the Habitat for Humanity Community Service Award. In addition, Mr. Cohen was named by the Ladue News as a Champion for Children in 2011.

On a daily basis, Mr. Cohen relies upon and collaborates daily with the school's academic leaders, responsible for bringing the school's mission to life. From 2001-2012, Mr. worked with a single building principal for middle and high school. Since 2013, the middle and high school have had separate building principals responsible for developing and overseeing the school's academic program. In the charter's sixteen-year history, LFLA has employed a total of five building principals between the middle and high school. Since the school's expansion to include a 9-12 high school was complete at the end of 2012, the executive director's position has come to be supported by the addition of a deputy director. These structural changes have provided LFLA's leadership greater focus and clarity in their responsibilities and activities.

Deputy Director

To further support the charter's Executive Director and two building principals, a senior leadership position was added to the educational leadership team beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. The position of Deputy Director will carry out directives from the Executive Director by overseeing and supervising many "district" level LEA and school responsibilities. These include, but are not limited to, the following: special education, federal programs, alternative education, student activities, core data supervision, and budget development/implementation. This position requires a dynamic

and dedicated leader, but also someone who has a strong foundation in the legal, social, and economic contexts of educational administration, as well as experience as a building principal. With strengths and experience in all these areas, Dr. Katrice Noble has served as LFLA's Deputy Director since the 2012-13 school year. Dr. Noble served as an assistant principal at both Beaumont and Roosevelt High Schools within the Saint Louis Public Schools before becoming building principal at LFLA at the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year. As principal from 2004-2012, middle school MAP scores improved from single-digit proficiency rates and high school students demonstrated success on the Algebra I and English II EOC (EOC) exams.

Dr. Noble has a Master's degree in Educational Administration from the University of Missouri-St. Louis and earned a Doctorate in Educational Administration from Maryville University in 2011. LFLA holds strongly that Dr. Noble's leadership will be crucial in the continued improvement and expansion of LFLA. Most importantly, Dr. Noble has and will continue to provide guidance, support, and oversight of all the building principals and deans. In addition, Mr. LeMay completed the state's MO LEAD training in partnership with the National Institute of School Leadership.

Middle & High School Principals

LFLA is led by two separate building principals. A third building principal will be added with the addition of the elementary school expansion in 2017-18. Under this leadership structure, it will be the responsibility of the middle and high school principals to carry out the charter's educational mission and improve its programming by working directly with staff and students. Each principal will be expected to provide instructional leadership by embodying the critical leadership traits of patience, vision, excellent verbal and written communication skills, knowledge of school improvement strategies and structures, and an incredible work ethic.

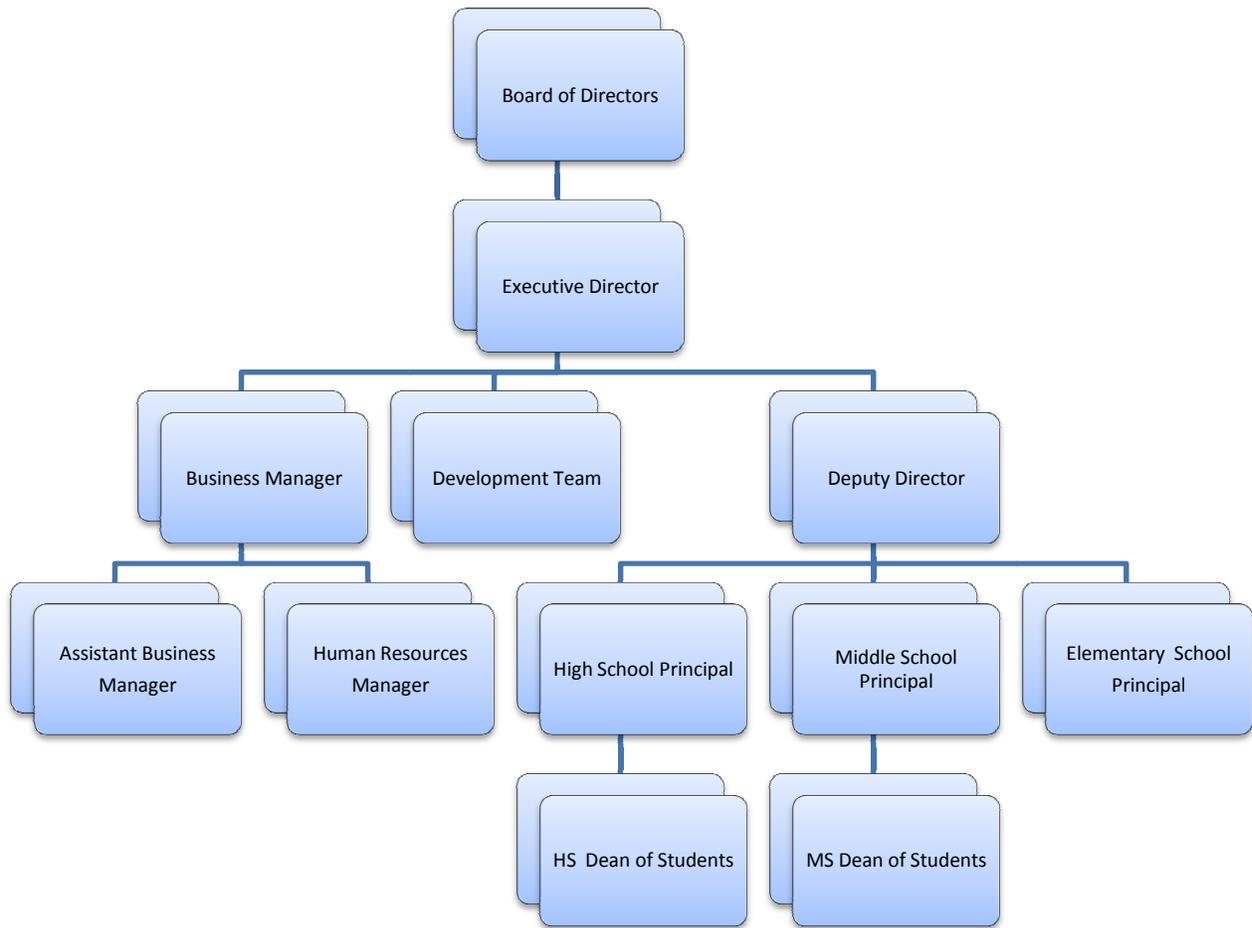
The high school principal, Mr. David LeMay, has served as both a teacher and assistant principal at LFLA. Over the past twelve years, he has built strong relationships with students and their families. Mr. LeMay has also effectively managed the school's federal programs and participated in multiple state reviews. As assistant principal, he led the middle school effort to build PLC teams focused upon using results to improve both instruction and student learning. Mr. LeMay has a Master's degree in Secondary Curriculum and Instruction (2006) and a Master's degree in Educational Administration from the University of Missouri St. Louis (2008). He is currently in his last year of doctoral studies at Saint Louis University. In addition, Mr. LeMay completed the state's MO LEAD training in partnership with the National Institute of School Leadership.

LFLA's middle school principal, Mr. Jeffrey Edwards, has served as both a teacher and middle school Instructional Coach at LFLA. Mr. Edwards has 4 years of teaching and special education experience from Henderson, NC and 5 years as a teacher, instructional coach and principal at LFLA. Mr. Edwards has a Bachelor of Science from the University of Missouri, Columbia and his Master's from the University

of Missouri, St. Louis. In addition, Mr. Edwards completed the state’s MO LEAD training in partnership with the National Institute of School Leadership.

Mr. LeMay and Mr. Edwards are each supported by a Dean of Students at both the middle and high school level. The charter’s organizational structure is designed to strengthen the school’s leadership team, especially each principal’s ability to focus on instructional leadership and develop a culture of student achievement.

Diagram B.3.1: Educational and Operational Leadership Hierarchy (Condensed)¹



¹ This Organizational Chart only reflects the Charter’s Management and Leadership Hierarchy. A complete organizational chart can be found in *Exhibit B.3-1*.

Table B.3.1: Key Managers of the Educational Program: Roles and Responsibilities

District/Building Administrators	Management Role	Management Responsibilities
<p>Executive Director</p>	<p>The Executive Director ensures that students and teachers learn and work together in a safe and caring environment. He/she is focused upon managing the charter’s facilities and daily operations in conjunction with overseeing the educational program that achieves academic results for students.</p> <p>The Executive Director is the direct supervisor for several other departments with management level positions, including the Business Manager, Human Resources and Non-Educational Operations Manager, and the Development Director.</p> <p>The Executive Director reports directly to the Board of Directors.</p>	<p>The Executive Director serves as the chief executive officer for the district. The Executive Director positions compares with the role of superintendent in a traditional school district setting. The Executive Director is responsible for providing strategic leadership as he/she oversees the following areas: educational programming; financial management and budgeting; facilities management; development (including grants and fundraising); personnel; and community relations.</p> <p>The Executive Director provides regular fiscal and educational programming updates as part of a continuous process for school improvement to the board.</p>
<p>Deputy Director</p>	<p>The Deputy Director oversees implementation of LFLA’s educational program at all levels to ensure that a culture of safety and student achievement is the number one priority.</p> <p>This Deputy Director focuses on ensuring that the charter’s educational programming and support services are accountable and compliant with state/federal guidelines.</p>	<p>The position’s key responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following: student enrollment and records (including health and immunizations, confidentiality); special education supervisor; 504 coordinator; federal instructional improvement planning and compliance; federal grants management and compliance; Core Data entry supervisor; student athletics; supervision/evaluation of athletic coaches; alternative education; discipline committee chair; student transportation; alumni relations; special presentations to the board;</p>

		and mentor for the building principals.
Building Principals: Elementary, Middle and High	<p>The elementary, middle and high school principals' primary purpose is to ensure advances in student achievement by serving as each building's primary instructional leader.</p> <p>The elementary, middle and high school building principal reports directly to the Deputy Director.</p>	<p>The building principal serves as the primary instructional leader for the building. Pursuant to this responsibility are variety of duties and tasks that ensure the school environment is focused upon learning and the well-being of children and students. These include the following: tracking and monitoring student performance; school improvement planning and implementation; facilitating professional development days; training teachers in the use of data in instructional decision making; transforming each school into a Professional Learning Community (PLC); presentations to the board; promoting parental involvement; instructional staff supervision and evaluation; student discipline; and promoting teacher empowerment and leadership.</p>
Dean of Students: Middle and High	<p>The Dean of Students position is responsible for ensuring a positive school culture through behavior management and student discipline. The Dean of Students supports the principal by allowing the principal to focus upon instructional leadership and student achievement.</p> <p>The Dean of Students for each building reports directly to the building principal.</p>	<p>The Dean of Students position is expected to carry out the following responsibilities: work with the principal to set expectations for student behavior (including Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports); develop and implement strategies for modifying inappropriate student behaviors; meet with parents regularly concerning students' behavior and their impact upon teaching and learning; work collaboratively with teachers and counselors to develop behavior improvement strategies.</p>

