

## Executive Summary

Name of Charter School: Leadership Preparatory Academy

Proposed Charter Term Length: Five Years

Current Grade Range: K-8      Grade Range at the End of the Charter Term: K-8

Expected Enrollment at the end of the Charter Term: 720

This application was approved by DeKalb County Board of Education on \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.

For each year of the NEW charter term, indicate the number of students the charter school plans to serve.

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Year 1	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80					720
Year 2	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80					720
Year 3	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80					720
Year 4	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80					720
Year 5	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80					720

### 1. State the charter’s school’s mission and describe why this initiative is important to the students it will serve.



LPA has a clear and focused mission that establishes why the school exists. The vision is the audacious goal of what we would like to become. LPA’s goals consist of critical components of the School’s mission and organization that relate to students, staff, parents, demonstration of leadership proficiencies, and demonstration of achievement of skills in reading, writing, math, science, and social

studies state assessments. Our goals are:

Figure 1: LPA’s Teaching and Learning Framework

Goal 1: LPA will meet all targets required by the CCRI and Beating the Odds goals, as defined by Georgia state requirements and the

State’s waiver for No Child Left Behind Child. This goal will be subject to any amendment, waiver or reauthorization thereof, during the term of the charter; Goal 2: LPA will demonstrate proficiency and

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improvement on national norm referenced measurements; Goal 3: In each year of the charter 100% of the students in grades K-8 will complete an electronic Leadership Portfolio that will document satisfactory completion of at least 80% of the objectives of the Leadership Curriculum for their specific grade level; Goal 4: LPA will implement programs and procedures that will lead to state STEM Certification by year 3 of the renewal term of the chart; Goal 5: LPA shall be economically sustainable; Goal 6: LPA shall ensure that all Governance Board Members effective training; and Goal 7: LPA promotes a positive school experience that engages students, parents, and teaches. The School's mission is to develop scholars through a rigorous academic program that engages all stakeholders by maximizing students' potential to lead in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. To accomplish this mission, LPA trains and develops its students to become 21<sup>st</sup> Century scholars and leaders through the implementation of its *Teaching and Learning Framework* (See Figure 1: LPA's *Teaching and Learning Framework*).

Our mission communicates the direction and focus of the school environment and serves as the north star around which all educational efforts for students are aligned. Clear, measurable and time sensitive goals are at the heart of the LPA school experience we desire for our students.

The mission guides and drives the learning process and determines how student learning is prioritized. The mission of LPA is rooted in the belief that all students deserve the opportunity for a rigorous academic program that maximize students' potential to lead in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

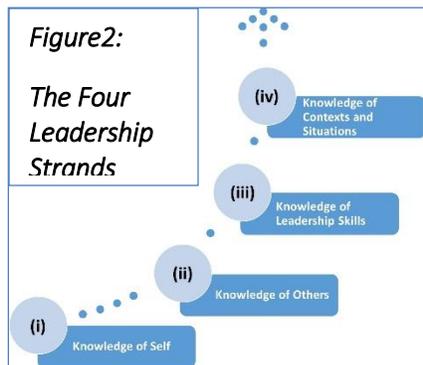
In light of the mission, and vision, and consistent with LPA's core values about what it means to be a leader in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the *Teaching and Learning Framework* has at its center College and Career-Ready Students. LPA aims to recognize and support the individual talents of each student in ways that will help him/her to succeed.

The school's mission is given to the stakeholders consistently since it is our tool to drive growth within the school community and guide it towards our desired outcomes. Since the inception of the school, parents have had numerous opportunities to provide feedback on programs and services through Parent

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University, Coffee and Conversation, Success Meetings, Curriculum Nights and our online feedback box. This feedback is used in the comprehensive school improvement plan and in developing and/or improving academic programs for our scholars for this petition cycle. During the 2018-2019 school term, we invited parents whose students had matriculated at LPA for more than five years, to participate in a listening session. During this session, the Administrative Team along with the school's Parent Liaison, listened to parents concerns and compliments of Leadership Preparatory Academy. The goal of the session was to listen with intent on parents' perceptions of how well the vision and mission the founders of the school has been executed. Further, those conversations yielded many ideas to refine the activities in the Leadership Curriculum to ensure that students are fulfilling and embracing the tenants of the curriculum. The essence of what was discussed was captured, ranked and analyzed into two categories – policies and procedures. Those items that were captured under policies were presented to the Governance Board in an Executive Summary for additional review. Those items that were captured under procedures were presented to the Administrative Team for review and in many cases implementation. We believe that hearing from our stakeholders continues to hold us accountable, and assists us in reassessing our programs.

### **2. Describe the charter's academic program, specifically focusing on why it is innovative in DeKalb County School District and more specifically, about the school students currently attend.**



#### The Leadership Curriculum

(<https://www.leadershippreparatoryacademy.org/2020-2025-charter-renewal-application/files/documents/Leadership%20Curriculum.docx>) is designed to

develop students' leadership skills while teaching core curricular course content areas through practical application in normal, daily living. The Leadership Curriculum identifies important processes, skills, and opportunities that promote the development of

leadership skills to in all students. These leadership concepts, understandings, and experience opportunities are centered on four strands (see Figure 2: The Four Leadership Strands). All components of the

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Leadership Curriculum are embedded within and aligned to grade-range and age-appropriate Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Through the Leadership Curriculum, students will: (i) develop an awareness of their own leadership potential; (ii) develop essential leadership skills that enable them to act responsibly in all aspects of their lives; (iii) become citizens who possess the leadership abilities to meet present and future challenges in the new global economy; and (iv) learn and practice essential leadership skills within their learning community. LPA accomplishes this by focusing on leadership training, rigorous academics, and character development studies.