Table 2: Key Managers of Daily Operations

Department Manager	Management Role	Management Responsibilities
Business Manager	The Business Manager works closely with the educational leadership team in budget development and implementation, but reports directly to the Executive Director.	The Business Manager is responsible for the following: budget design and implementation; producing financial reports for the Executive Director, educational leadership team, and board (including LFLA’s annual financial report; bid and purchase approved office and classroom supplies; maintain company business, grant, and insurance files.
Assistant Business Manager	The Assistant Business Manager manages all aspects of the charter’s finances through proper accounts payable and receivables management.	Assistant Business Manager reconciles credit accounts, asset tagging, handling deposit of receivables and coordinate budget for Athletics.
Human Resources Manager	The Human Resource Manager processes employee payroll and administers benefits. This position works with the educational leadership team on staffing, employee relations, human resource issues and ensures legal compliance with Federal and state law, but reports directly to the Business Manager.	The responsibilities of this position include, but are not limited to the following: employee contracts; interview, hire, employee induction; benefits administration; payroll processing; assist in developing and implementing non-educational budgets; provide administrative support to the Executive Director; track employee certification; and supervises background check procedures for employees.
Development Team	The Development Team handles the acquisition of additional resources for the charter and community awareness and involvement. The Development Team reports	The Development Team’s primary responsibilities include the following: strategize and develop a development plan; secure the charter additional financial resources through donations; set fundraising goals; grant writing; and

	directly to the Executive Director.	oversee and manage the training of volunteers.
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Background Checks and Family Care Safety Registry

Background checks and Missouri’s Family Care Safety Registry are required for all board members, employees, both instructional and non-instructional, volunteers and contractors. This is in accordance with the following Missouri statutes: 160.505.1 and 160.408.11. The HR Manager is responsible for ensuring that background checks are performed and results reviewed. The teacher recruitment, screening, and selection process, including background checks, is described in more detail in section *B.4: Staff Recruitment, Retention, Replacement and Training*.

B.4 Staff Recruitment, Retention, Replacement and Training

LFLA believes that the effective recruitment and retention of high-quality instructional staff is essential to fulfilling the school's long-term educational goals. After quality individuals join the organization, LFLA makes it a point to offer its best educators opportunities to grow both instructionally and professionally within the school. As a result, LFLA utilizes several strategies to ensure that it recruits and retains the best possible people. Certainly, LFLA is committed to the 100% Highly Qualified Teacher standard for core content area teachers as part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Staff Recruitment Strategies

- All open teaching and instructional support positions are advertised on the MOREAP system (www.moreap.net) managed by The Cooperating School Districts of Saint Louis and the website for the Missouri Charter Public Schools Association (<http://www.mocharterschools.org>).
- LFLA partners with regional universities to provide student teaching opportunities at the middle and high school level. These student teachers have an opportunity to develop and practice their craft in an urban environment, while the school has an opportunity to identify talented teachers.
- The Academy also relies heavily upon current teachers to refer quality candidates to our administration. The Academy has a referral bonus to award teachers who recommend an applicant who is eventually hired.
- LFLA plans to partner with the Teach For America program. Teach For America places exceptional college graduates who did not major in education in low-income schools following an extensive training program. The Academy currently employs two-Teach For America alumni.

Staff Retention Strategies

- LFLA offers a competitive salary and full health benefits. Family health benefit plans are also available along with vision and dental coverage.
- All LFLA teachers and staff working 25 hours or more participate in the Saint Louis Public School Retirement System for the City of Saint Louis.
- The district provides graduate tuition assistance to teachers looking to strengthen their content knowledge and instructional practice.
- Continuous professional development is provided to teachers through in-services and workshops. These opportunities focus upon best instructional practices, such as PLC, the *Physics First* program, and *Six Traits of Writing*.
- The Academy rewards teachers by compensating them for participating in extending learning opportunities, such as the school's MAP Attack program and mandatory summer school program for grades six through eight.
- The school offers grade-level teaching team bonuses for improving student performance on the MAP.
- Exceptional teachers and staff have the opportunity to apply for leadership positions as both classroom teachers and building administration. The high

school principal along with the middle and high school deans worked as LFLA classroom teachers.

Evaluation of Teaching Applicants

The school's educational leadership team screens and evaluates all teaching applicants. The evaluation criteria include the applicant's educational background, certification status, work experiences inside and outside educational environments, and other experiences relevant to working with children, such as, volunteer work, professional associations, and coaching. LFLA's goal is to secure the best teacher for students possible; therefore, the interview process is especially important. Most teaching applicants participate in three interviews. The first interview is often with two to three members of the school educational leadership team. The second interview is with the entire educational leadership team along with a teacher leader and/or department chair. The last interview follows a school and classroom observation by the applicant. The applicant is then asked to reflect and share their thoughts and observations with the administrative team.

Research indicates that the teacher is the most significant factor in student learning.¹ This is especially true in student populations that are predominantly African American and free and reduced lunch status. This means that there are certain non-negotiable qualities that all teachers and instructional staff must possess at LFLA:

- Belief that all students are capable of learning
- Strong academic background in the subject matter to be taught by the teacher
- Ability to connect with kids and parents and convince them that their teacher cares
- An understanding of the importance of teacher collaboration in improving instruction and ensuring student learning
- Commitment to meeting measurable academic objectives and student growth targets
- Ability to motivate students through creative instruction and personal relationships
- Dedication to research and apply the best instructional practices to improve student achievement
- Willingness to work longer and more days than teachers in traditional school districts
- Desire to move the charter's mission forward by committing to the school's core value that "Failure is not an option"

Hiring of Non-Certified Instructional Personnel

As stated previously, LFLA is committed to having 100% of its instructional personnel certified in the subject area and grade level he/she will teach. The school makes every effort to recruit and hire staff in relation to this standard; however, there

¹ National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research, "Value Added of Teachers in High-Poverty Schools and Lower-Poverty Schools" (2010).

are some high need subject areas that make this goal difficult to attain. In determining appropriate experience, training, and skills for the hiring of non-certified instructional personnel the charter refers to the following criteria. First, the applicant must have his/her transcript reviewed and evaluated to determine appropriate academic background and content expertise for the position. At the very least, all non-certified instructional personnel will have a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Second, the applicant should have an interest and experience working with adolescents. Such experience may include substitute teaching, coaching, or volunteer work. Third, the potential non-certified teacher must to present a timetable toward becoming highly qualified within a reasonable amount of time. This timetable to certification may include college/university study or the American Board for Certified Teaching Excellence (ABCTE) program. Lastly, a non-certified teacher must possess the same human qualities and commitment to student learning as any certified teacher.

For instructional support personnel, the charter will comply with federal funding guidelines that state that all paraprofessionals have at least sixty hours of college credit. In some cases, it has been possible to hire certified teachers to perform supplemental services, including managing interventions for struggling learners.

Plan and Budget

As illustrated in *Table B.4.1*, total salaries for the charter are projected to remain between 67% and 77% of annual revenue over the next six years. A growth in total salaries has occurred steadily over the years, but has always been in relation to our total student enrollment. *Table B.4.1* reflects that same pattern in salaries, as year two includes the opening of our elementary school, with additional grades and staffing to support them being added each subsequent year through year six. It is important to note that total employees and salaries includes many services that other charter schools may contract and appear as purchased services when budgeting such as, transportation, food service, and janitorial. As with businesses and organizations of all kinds across this nation, the charter must work aggressively to minimize employee health care costs. Continuous increases in health care benefits without increased revenues may result in the need to revise budget and staffing projections.

Table B.4.1: Historical and Projected Revenue, Salaries, and Benefits

	<u>2016-2017</u>	<u>2017-2018</u>	<u>2018-2019</u>	<u>2019-2020</u>	<u>2020-2021</u>	<u>2020-2022</u>
Annual Revenue	\$7,622,061	\$9,772,157	\$9,391,950	\$10,497,046	\$10,289,293	\$11,218,660
Junior K, Elementary, Middle and High Total Enrollment[2]	596	716	756	796	836	876
Total # of Educators[3]	64	70	74.5	78.5	83.5	86.5
Total Dollar Amount of Educator Salaries & Benefits	\$3,181,564	\$3,546,483	\$3,867,570	\$4,153,500	\$4,503,362	\$4,751,292
Educator Salary as % of Total Revenue	42%	36%	41%	40%	44%	42%
Total Employees	111	130.5	137	143.5	149	155
Total Employees Salary & Benefits	\$5,569,565	\$6,536,061	\$6,984,766	\$7,454,555	\$7,886,350	\$8,230,068
Total Employees Salary and Benefits as % of Total Revenue	73%	67%	74%	71%	77%	73%

*Student enrollment number is for August

[1] All years are budgeted amounts.

[2] Enrollment varies as we try to accommodate the enrollment of siblings.

We predict a slight decrease in sibling enrollment over the years as students graduate.

[3] For the purposes of chart the term educators refer to those staff directly responsible for providing educational, social work, and guidance services to students.

**Table B.4.2: Staffing Projections
5 year Staffing Plan-Junior Kindergarten-5th**

Positions	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Student Enrollment	0	120	160	200	240	280
Administration	0	1	1	1	1	1
Instructional Coach	.5	.5	.5	.5	1	1
Social Worker/Counselor/Nurse	0	0	1	1	1	1
Administrative Assistant	0	1	1	1	1	1
Regular Ed. Teachers	0	4	6	8	10	12
Reading Specialist	0	0	.5	.5	1	1
Early Childhood Teachers/Staff	0	4	4	4	4	4
K-5 Teacher's Assistants	0	2	3	4	5	6
Special Education Teachers	0	0	.5	1	2	2
Specialist/Electives	0	0	1	2	4	4
Before/After Care Staff	0	3	3	3	3	3

Table B.4.3: Staffing Projections Grades 6-12

Positions	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Administration	4	4	4	4	4	4
Instructional Coach	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Administrative Asst.	1	1	1	1	1	1
*MS Core Instructional Staff	15	15	15	15	15	15
HS Core Instructional Staff	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5
World Languages	3	3	3	3	3	3
Art/FACS/Business	5	5	5	5	5	5
PE/Health/Drivers Ed	5	5	5	5	5	5
SPED Teachers	5	5	5	5	5	5
Social Worker, Counseling, Support Specialists	6	6	6	6	6	6

*Includes: Communication Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies
+Based on an approximate enrollment of 252 middle school students and 330 high school students for each school year.

Employment of Revoked Licenses to Teach and Background Check Procedures

LFLA will not hire or employ teachers whose licenses to teach have been either suspended or revoked by the state board of education. This is in accordance with Missouri state statutes 160.415 and 168.071. In addition, the Academy applies the following procedures to ensure that all teachers are able to present themselves as people of character and appropriate role models for students:

- The potential teacher applies to LFLA for a position.
- Resumes and application materials are evaluated.
- The applicant enters the interview process and is offered a position, but is required to clear a FBI and state background check using the state's background check procedures, including fingerprinting.
- The teacher is required to provide a copy of his/her teaching certificate confirming up-to-date certification by DESE.
- Background check findings and employees disclosures will be handled on a case-by-case basis between administrators and the applicant.
- Upon acceptance of a position, the applicant is contractually obligated to disclose any misdemeanor or felony convictions (not including minor traffic offenses) and any suspensions/revocations of their teaching certificate.
- Once all proper documentation is submitted and cleared, the teacher may begin employment.
- During the school year, the teacher is required to manage certification status with DESE, ensuring it is valid at all times and does not expire. Teachers are also contractually obligated to disclose any criminal convictions to the charter's administration.
- The Human Resources Manager verifies teacher certification annually through the DESE website to confirm it is valid.
- In the event a teacher's certification is suspended or revoked during the school year, the charter will take appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the teacher's right to due process under federal and state law.

Mission, Climate and Culture

Our focus is on student learning, not teaching, and we will work interdependently to achieve the goal of all students learning from all of us, as all of us continue to learn from each other.

We accept learning as the fundamental purpose of LFLA and therefore are willing to examine all teaching practices in light of their impact on learning. We are committed to working together to achieve our collective purpose. We will cultivate a collaborative culture through development of high-performing teams.

We assess our effectiveness on the basis of results than intentions. Individuals, teams and the administration will seek relevant data and information and use that information

to promote instructional best practices and student achievement. By this we have achieved our Pillars of Excellence - Educate, Empower and Uplift.

The Executive Director, Deputy Director, Principals and Human Resources encourage all Administrative and Teaching staff to bring input on any issue, topic of concern or ideas to their attention with our Open Door Policy.

B.5: Student Recruitment and Enrollment

LFLA has been consistently successful in the recruitment and enrollment of students throughout the city of St. Louis. LFLA serves students city wide with no geographical boundaries according to zip code; therefore, LFLA is an educational option for approximately 35,000 students that reside within the city of St. Louis. Due to the high volume of applicants the school receives, a waiting list is often established. For the upcoming 16-17 school year, the academy is at its enrollment target for all grade levels except for sixth grade. Table B.5.1 (also in *A.5 Target Populations*) demonstrates LFLA's historical enrollment, which offers evidence as to the academy's ability to recruit, enroll and retain students.

Table B.5.1: Historical Enrollment Data*

Year	Grade							Total	Avg. per Grade
	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th		
2011-12	85	92	83	85	82	74	74	575	82.1
2012-13	89	86	86	83	85	83	67	579	82.7
2013-14	79	85	88	76	78	75	81	562	80.2
2014-15	81	86	89	86	80	76	67	565	80.7
2015-16	79	83	77	86	87	70	74	556	79.4

****Student enrollment numbers for 2011-2012 were based on attendance as of September 1. For 2013-14 and subsequent years, the end of year attendance numbers were utilized for comparative purposes in tracking LFLA's stable enrollment.

Recruitment

Historically, LFLA has targeted recruitment efforts within the bounds of the city of St. Louis. The Academy recruits and/or reaches out to traditionally less informed families by:

- sending enrollment packages to families using direct mailing lists
- distributing postcards and brochures
- word of mouth from families of current students
- delivering enrollment information door-to-door in targeted neighborhoods
- advertisements on television, radio, and newspaper
- hired a *Recruitment Specialist*, a former graduate, that understands the academy, can explain the benefits and the positive impact on his life. *Recruitment Specialist* uses a 'boots on the ground' approach to network neighborhoods, not for profits, camps and after school centers to introduce the community that LFLA is an option

See *Exhibit B.5.3* for examples of our marketing brochures, newsletter and video of a commercial that are seen by prospective families. In an effort to market the school and its mission to the St. Louis community, LFLA also utilizes radio spots, advertisements in local bus shelters, and sponsors or engages in a variety of fairs and festivals.

Enrollment

Consistent with R.S.Mo 160.410, LFLA is open to any child who is eligible for admission to a public school. In accordance with federal law, no student will be denied admission based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability.

- All parent/guardians wanting their children to attend LFLA must complete a student application and submit it with all of the required documents listed on page one of the application to the registrar by the appointed deadline.
- Lotteries will categorically take place for students entering middle school and ninth grade high school.
- Current academy students will automatically be reenrolled for the following school year. Therefore, lotteries will only take place for the remaining grade levels (7,8, 10, 11, and 12th grade) if students have indicated before each lottery date that they will not be returning to LFLA, which would result in any possible open positions for the following year.
- Preference will be given to siblings of current LFLA students and children of current LFLA employees. Those students will not be subject to taking part in the lottery process but their acceptance still depends on whether or not space permits.
- Siblings of students selected in the lottery process will not automatically be accepted to LFLA, but will be placed on a separate list to be drawn from if space becomes available. These siblings will be offered the open student positions if possible.
- When a student is selected to receive a position at LFLA the parent/guardian has five business days to accept the position for his/her student.
- The student lottery application will only remain active for the school year the parent/guardian initially applied. If a student is not selected to attend LFLA, the parent guardian must fill out another student lottery application for the next academic school year. See *Exhibit B.5-1* for a copy of the Enrollment Application.

**Table B.5.2 Letters of Enrollment Intent by Grade Level for
2016-17 School Year (as of 6-24-16)**

6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th
23	8	10	28	4	5	3

Tables B.5.3-Summary of Enrollment Projections (also see A.5 Target Population)

Junior Kindergarten-5th Grade

Positions	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Student Enrollment	0	120	160	200	240	280

Middle and High School

Positions	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Student Enrollment	582	582	582	582	582	582

Table 1 illustrates enrollment projections for the next five years based on capacity and historical enrollment data.

B.6: Parent/Guardian, Community, Higher Education, and Employee Involvement

Parent Involvement

An ongoing goal of the Academy is to foster cooperative partnerships with students' families to ensure students receive the support needed to be successful. Likewise, it is equally important for parents to have a role in the development and vision of a school. For further information, see Exhibit B.6.1, Parent and Student Handbook. In order to cultivate the Academy's parental involvement, the following principles have been established to welcome parents and include them in LFLA's governance, operation, and vision:

- **Communicate** - Ensure families are aware of opportunities to get involved, along with details and expectations.
- **Appreciate** - Show that LFLA values everyone's time and support.
- **Accommodate** - Be aware of parents' schedules, lifestyles, and needs.
- **Respond** - Answer questions and address concerns in a polite and timely manner.
- **Respect** - Learn parent-volunteers' names. If they don't continue to volunteer, find out why they've chosen not to come back and let them know how much you appreciate their help.
- **Align** - Ask parents what they are interested in doing and align these skills with the Academy's needs.
- **Ask** – Let families know the Academy needs parent/guardian volunteers.

Specific opportunities for parents to get involved include parent-teacher conferences, volunteering for events (e.g. Talent Show, Black History and Holiday Programs), assisting with extracurricular events (e.g. sports events or after-school activities), committee meetings throughout the year to plan and fundraise for the school, an 8th Grade parent night, a financial aid night for high school seniors, and a student-parent showcase (lunch and talent show).

In 2014, a Parent University was established to raise awareness about the opportunities families have to get involved with the Academy and their students' education. Meetings are conducted on a regular basis and address issues such as classroom support, fundraising, and parent outreach. Our hope is that this will encourage greater parent participation. In addition, a parent is elected to serve as a liaison between parents and the board. The liaison acts as a non-voting board representative.

LFLA also feels that having a variety of communication tools will be key to successfully reaching and engaging parents. The following modes of communication are being employed to facilitate a closer working relationship between the school and parents:

- The Academy Newsletter

- School website/teacher homepage
- Voice/Text/Email Messages
- School bulletin board
- School Reach system for mass phone calls to parents regarding issues such as school closings

Grievance Procedures for Parents/Guardians

LFLA is committed to providing procedures for parents to voice concerns and complaints to the appropriate school officials. With regards to student and teacher concerns and complaints, these should be made directly to the building principal. If the parent is unsatisfied or wishes to also communicate concerns and complaints to senior level leadership, then they may do so by making an appointment with either the Deputy Director or Executive Director. In addition, parents have the right to attend monthly board meetings, which are posted in advance at the school and are identified within the school calendar. As part of this process, the district may require that the grievance be formalized by communicating it in writing. Any claims regarding discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or sexual orientation or identification, may be submitted as a grievance to any of the school's administrators or the board of education. Upon receiving a written grievance, a meeting will be scheduled with the appropriate school personnel following an investigation into the circumstances and facts of the grievance. These grievances are also described as Exhibit B.6.3.

Educator Involvement

LFLA firmly believes a successful school hinges on the collective strengths and adaptability of its faculty and staff. Professional development encourages teachers to become involved in school decisions through their work with curriculum and assessment development, developing Rtl strategies, and leading professional development activities in areas such as, Teach Like a Champion and technology training. During professional development time teachers regularly engage in the following activities:

- the learning of best instructional practices, including engagement and behavioral strategies from Teach Like a Champion.
- curriculum development and revision
- assessment design and interpretation of results in grade level or content area Professional Learning teams.
- review student data and design appropriate classroom and Rtl strategies

In addition, the Academy's leadership team meets regularly to review performance data, develop strategies to assist teachers in improving instruction, and set LFLA improvement goals relative to curriculum, assessment, and instructional improvement. The Academy's leadership team is comprised of building administrators, instructional coaches, and grade level/department leaders. The Academy's leadership team is designed to address critical needs by embracing collaboration and

empowerment. Lastly, two teachers serve as members of the board's education subcommittee and attend board meetings as staff representatives.

Student Mental and Physical Health and family well-being

LFLA will continue to emphasize across all staff the need to educate and serve the whole child as well as positively impact the entire family. Because many students enter Lift For Life Academy with various emotional needs and trauma, LFLA makes every effort to ensure the best possible future for student beyond academic achievement.

School staff receives professional development from mental health professionals in the St. Louis Region. Lift For Life Academy's social worker has established partnerships with universities to facilitate and supervise graduate students. The school also connects families to appropriate agencies within the community to assist families in need.

Health and Wellbeing

Lift For Life Academy is currently launching a capital campaign to build a health and wellbeing center. The Academy understands and recognizes that students and families need a healthy nutrition and bodies to have healthy minds. LFLA believes that fitness and nutrition habits formed at an early age will affect them for the rest of their lives. Lift For Life Academy will incorporate fitness, health and nutrition strategies into learning activities.

LFLA is able to create and maintain a positive and engaging environment for our students through a variety of partnerships with student families, local businesses, and other not-for profit organizations. These collaborations are an efficient way to make an impact in identified areas of need. Types of involvement include volunteer time, donations (e.g. monetary or educational equipment), programming resources, and/or teacher development.

Community and Higher Education Involvement and Partnerships

Through community events, as well as those held at the school, LFLA has developed partnerships to expand educational opportunities for students. Partner organizations and the nature of the collaboration are listed in *Table B.6.1*. All partnerships listed are current with plans to continue in the 2012-2013 academic year unless otherwise noted. See exhibit B.6.2 for sample letters of community partnership.

Table B.6.1: LFLA's Community Partners

Organization	Nature of Partnership
Alcoholics Anonymous	Provides speakers for school health classes about alcohol abuse.
Alive & Well-STL	Trauma informed training for students who have experienced grief or other trauma.

American Lung Association	Gives presentations to students about the health risks of smoking.
American Red Cross	Gives presentations on how to perform First Aid.
Area Rotary Clubs	Supports the school by donating money for projects or equipment.
Bar and Bat Mitzvah Projects	In-kind donations, such as funding for board games, school supplies, and the school library.
Barnes-Jewish HealthCare	Speaks to the school health classes about nutrition and drug/tobacco/alcohol abuse.
Behavior Health Resources	Speaks to health classes about mental illness.
BJC School Outreach & Youth Development	Education re: Nutrition and Tobacco & Substance Abuse
University of Missouri-St. Louis' Bridge Program	Pre-collegiate program that provides unique and comprehensive college readiness.
Campus Y – Picture the Future	An after-school photography program operated and staffed by Washington University in St. Louis students.
Campus Y – Youth University	Two week summer school for students to learn about applying to community colleges and local universities. Teaches social and team building skills. Operated by Washington University in St. Louis.
Center for Hearing & Speech	Screening and resources for vision and hearing impaired students
College Bound	Personalized college prep program in St. Louis that offers summer enrichment programs, academic support, field trips, ACT preparation, leadership training, scholarships, referrals, and college counseling.
Congregation Shaare Emeth	Provides financial support to the school.
Covidien	Donates furniture to the school.
Eye Care Charity of Mid America	Vision Van provides students with free eye exams and prescription glasses
Gateway Greening	Provides assistance in developing “outdoor science classrooms.” Offers consultation/support for rebuilding flower beds, provides materials for garden, and engages teachers through online training.
Gateway To Oral Health	Provides free dental care for students twice a year.
Jazz St. Louis	Provide students musical field trips and on-site concerts.
John Burroughs High School May Project	Seniors from the school come to LFLA to mentor middle and high school students in math. They also assist the physical education teachers.

Junior Achievement	Teaches LFLA students about global economies and ethical business practices.
Kids Under Twenty-One (KUTO)	Speaks with students about the risks of using alcohol or drugs.
Lenscrafters	Brings the "Vision Van" to LFLA and provides students with free eye exams and glasses.
Metropolitan Leadership League of St. Louis	Leadership program for young women promoting positive academic, social and leadership skills and entail community service opportunities.
Missouri Department of Transportation	Provides drivers education presentations and supports Driver's Education program at LFLA.
Narcotics Anonymous	Provides speakers to talk to classes about drug abuse.
National Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NCADA)	Provides high school training on risks and consequences of alcohol and drug use.
Optimist Club of Clayton	Provides funding to LFLA. Students participate in annual speech competition.
Parkway North High School	Seniors mentor LFLA students in math and communication arts.
Rawlings Sporting Goods	Donates baseball equipment for baseball team.
Ritz Carlton, St. Louis	Job-skills training and introduction to career opportunities in hospitality industry.
Saint Louis University	Provides facilities to track team. Offers summer science enrichment programs to Juniors and Seniors. Professional expertise to support professional development from the college of education. Advanced college credits for students as part of the SLU 1818 program.
Salvation Army	Donates use of sports facilities for LFLA sports/PE programs.
Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis	Provides assistance in college planning and financial options.
Southeast Missouri State University	Student teacher and practicum placement at LFLA. College of education student field experiences.
St. Louis Auto	Speaks to driver's education class about general car maintenance.
The Buddy Fund	Provides the school with free physical education equipment.
Think First	Program that addresses distracted driving, drunk driving and seat belt usage.

Thrive	Speaks to middle school and high school students about sexual education and the importance of sexual integrity.
TYREDD	Teaches students to look for signs/symptoms of fatigue while driving.
University of Missouri – Columbia – Physics First Program	Covers the cost of summer training for science teachers and online training during the year to encourage teaching science with a hands-on approach. Also provides training for math teachers for two weeks at no cost.
University of MO-St. Louis	Student teacher and practicum partnership with the college of education.
Washington University	Provide after-school programs to LFLA students, such as, Picture the Future, Outdoor Explorers, and Youth University.
Wyman Center	Operates a teen outreach program that focuses on leadership and sexual education. Students plan and engage in community service projects.
YMCA of Greater St. Louis – Science Gone Mad	An after-school science program operated and staffed by students from Washington University in St. Louis and St. Louis University.
YWCA	Speaks to a variety of classes about healthy relationships.

See *Appendix B.6-1* for a copy of letters documenting some of these community partnerships.

Educator Involvement

LFLA firmly believes a successful school hinges on the collective strengths and adaptability of its faculty and staff. Professional development encourages teachers to become involved in school decisions through their work with curriculum and assessment development, developing Rtl strategies, and leading professional development activities in areas such as, Teach Like a Champion and technology training. During professional development time teachers regularly engage in the following activities:

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In addition, the Academy's leadership team meets regularly to review performance data, develop strategies to assist teachers in improving instruction, and set LFLA improvement goals relative to curriculum, assessment, and instructional improvement. The Academy's leadership team is comprised of building administrators,

instructional coaches, and grade level/department leaders. The Academy's leadership team is designed to address critical needs by embracing collaboration and empowerment.

C.1: Budget

All financial decisions at Lift For Life Academy (LFLA) are driven by a desire for accuracy and consistency and a goal-oriented vision for the school. Budget priorities are continually evaluated to ensure that fiscal goals align with the school's mission and vision for educational achievement. Our stakeholders—faculty, staff, administrators, board of directors, and sponsor—are all invested in the conversation about the best fiscal path for the Academy to achieve the greatest impact for students.

Budget Process

LFLA strives for high levels of staff participation in the budget process to increase both the accuracy and school-wide ownership of the budget. The annual budget process begins in late December, when the Business Manager prepares departmental budget forms and historical departmental expenditures to be distributed to departments at the start of January. The process is completed by the end of May with a final approval by the board. See Appendix C.1.1 for a copy of the FY17 Draft Budget and support documents presented to the board in May 2016 for their approval.

The formal budget documents presented to and approved by the board include detailed revenues and expenditures as well as summarized reports. See *Appendices C.1.1 through C.1.7* for the DESE 6 year budget template documents and *Appendix C.1.8* for a cash flow analysis. .

Revenue and Expenditure Assumptions

Budgeted expenses are based on a blending of expected availability of funds, historical expenditures, and departmental budget requests. When applicable, information regarding projected costs is gathered from vendors, analysts and government websites. Detailed records are maintained to support all revenue and expense budget assumptions. Two examples of our budgeting process follow.

Transportation Fuel Expense: The Business Manager calculates the transportation fuel expense by incorporating forecasted data available from the U.S. Energy Information Administration website, LFLA's primary diesel fuel provider, Energy Pro, as well as historical and forecasted usage data.

Salaries and benefits: Salaries and benefits are calculated based on anticipated staff additions and/or changes, an average 2% salary increase, 7.5% employee health insurance expense increase, and an estimated stable pension expense. LFLA's insurance broker provides the estimated health insurance increase. LFLA's St. Louis Public School Retirement contact provides data used to calculate the estimated pension expense increase.

Budgeted revenue is based on a combination of historical figures, estimated enrollment and average daily attendance forecasts. See *Table C.1.1* for more information. FY17 budgeted Basic Formula, Classroom Trust, and Proposition C calculations are included with the Appendix C.1.2 6-Year Operational Budget.

Table C.1-1: Budget Revenue Assumption Examples

Revenue Stream	Assumption / Calculation Methods		
Prop C	<i>DESE Forecasted Estimate</i>	<i>Historical Attendance</i>	
Basic Formula	<i>DESE Forecasted Estimate WADA</i>	<i>Historical Data such as Free/Reduced Lunch & Attendance</i>	
Classroom Trust	<i>DESE Forecasted Estimate WADA</i>	<i>Historical Data such as Free/Reduced Lunch & Attendance</i>	
SPED		<i>Historical Data</i>	
Transportation	<i>DESE Forecasted % Change</i>	<i>Historical Data</i>	
School Food		<i>Historical Data</i>	
Title		<i>Historical Data</i>	
Development	<i>Known/Committed Grants</i>	<i>Historical Data</i>	<i>Forecasted Events</i>
Student Fundraising/Fees		<i>Departmental Budget Submissions</i>	

Budget and Cash Flow Challenges

A Financial Dashboard has been developed to give a monthly broad overview of how LFLA is tracking on four primary annual finance goals:

- LFLA will be financially managed, per the approved budget, to result in a budget surplus at the close of each fiscal year.
- LFLA Governing Board will complete and approve a balanced budget based on valid evidence-based assumptions 30 days prior to the close of the fiscal year.
- LFLA will always ensure accurate, timely and sufficient filing of required financial reports.
- LFLA will receive an unmodified independent auditor’s report with no material findings.

See Appendix C.1.9 for a sample Finance Dashboard. As a part of this process, monthly financials, which provide a budget to actual analysis and forecasts, are reviewed and discussed by the Finance Committee. This information is distributed and presented to the Board of Directors. When shortfalls are experienced or forecasted, several strategies are employed to meet any budget or cash flow challenges. One strategy is for the Business Manager and Executive Director to look for ways to reduce expenses. For example, one year when fuel prices rose sharply, the Academy decided

to reduce fuel expenses by decreasing the number of athletic practices per week. If another strategy is necessary, the Academy also has a cash reserve that can be accessed for urgent needs.

See Appendix C.1.10 for an overview of LFLA's long and short-term debt, with annual anticipated payments.

Commitment to Financial Viability

LFLA takes a proactive stance regarding its financial stability. The Finance/Operations Committee meets every other month. Monthly financials and forecasts are discussed during these meetings, as well as other Finance/Operations related items. Financials and forecasts are shared with the board and school administrators every month.

LFLA's financial analysis includes comparisons of expense categories for the current year versus the same category a year prior. This positions LFLA to increase our ability to identify trends and be proactive in taking corrective actions where necessary. This fiscal responsibility has contributed, in part, to our FY15 strong ending fund balance and 15.57% reserve.¹ Moving forward, our top budget priority is maintaining the physical and human resources necessary to provide an excellent education to LFLA students

¹ Reserve per FY15 audit

C.2 Financial Management

LFLA is committed to the accurate financial management and reporting required for a school to be successful and fiscally sound. The primary positions responsible for financial management and oversight are the Business Manager and the Executive Director. Additional support and required approval is provided by the Finance Committee, as well as the Board of Directors.

Student Records

All records pertaining to enrollment tracking, attendance eligibility, special education and limited English proficient enrollment is managed by Student Records. This information is recorded and monitored through the School Insight Student Management System software. As such a large portion of our student body is eligible for free and reduced lunch, we have enrolled in Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). Therefore, all students eat breakfast and lunch for free and LFLA is not required to gather financial information regarding student families. The safety and security of student information is a top priority of LFLA and Student Records. The Academy is in compliance with all state and federal laws regarding the safeguarding of student files and information. Also, in compliance with R.S.Mo 167.020, LFLA will ensure that within two business days of enrolling a student, the school will request the student records from the transferring school district and that LFLA also responds to incoming requests for student records within five business days. Please see Appendices C.2.6 & C.2.7 for our Attendance Policy and our Migrant and ELL Policy.

Financial Reporting

All financial reporting is tracked using Software Unlimited, Inc.'s School Accounting Software, which aligns with the approved financial standards of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). On a monthly basis, the Lift For Life Academy Business Manager sends data from the previous month to Westbrook & Co., P.C., a financial consultant specializing in charter school finances. The Westbrook consultants review the data, prepare bank reconciliations and adjusting entries, and provide a Statement of Financial Position and Activities. When this process is complete, the Business Manager analyzes the data, and prepares additional financial reports.

Accounting Procedures and Procurement

LFLA has implemented an *Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual* which details all expected actions related to: cash receipts, cash disbursements, reconciliations, purchases, fixed asset management, payroll, financial reporting, grant compliance and fiscal policy statements. The purpose of this document is to affirm the Academy adheres to generally accepted accounting practices and the Missouri Financial Accounting Manual. Please see *Appendix C.2-1* for a copy of this accounting manual. The Business Manager has thoroughly studied the Missouri School Accounting Manual and also has access to Westbrook consultants for additional training and support needed to oversee the sound financial management of an educational

institution. LFLA complies with established best practices in the procurement of goods and services. These best practices are described in its procurement policy overview (*Appendix C.2.1*).

Internal and External Financial Reviews

The Academy communicates financial information to relevant employees, board members, and stakeholders every month in order to get feedback. Within 15 days of the beginning of the month, the Business Manager sends an e-mail to the Board of Directors, school administrators, our sponsor liaison, and bank representatives to review the previous month's expenditures and project future expenses. See *Appendix C.2-2* for an example of these communications. Every other month, the Finance Committee meets to discuss financial management and operations. This committee currently includes:

- Brian Liberman (Treasurer, Finance Chair/Board Member)
- Scott Dolan (Board President)
- Jack Burke (Immediate Past President)
- Rene Crosswhite (Finance Committee Member)
- Harvey Citerman (Finance Committee Member)
- Marshall Cohen (Executive Director)
- Michal Grace (Business Manager)

Recommendations made by the Finance Committee are taken into account by school leadership when making decisions and, in some instances, are discussed by the entire Board for their input as well. The Finance Committee follows up with key issues on an ongoing basis to track progress towards goals.

In keeping with the Sunshine law financials are available to all staff and the public upon request.

Compliance

In accordance with R.S.Mo 160.405, the Academy facilitates an annual financial audit by contracting with the independent CPA firm Hochschild, Bloom & Company LLP. The results of the audit are presented and approved by the Board of Directors in November and distributed to our sponsor and DESE in December. Once information from the audit is received, the Academy reviews recommendations and makes the appropriate adjustments to ensure proper recordkeeping and compliance with state and federal laws. Hochschild, Bloom & Company LLP also oversees the filing of the Academy's tax return according to all deadlines and requirements. See *Appendix C.2.5* for a copy of our most recent audit.

Any grants that LFLA receives, as well as any federal programs that the school participates in, are administered according to required guidelines. In accordance with R.S.Mo 160.405.13(2), LFLA maintains a \$2,000,000 General Liability policy through MOPERM that indemnifies the school, its board, staff and teachers in the unlikely event

of a tort claim. Lastly, in accordance with R.S.Mo 162.821, LFLA shall submit all required documentation for the Annual Secretary of the Board Report (ASBR) with the assistance of our financial consultant, Westbrook & Co., P.C.

Please see Appendix C.2.3 for our Liability Insurance Policy and Appendix C.2.4 for Fraud Policy.

C.3 Facility

Part of what makes the environment at LFLA unique is both the location, in the heart of historic Soulard, and the architectural aesthetics of being in a 1900's era bank building. One of LFLA's primary facility goals is to create an educational campus that replicates a small university. The campus is located in a commercial district centrally located just south of downtown St. Louis. The location has helped to get many students away from neighborhoods where crime and poverty dominate the landscape. In addition, our central location helps to eliminate potential 'turf' issues associated with students being transported to schools in neighborhoods that may have a history of conflict with their own.

From originally occupying a small space, essentially a one room school house of 5,000ft², the organization has grown exponentially. The campus now includes six buildings totaling over 85,000ft². This growth has occurred through a variety of renovations, expansions, and acquisitions since the original purchase of the bank building in 2001. Additionally, the Academy has approximately one acre of outdoor learning space utilized for teaching students about botany and environmental issues. Future plans include an outdoor courtyard and learning space. Lastly, the school has approximately two acres of parking. Today, LFLA's campus provides ample space for educational opportunities and growth.

Description of Properties

1731 S. Broadway is the main area of the school, housing many administrative offices and classrooms. In 2010, an addition was built to the southern wing and includes two science rooms, a Dean of Student office and two general classrooms. 1731 serves primarily high school students.

1717 S. Broadway is connected to 1731 and includes a cafeteria space shared by all students and staff. The second floor classrooms predominantly serve high school students.

1709 S. Broadway was acquired in an effort to establish a permanent space for 7th and 8th grade students as they begin their transition into high school.

1710 S. Broadway is the 6th grade center. Sixth graders historically enroll from upwards of 50 different public and private elementary schools. The 6th grade center is used to get students acclimated to the culture at LFLA.

1811 South Broadway currently houses a small workout area and coaches offices. In the future, the building will be demolished to make room for *the Health & Wellbeing Center*.

1700 South Broadway; is leased and renovated in 2015 for additional middle school classrooms. The property will be purchased for the addition of elementary grades.

Each classroom’s maximum capacity is 25 people. The current student-to-teacher ratio per class is: 6th grade – 15:1; 7th/8th – 16:1; high school – 18:1. *Diagram C.3-1* illustrates the layout of the campus.

Table C.3-1 shows the six facilities currently utilized by the Academy

Table C.3.1: Facilities Breakdown

Building	Approximate Size	Space Utilization	Current standing
1709 S. Broadway	8,000ft ²	10 classrooms, In School Suspension classroom, 1 administrative office	Owner
1710 S. Broadway	5,000ft ²	4 classrooms, social worker office, special education classroom	Owner
1717 S. Broadway	25,000ft ²	5 classrooms, cafeteria, speech therapy office, and school counselor’s office	Owner
1731 S. Broadway	40,000ft ²	14+ classrooms, offices: special education, administrative (4), executive director, development, transportation, library, common area	Owner
1811 S. Broadway	2,067ft ²	Fitness & workout area, athletic director and coaches office	Owner
1700 S. Broadway	5,000ft ²	6 classrooms, including Success Academy (alternative education)	Leasing

Diagram C.3.2: LFLA Campus View



Facility Needs

Planning and constructing a gym facility on the campus site is a major project that would enhance the campus experience and eliminate costly travel to off-site facilities for physical education classes. Currently, physical education teachers and their students take school buses to off-site facilities rented by LFLA. Current rental and transportation costs are approximately \$30,000 a year. Lost academic time travelling can average upwards of 29 hours a year. *Table C.3-2* lists the current off-site buildings being used. Owning an on-site gym would have many benefits to the Academy, including being able to host sporting events, conduct on-site P.E. classes, sports practices, and pep rallies as well as non-sporting events such as career and health fairs, school dances and general assemblies. The funds used to pay for outside resources would be utilized instead to cover the general upkeep costs of owning the gym, therefore curbing some of the maintenance costs. See Capital Campaign for more information. The need for an onsite gym has become more urgent due to the loss of three off site locations that were closed, sold or converted to other uses in the past eighteen months.

Table C.3.3: Off-Site Buildings

Name	Address
Salvation Army	2740 Arsenal, St. Louis, MO 63118
12 th & Park Recreation Center	1410 S Tucker Blvd, St. Louis, MO, 63104

Capital Campaign

In January 2015, Lift for Life Academy retained professional counsel to conduct a campaign planning study to survey the philanthropic landscape and create the blueprint for a campaign. After much research, constituent input and planning, Lift For Life Academy has committed to undertaking a capital campaign to construct a 12,000 square foot Health & Well-being Center (gym) on campus plus an addition of more High School classrooms on the second floor of the John Mann Wing. We have established a challenging, yet attainable, goal of \$2,500,000 to complete these critically needed additions. This expansion is in compliance with Lift For Life Academy's 2015 Master Plan (Appendix C.3.3.1) and the 2016 Strategic Plan (Appendix C.3.3.2)

To lead the campaign, in fall of 2015, LFLA hired an experienced fund-raising professional. We have crafted a detailed, persuasive and compelling case for support (***Fulfilling Our Promise***) and have begun donor cultivation, solicitation and stewardship. (See Appendix C.3.3 Case Statement.) Through June 1, 2016, \$1.1 million has been committed. An architect has been hired to help update the Master Plan and collaborate with various committees, including board members and administrators, to plan and design a gym and classrooms that relate to the Capital Campaign. The goal is to begin classroom construction in late 2016.

The Elementary expansion are identified both in our Master and Strategic Plan. Ultimately, this will provide LFLA more educational influence over its students as opposed to the current interventionist model.

Junior Kindergarten & Elementary Grade Space

Facilities and space planning for the future Jr. Kindergarten & Elementary school have been ongoing for the past several months. Our facilities plan is centered on building our future k-12 program as part of a singular campus location. As a result of the facilities planning process, both board members and school leaders believe that having all k-12 facilities in close proximity will serve students and families better.

In order to make a singular campus come together, there are several properties on the eastern side of LFLA's campus (7th Street) that are available and will be combined with current LFLA properties for the Jr. K-Elementary grades. Large land parcels on the eastern end of 7th Street, close to 3rd Street offer a great location for an elementary gym, field, outdoor gardens and general play areas (playground). Our primary goal is to create spaces that are unique to the age and development needs of elementary students. This includes creating unique spaces for junior kindergarten, kindergarten, 1st & 2nd grade students and eventually 3rd through 5th grade students.

Identified in Diagram C.3.1 are current properties being considered as part of the elementary expansion. Consideration has been given to the fact that our needs may change based on the types of properties we secure therefore, additional options are listed below as potential sites.

1617 S. 3rd Street; for Junior K-1st grade, with approximately 9,000 ft² and an adjoining lot for playground. Currently in negotiation for purchase at \$110,000 with about \$300,000 in renovation costs. Funding will come from select donors that are interested in helping launch elementary grades. Space targeted for completion in Spring/Summer 2017.

1700 South Broadway; for 2nd & 3rd grades, with approximately 5,400 square feet with parking and vacant land to the east (3rd St.). Property is currently leased by LFLA for \$24,000 a year. Modifications to space are approximately \$42,000. General operating expenses will cover modifications. Lower level of 4,000 square feet for future related art and offices for future needs. Currently used for middle school students. Those students will be moved to the main campus after completion of the expansion wing (summer of 2017).

1706 S. Broadway; former Art Studio & Coffee Shop is an open floor plan with approximately 4,500 ft² including parking and vacant land to the east (3rd St.). Acquisition cost of \$390,000 with minimal renovation. Property will connect to 1700 and 1710 with walkthrough. Primary function is for cafeteria, commons and library. A bank loan would be utilized for the acquisition cost. The goal is to have available in summer 2018.

1710 S. Broadway; current 6th Grade Center, with approximately 5,000 ft² including parking and vacant lot and currently owned by LFLA. Would connect this property to 1706 S. Broadway. Estimated modifications would be \$15,000.

1825 S. Broadway; currently Flannigan's Paint store, situated on the southwest corner of the LFLA campus and next to the future Health & Wellbeing Center. With over 7,700 ft² of developable space and parking, this building would be primarily used high school electives classrooms. Acquisition and development of this property would open up current and potentially futures spaces on the campus northern boundary for middle and elementary consolidation. Likelihood of acquisition is high as the building is currently under contract from an anonymous LFLA donor.

Elementary Gymnasium and Outdoor Recreation and Learning Space; As part of the development of our elementary facilities, various additions to our property portfolio will be divided into stages that align to the expansion of the elementary school through the additions of grade levels. Diagram C.3.1 illustrates the eastern end of the proposed elementary development. It will include a small gym and the removal of asphalt to create recreational green space and green learning spaces. Funding for the gym's development would come from a small capital campaign. Repurposing of the outdoor

space will utilize existing relationships with various contractors that have assisted LFLA in repurposing commercial spaces into school space.

Other space opportunities:

1716 S. Broadway; 4th & 5th grade, with approximately 5,000 ft² with parking and vacant lot east to 3rd Street. Potential connection to 1710 S. Broadway for all four properties and in one contiguous connection. Acquisition would be approximately \$400,000 with renovations of \$85,000. A bank loan would be acquired.

1724 S. Broadway; currently Bar 101 with 8,000 square feet and large sand volleyball courts to the east. Property is directly to the east of the main LFLA campus.

Budget

Since LFLA began its search for, and acquisition of facilities, the belief of the school's leadership has consistently been that owning, operating, and building equity in our facilities is far more economical than leasing a property. Similarly, by purchasing the facilities, the Academy can avoid any unanticipated additional fees or rent increases sometimes associated with leasing. Eventually loans will be paid off and those funds used to pay mortgages will be used for increasing impact within the classroom. Appendix C.3.4 includes an overview of all LFLA debt and a timeline for building loan acquisitions.

Renovations and Safety

Since the purchase of 1731 S. Broadway in 2001, a variety of renovations have been completed to ensure all building and safety codes are met. All properties meet fire safety standards. Fire systems are inspected annually. All buildings are compliant with occupancy requirements.

Except for a couple of classrooms, the vast majority of the campus is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for accessibility purposes. Due to the burdensome costs of renovating a building constructed prior to ADA, LFLA has developed accommodation plans. If a student with a disability attends LFLA and enrolls in a course that is located in either of the two spaces that are not in compliance with ADA, the course will be moved to a different classroom that is accessible. To clarify, the two buildings mentioned above are ADA compliant except for two small areas. All entrances, exits, classrooms except for the two areas (classrooms) are compliant. If there is a special need that prohibits a student with a disability from accessing those two classrooms, the class will be moved to accommodate the student. A more detailed description of accommodations is explained in *A.6 Special Student Populations*. Lastly, to ensure the comfort and safety of all students, faculty and staff, annual inspections are held to assess the proper operation of the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system (HVAC).

C.4: Contracted Services

LFLA follows the Procurement Policy outlined in the Accounting Policies and Procedures (Appendix C.2.1, included with C.2 Financial Management Section).

Procurement – Goods and Services

Lift For Life Academy procures only those items and services that are required to perform the mission and/or fill a bona fide need. Procurements are made using best value contracting which includes assessing the best value considering quality, performance and price. Lift For Life Academy will use a competitive procurement process, which requires sound business practices for purchases less than \$5,000. The school will also select the best value by obtaining three written quotes for items greater than \$5,000.

1. The School adheres to the following objectives:
 - a. Procurements will be completely impartial based strictly on the merits of supplier and contractor proposals and applicable related considerations such as delivery, quantity, etc.
 - b. Make all purchases in the best interests of the school and its funding sources.
 - c. Obtain quality supplies/services needed for delivery at the time and place required.
 - d. Buy from responsible and dependable sources of supply.
 - e. Obtain maximum value for all expenditures.
 - f. Deal fairly and impartially with all vendors.
 - g. Be above suspicion of unethical behavior at all times; avoid any conflict of interest, related parties or even the appearance of a conflict of interest in the Charter School supplier relationships.
2. Department point persons are allowed to make purchases under \$5,000 that fall under their budget responsibility. Bills/invoices sent directly to the school should be signed off on by the person initiating the purchase. An e-mail request with all relevant information and supporting backup is also acceptable.

Emergency Purchases

An “emergency purchase” is the purchase of goods or services that are so badly needed that the school will suffer financial or operational damage if they are not secured immediately. A decision to purchase may be declared in an emergency at the school’s discretion and “best value” procurement guidelines must be followed. In addition, the purchase must be authorized by the Business Manager or another Charter School designee.

Board Level Bid and Awarded Work

Projects (either groups of items or services) that are expected to be \$10,000 or greater require 3 bids and are reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee and then presented to the board for approval. LFLA verifies status of contractors with the federal government when it is expected that expenditures to that contractor will equal or exceed \$25,000 in a given year.

Insurance:

LFLA maintains multiple insurance plans to ensure proper coverage. The Academy receives coverage through the Missouri Public Entity Risk Management Fund (MOPERM), Hartford, United States Fire Insurance Company, and Missouri Merchants and Manufacturer Association (MMMA). As a shared-risk pool offered by the State of Missouri, MOPERM is not BEST rated. However, MOPERM provides their audit report under “Public Resources” on the MOPERM website^[1] and provides insurance for multiple school districts. MOPERM’s member list can be provided upon request. See Table C.4.1 for a list of our insurance providers and insurance types.

Table C.4.1: LFLA Insurance Summary

Agency	BEST Rating	Coverage	Additional Notes
MOPERM	****	Directors' ad Officers' Liability	Referred to as "Public Officials Errors and Omissions Liability"

^[1] <http://www.moperm.com/resources/audit.php>

MOPERM	****	Commercial General Comprehensive	Does not expressly cover corporal punishment, however, MOPERM's memorandum does not exclude them
United States Fire Ins Co	A	Athletic Participation	
MOPERM	****	Educators' Legal Liability	Part of General Liability
MOPERM	****	Employment Practices Liability	Part of General Liability
MOPERM	****	Sexual Abuse Liability	Part of General Liability
MOPERM	****	Automobile Liability	Covers all buses, driver's education vehicles, and drivers
****	****	Excess Liability or Umbrella	MOPERM does not offer, however, their policy has an unlimited aggregate
MMMA	A	Worker's Compensation Liability	Self-insured trust that is insured for excess by Safety National Casualty Corp (rated A+)
Hartford	A	Surety bond for School's CFO	R.S.Mo 160.405 states: 14. The chief financial officer of a charter school shall maintain: <i>(1) A surety bond in an amount determined by the sponsor to be adequate based on the cash flow of the school; or</i> <i>(2) An insurance policy issued by an insurance company licensed to do business in Missouri on all employees in the amount of five hundred thousand dollars or more that provides coverage in the event of employee theft. This is the one we have opted for. Hartford Crime</i>

			Policy provides this
Anthem	A	Health Insurance	
Anthem	A	Dental Insurance	
Hartford Life & Accident Insurance Company	A	Short Term Disability Insurance	

In lieu of the surety bond requirement for the CFO, LFLA has an Employee Theft policy in place through Hartford with \$500,000 in coverage. See Table C.4-1 for R.S.Mo 160.405 which allows for this in place of the Surety Bond. See the following Appendix items for additional information related to the Academy’s insurance coverage:

- Appendix C.4.1: MOPERM Liability Policies
- Appendix C.4.2: Hartford Crime Policy
- Appendix C.4.3: MOPERM Property Policy
- Appendix C.4.4: US Fire Ins Co Policy (Athletics)
- Appendix C.4.5: MMMA Worker’s Comp Policy
- Appendix C.4.6: Anthem Health and Dental Policies
- Appendix C.4.7: Hartford Short Term Disability Policy

Food and Transportation Services are not contracted out but rather, are provided by LFLA staff. As transportation reflects a significant portion of our budget we are opting to share more about how we provide those services in this section.

LFLA provides transportation to students pursuant to R.S.Mo 167.231. LFLA believes owning and operating a bus fleet is both cost-effective and allows the school to

provide quality transportation services to students. During the first six years of the school's operations, transportation services were provided by a third party busing company. The ability to directly oversee the fleet has provided more flexibility in scheduling and allowed the Academy to react quickly to calls from parents or guardians regarding students' transportation needs. The Academy's consistently high attendance rate (~92%) can be attributed, in part, to the internal operation of bus services. Buses strive for flexibility to wait for a student that is running late and attempt to be in good positions to accommodate families that move frequently. By eliminating large amounts of communication with an intermediary, there is less opportunity for mistakes to be made. All of the Academy's students are eligible for bus transportation services regardless of where they live in the city of St. Louis, though some families opt to use other means of transportation.

Drivers and Fleet

The Academy's fleet consists of twelve buses. Table C.4-1 provides specific loan information, if applicable, for each bus. Based on current repayment plans the current bus loan will be retired in FY20. The bus sizes range from 29 to 71 passengers and all buses meet state and federal requirements for safety. Drivers inspect buses directly after running a route to ensure passenger safety and proper function. The Academy maintains insurance coverage on all transportation vehicles used through the Missouri Public Entity Risk Management Fund (MOPERM). See Appendix C.4.1 for a copy of insurance ID cards.

All bus drivers hired by LFLA are required to have a CDL Class B license with PS certification, a minimum of one-year experience, a current DOT physical, and fingerprint and family registry background checks. To sustain student safety and integrity in the operation of school transportation, random drug checks are administered throughout the year.

The bus driving team reports to the transportation supervisor. The transportation supervisor oversees drivers, establishes and evaluates the efficiency of bus routes, and makes accommodations for routine maintenance. As many students who attend Lift For Life Academy move often, the role of the transportation supervisor is vital in stabilizing a child's ability to attend school every day.

As required, the transportation supervisor conducts bus driver training on an annual basis by providing a minimum of eight hours of training during the school year to each employed by bus driver (162.065, RSMO).

Table C.4.1: LFLA Buses

Bus Number	Status of Bus
3	Combined Loan
4	Owned
5	Owned
6	Owned
7	Combined Loan
8	Owned
9	Owned
10	Owned
11	Owned
13	Owned
14	Owned
15	Owned
Bus Number	Principal Loan Amt
3/7	\$128,942
TOTAL	\$128,942

Budget

Since the school began providing its own transportation, adjustments have been made yearly to accommodate the varying expense of fuel, maintenance, drivers and any inspections that may be required. Table C.4.2 includes the amount budgeted and spent by fiscal year from FY15 to the present. FY17 budget includes discarding 2 older buses that incur greater maintenance costs and purchasing 2 new buses. Therefore, it is expected that bus maintenance expenses will be less in FY17. In an effort to be as accurate and efficient as possible, the school’s business manager estimates costs for the upcoming year. To reach a budget projection, the business manager conducts research on the Department of Energy website, speaks with fuel providers and identifies trends in historical transportation expenses. The majority of the cost for LFLA’s transportation services is covered by a combination of state funds specifically earmarked for transportation, along with revenue received through the Basic Formula. Due to the level of uncertainty which encompasses transportation services, the school makes accommodations when unforeseen costs may impact the budget. The projected budget for FY17 is based on: the anticipated need of drivers and students to be transported, the approximate cost of fuel given projections and historical information, possible maintenance costs that are predetermined by pre/post trip forms, and annual inspections or supplies needed, given the present inventory. LFLA does not use contracted transportation except for unusual circumstances such as a driver or driver(s)

being out on extended medical leave. Therefore LFLA has not budgeted for a third party transportation provider, given the size of the fleet and the consistent upkeep of all vehicles.

Table C.4.2: LFLA Transportation Budget Summary

Description	FY15 Budget	FY15 Actual	FY16 Budget	FY16 Actual (YTD)	FY17 Budget
Bus Drivers	\$534,012	\$461,191	\$461,979	\$492,305	\$588,945
Fuel	\$107,910	\$ 79,377	\$ 87,380	\$ 57,733	\$ 92,732
Maintenance	\$ 70,650	\$133,556	\$ 87,000	\$122,517	\$ 74,400
Miscellaneous	\$ 24,852	\$ 38,767	\$ 30,146	\$ 35,725	\$ 28,252
TOTAL	\$737,424	\$712,891	\$666,505	\$708,280	\$784,329

D.1 Pre-Opening Plan

Elementary Expansion Introduction

As a current charter middle and high school, Lift For Life Academy (LFLA) has developed this pre-opening plan for its proposed elementary expansion. This pre-opening plan is connected closely to many existing aspects of LFLA's current middle and high school operations, including curriculum, finances, and facilities. As a result, information contained in this section may also be presented in other sections of the charter application.

Board Governance

The proposed elementary expansion will be part of the current Local Education Agency (LEA) known as Lift For Life Academy. As a result, board members currently providing governance and oversight of LFLA's middle school and high school will also be responsible for LFLA's elementary school when it is opened. The composition of LFLA's board with background information is presented in section B.2 of the application. Participation from the Board has already included the formation of an elementary subcommittee, which has been instrumental in preliminary planning in the areas of curriculum, staffing, budget and facilities. The elementary subcommittee began meeting with LFLA administrators and teacher leaders along with outside experts beginning in January of 2016 and through the spring of 2016. The elementary subcommittee will continue to meet regularly through 2016-2017 and report progress to the board at monthly board meetings. The elementary subcommittee chair is Dr. Mary Jo Liberstein.

Elementary School Enrollment Projections and Recruitment

LFLA has established enrollment projections for the proposed elementary expansion beginning with the 2017-2018 school year. As table D.1.1 (also presented in section A.5) illustrates below, the elementary school would begin with a junior kindergarten (jr. k), kindergarten (k), and first grade in 2017-2018. A grade level would then be added each subsequent year until the elementary school reaches jr.k/k-5th grade in 2021-2022.

Table D.1.1: Anticipated Enrollment Data for the Elementary Expansion

Year	Grade							Total
	Jr. K	K	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	
2016-17	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2017-18	40	40	40	X	X	X	X	120
2018-19	40	40	40	40	X	X	X	160
2019-20	40	40	40	40	40	X	X	200
2020-21	40	40	40	40	40	40	X	240
2021-22	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	280

The recruitment of LFLA students will align closely with current methods of recruitment for the middle school and high school (see section A.5 for grades 6-12 historical enrollment). These methods along with supporting documents included in the appendix are described in section B.5 of the charter application. Presented here is an overview of primary recruitment strategies that will also be used in recruiting elementary school students:

- sending enrollment packages to families using direct mailing lists
- distributing postcards and brochures
- word of mouth from families of current students
- delivering enrollment information door-to-door in targeted neighborhoods
- advertisements on television, radio, and newspaper
- hired a *Recruitment Specialist*, a former graduate, that understands the academy, can explain the benefits and the positive impact on his life. *Recruitment Specialist* uses a ‘boots on the ground’ approach to network neighborhoods, not for profits, camps and after school centers to introduce the community that LFLA is an option

In addition to the above strategies, parent feedback and surveys have expressed strong interest among current LFLA parents in the opening of an elementary school. As mentioned previously, the opportunity for parents to choose a singular k-12 school located on a singular campus would provide a transformative educational opportunity for city parents and families.

Staff Hiring and Faculty

Since the proposed elementary school would be part of a singular campus that currently services middle and high school students, this means that many staff positions, including managerial and senior level leadership positions, would not have to

be duplicated. For example, the Executive Director, Deputy Director, business manager, and human resources manager positions are currently in place and would not require duplication with expansion. In addition, some key services such as, food and transportation, may require minimal additions of support staff with regards to elementary expansion. As the elementary enrollment grows, positions would be added in order to provide an appropriate level of service. With regards to instructional staff, Table D.1.2 provides an overview of LFLA’s elementary staffing projections (also presented in section B.4 of the application).

In reviewing Table D.1.2, it is important to note that LFLA plans to hire its elementary school principal prior to the first year of elementary operations. This person will serve as an instructional coach/principal intern as he/she begins preparing for the 2017-2018 school year. The elementary principal would then be supported by an instructional coach after assuming the position of principal in 2017-2018. In addition to curriculum development, the principal intern will be responsible for developing a parent engagement plan. This includes identifying parents with elementary age children and gaining their participation in the development of the school’s curriculum and instructional program.

**Table D.1.2: Staffing Projections
5 year Staffing Plan-Junior Kindergarten-5th**

Positions	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Student Enrollment	0	120	160	200	240	280
Administration	0	1	1	1	1	1
Instructional Coach	.5	.5	.5	.5	1	1
Social Worker/Counselor/Nurse	0	0	1	1	1	1
Administrative Assistant	0	1	1	1	1	1
Regular Ed. Teachers	0	4	6	8	10	12
Reading Specialist	0	0	.5	.5	1	1
Early Childhood Teachers/Staff	0	4	4	4	4	4
K-5 Teacher’s Assistants	0	2	3	4	5	6
Special Education Teachers	0	0	.5	1	2	2
Specialist/Electives	0	0	1	2	4	4
Before/After Care Staff	0	3	3	3	3	3

Facilities-Junior Kindergarten & Elementary Grade Space

As presented in Section C.3 of the charter application, creating a singular jr. k/k-12 campus is LFLA's goal. Facilities and space planning for the future Jr. Kindergarten & Elementary school have been ongoing for the past several months. As a result of the facilities planning process, both board members and school leaders believe that having all k-12 facilities in close proximity will serve students and families better.

As part of this process, LFLA is investigating several properties on the eastern side of LFLA's campus (7th Street) that are available and would be combined with current LFLA properties as part of the proposed expansion. Large land parcels on the eastern end of 7th Street, close to 3rd Street offer a great location for an elementary gym, field, outdoor gardens and general play areas (playground). Our primary goal is to create spaces that are unique to the age and development needs of elementary students. This includes creating unique spaces for junior kindergarten, kindergarten, 1st & 2nd grade students and eventually 3rd through 5th grade students.

Identified in Diagram D.1.1 are current properties being considered as part of the elementary expansion. The Executive Director leads the property acquisition process with support from the board's finance and executive committees. Board approval is required for the acquisition of new properties to LFLA's portfolio. Consideration has been given to the fact that our needs may change based on the types of properties we secure therefore, additional options are listed below as potential sites. The identification of specific properties along with projected acquisition dates is below Diagram D.1.1.

Diagram D.1.1: Campus Overview with Elementary Expansion Sites



1617 S. 3rd Street; for Junior K-1st grade, with approximately 9,000 ft² and an adjoining lot for playground. Currently in negotiation for purchase at \$110,000 with about \$300,000 in renovation costs. Funding will come from select donors that are interested in helping launch elementary grades. Space targeted for completion in Spring/Summer 2017.

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Elementary Gymnasium and Outdoor Recreation and Learning Space; As part of the development of our elementary facilities, various additions to our property portfolio will be divided into stages that align to the expansion of the elementary school through the additions of grade levels. Diagram C.3.1 illustrates the eastern end of the proposed elementary development. It will include a small gym and the removal of asphalt to create recreational green space and green learning spaces. Funding for the gym's development would come from a small capital campaign. Repurposing of the outdoor

space will utilize existing relationships with various contractors that have assisted LFLA in repurposing commercial spaces into school space.

Development of New Curriculum at the Elementary Level

As described in section A.2 of the charter application, the expansion of LFLA to include a junior kindergarten/k-5 elementary program began with exploratory meetings that included participation from board members, administrators, teachers, and outside experts. A curriculum sub-committee was also formed to develop the mission and guiding principles of the proposed elementary school. The two primary guiding principles that emerged were that the elementary curriculum incorporates a standard-based instructional system and expeditionary learning.

The standards-based approach aligns closely with standards-based systems already implemented at the middle and high school levels. The expeditionary approach to learning represents a blending of several curriculum principles. These principles are intended to move students beyond the foundations of math, reading, and writing literacy by also focusing on their inquiry/critical thinking skills along with their *Habits of Mind*¹ as learners. The expeditionary approach to learning is hands-on, most often thematically-based, and expects students to demonstrate a constructivist approach to student understanding and learning. This transformative approach to elementary education in St. Louis' urban core does not currently exist fully and will elevate both the quality of students and educational experience at LFLA's middle and high school. The elementary school's curriculum design is intended to accomplish two primary goals: First, proficiency and/or exceeding growth in communication arts and math for all students. Second, teach and grow the *Habits of Mind* that will prepare students for successful school experiences in middle, high school, and post-secondary.

Although the development of the curriculum at LFLA's elementary school will be primarily teacher driven, the need to support teachers and students with the appropriate resources, especially in reading, writing, and math, is essential. These foundational resources are intended to make sure students meet the state's elementary standards. The table below represents an overview of the curriculum's foundations with the expectation that all learner outcomes/objectives align fully to the scope and sequence included in the Missouri Early Learning Standards and Missouri Learning Standards. In addition, the projected minutes of instruction for k-3 are identified. Please note, the identified minutes per subject areas are derived from a weekly average as opposed to a fixed daily schedule (6.5 hours per school day). The acquisition of curriculum materials in English/Language Arts and Math will be in place for the 2017-2018 school year. Preliminary curriculum development and writing will begin in the 2016-17 school year and continue in-line with the elementary expansion timeline.

¹ Costa, Arthur and Kallick, Bena. See *Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind* (2008) and other works.

Table D.1.3 Proposed Elementary Curriculum Overview

Subject Area	Curriculum Supports
English/Language Arts 120 minutes per day	k-3, <i>Open Court Reading</i> from McGraw-Hill emphasizes phonics, phonemic awareness, and fluency. Leveled sets allow for differentiation. k-5, <i>Ready Gen</i> by Pearson, supplemental reading series that provides cross-discipline and thematic texts.
Math 90 minutes per day	k-5, <i>Eureka Math</i> from Great Minds emphasizes relevant problem solving, computational fluency, and explaining the why. <i>Study Island</i> computer-based practice and benchmarking.
Science 45 minutes per day	k-5, Teacher Designed Curriculum with units of study aligned to Missouri Learning Standards. In addition, the science curriculum will be inquiry-based and hands-on with textual support available on-line.
Social Studies 45 minutes per day	k-5, Teacher Designed Curriculum with units of study aligned to Missouri Learning Standards with an emphasis on reading/writing literacy as part of social science inquiry. Textual support will be available on-line.
Art and Physical Education 90 minutes per day	In addition to aligning to the state’s standards for Art and PE instruction, specials or elective classes will support the school’s expeditionary focus. For example, students in Art may complete projects that describe the School as Museum.

Budget

As mentioned previously, the elementary expansion will fit into existing aspects of LFLA’s middle and high school operations, including budget development and implementation. This includes additional staffing (instructional and non-instructional), curriculum and materials, and facilities. Table D.1.4 (also included in section B.4), describes LFLA’s projected revenue, salaries, and benefits. In reviewing Table D.1.4, the increase of students and staff beginning in 2017-2018 accounts for the elementary expansion beginning in 2017-2018 with a junior kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade. An additional grade level would be added each subsequent year until the school reaches the fifth grade in 2021-2022.

In addition to Table D.1.4, a six-year projection of revenue and expenditures by accounting code is included in this application as Appendix C.1.2. This Appendix item describes in significantly greater detail LFLA’s revenues and expenditures as the

elementary expansion progresses. In addition, Appendix C.1.6, also provides additional staff budgeting details that align to LFLA’s elementary expansion. Both these Appendix items have also been uploaded to Epicenter as Appendix D.1.1 and Appendix D.1.2.

Table D.1.4: Historical and Projected Revenue, Salaries, and Benefits

	<u>2016-2017</u>	<u>2017-2018</u>	<u>2018-2019</u>	<u>2019-2020</u>	<u>2020-2021</u>	<u>2021-2022</u>
Annual Revenue	\$7,622,061	\$9,772,157	\$9,391,950	\$10,497,046	\$10,289,293	\$11,218,660
<u>Junior K, Elementary, Middle and High Total Enrollment</u> ^[2]	596	716	756	796	836	876
<u>Total # of Educators</u> ^[3]	64	70	74.5	78.5	83.5	86.5
Total Dollar Amount of Educator Salaries & Benefits	\$3,181,564	\$3,546,483	\$3,867,570	\$4,153,500	\$4,503,362	\$4,751,292
Educator Salary as % of Total Revenue	42%	36%	41%	40%	44%	42%
Total Employees	111	130.5	137	143.5	149	155
Total Employees Salary & Benefits	\$5,569,565	\$6,536,061	\$6,984,766	\$7,454,555	\$7,886,350	\$8,230,068
Total Employees Salary and Benefits as % of Total Revenue	73%	67%	74%	71%	77%	73%

*Student enrollment number is for August

^[1] All years are budgeted amounts.

^[2] Enrollment varies as we try to accommodate the enrollment of siblings.

We predict a slight decrease in sibling enrollment over the years as students graduate.

[3] For the purposes of chart the term educators refer to those staff directly responsible for providing educational, social work, and guidance services to students.

D.2. Closure Plan

The Board of Directors and staff at Lift For Life Academy (LFLA) understand that closure of a charter school can be very difficult for school stakeholders, particularly students, families, and staff. If it is determined that LFLA, for any reason, will cease operations as public charter school, LFLA's Board of Directors will work with our charter sponsor and academy leadership to ensure that the school's closure is orderly and in the best interests of displaced families and staff. Special emphasis will be placed on successful transitions for all parties involved. Some actions necessary for an orderly closure will take place within a week, while others may require one month to a year. In addition to a successful transition for students and stakeholders, LFLA will be committed to working with DESE and its sponsor to ensure appropriate fiduciary actions take place with regards to assets, revenues, and expenditures.

The school closure policy and procedures may be adjusted and/or revised in collaboration with the granting of the charter through the Missouri Charter Public Schools Commission.

Overview of Closing Procedures

Due Date	Action Steps	Responsibility
Time of decision	-begin developing a closure budget plan in collaboration with the sponsor for eventual submission to DESE.	Executive Director and Board of Directors
1-week of decision	-communicate closure decision to parents -communicate closure decision to staff -communicate closure to DESE and initial budget closure plan -communicate closure to community partners	Executive Director and Board of Directors
1-week of decision	-press release	Executive Director and Board of Directors
Remainder of school year following decision	-continue to operate the instructional program, including administering of state tests	School Leadership
On-going until closure	-board meetings continue along with financial review, disposal of assets, and insurance review.	-Executive Director and Board of Directors
1-month from decision	-convene parent meeting focused on school transition	-School Leadership
1-month from	-formal notification for termination	-Executive Director

decision	of employment, including benefits	
Within 60 days of last day	-document transition of organization records, including plan for retention	-Executive Director
Within 90 days of end of school year	Submit final closeout audit that documents disposition of all liabilities	Executive Directors and Board of Directors