In keeping with the goals and objectives of the DCSD, there are many schools that offer additional programs beyond the required curriculum; however, none of the magnet, theme, etc. have a focus on leadership studies. A thorough search through the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) database did not reveal any K-8 schools that offered programs similar to the ones at LPA. The Leadership Curriculum continues to evolve to address skills needed in our rapidly changing world. Our Leadership Curriculum is an innovative concept that is grounded in research. Our Leadership Curriculum is an important concept that is grounded in research which links leadership to instruction in order to provide students with an advantage in tomorrow's competitive world. Teachers embed leadership development in existing instruction within all subject areas at various grade levels. Goals for the Leadership Curriculum include: (a) To develop in every LPA student an awareness of his or her own leadership potential, (b) To assist students in developing essential leadership skills that enable them to act responsibly in all aspects of their lives with specific emphasis on community involvement and service, (c) To develop citizens who possess the leadership abilities to meet present and future challenges in a global society, (d) To provide students with opportunities to learn and practice essential leadership skills within a learning community. The evolution of the Leadership Curriculum relies heavily on students being involved in their community through service organizations outside of the school day. Students are rewarded and encouraged to volunteer their time on issues that they feel strongly about. Additionally, students participate in school

wide service projects. At the end of each year, class representatives meet with the Chief Academic Officer to discuss projects that they want to continue to support or add to the list of supported projects. These projects have included UNICEF, Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, shoebox drive for homeless shelters and many other organizations. In the school, students have opportunities to run for class representatives, school wide leadership positions (SGA), they can serve as assembly leaders, lost and found leaders, tour guides, recycle leaders and as members of organized service oriented clubs (BETA, Safety Patrol, CAO Advisory Group, etc.) .

Every student will participate in age appropriate activities designed to support leadership and identifying the processes to achieve beneficial outcomes. LPA will continue to provide authentic experiences on how the democratic process functions (Student Leaders Council) and how individuals can impact communities in positive ways (Community Service Projects). As students advance through the grade levels and the Leadership Curriculum, they will learn how to identify community needs, how to develop a plan of action, how to turn a plan into actions, and how to reflect on change and self-awareness. The leadership skills that they acquire from school and working in their communities make them poised to become visionary leaders for their future. As we continue to harness the talents of these students through the infusion of our Leadership and Stem curriculums, we firmly believe that we are expanding opportunities for DeKalb County students to solve the challenges that they will certainly face in the future and accede to influential positions on the world's stage.

**3. Describe the charter school's organizational structure, specifically focusing on its innovation and need for flexibility.**

Leadership Preparatory Academy's school design is built on decades of scientific research into what essential practices lead to high performing schools, which is based on the findings of widely respected researchers in the field of "Effective Schools," including Ronald R. Edmonds, Lawrence W. Lezotte, Robert J. Marzano, Mardale Dunsworth, and Dawn Billings. In keeping with LPA's vision, the school's design incorporates 10 essential elements, taken from the Effective School Analysis, which form the blueprint for developing LPA into a high performing charter school.

## Leadership Preparatory Academy

These essential elements are:

- Clear and Focused Mission
- Safe and Orderly Environment
- Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum
- Instructional Framework
- Classroom Assessment and Evaluation
- School Culture of High Expectations
- School and Instructional Leadership
- Professional Growth, Development and Evaluation
- Student Connections and Engagements
- Student, Family and Community Support

Leadership Preparatory Academy will continue to focus on building 21<sup>st</sup> century skills including problem solving, teamwork, initiative, self-direction and career development. We have modified our school structure to divide our student body into two houses – lower school for grades K-4 and upper school for grades 5-8. Currently, exploration, discovery, problem solving are huge concepts that our Upper School students are tackling. Teaching students the engineering model through the STEM curriculum of engaging, exploring, explaining, extending, and evaluation is the backbone of our work. More than ever, it is important for our students to be equipped with the knowledge to solve tough problems, gather and evaluate evidence, and make sense of the information. These skills students learn by studying science, technology, engineering and math. Students in our lower school, spend a large amount of their time engaged in developmentally appropriate hands-on activities. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own learning, share their insights with their peers, and apply new learning to authentic, real-life situations.

As student gain this knowledge, there is an expectation that students will utilize these skills through their community service. We believe that students learn how powerful they can be by taking actions which impact their community. Learning is enriched and students are strongly motivated when there are

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authentic purposes for learning. By utilizing the skills, they acquire through the Leadership Curriculum, students communicate persuasively to effect change. Our students are becoming keenly aware of the power that they possess when they organize, collaborate and communicate the changes that they desire for their world. Because of our unique approach to teaching and learning, LPA has delivered on its promise to provide a robust learning environment in which students develop the academic skills, scholarly habits, and character traits they need to succeed in college and beyond.

While some argue that leadership is born, we mirror what the legendary football coach Vince Lombardi once said, “Leaders aren’t born, they are made. And they are made just like anything else, through hard work.” We take that idea a step forward by reminding our students that the core values of Excellence, Responsibility, Respect, Integrity and Courage which are the backbone of our school coupled with hard work will propel them to their next level.

While it is always our goal to hire professional qualified educators, the flexibility to employ teachers who have a deep content knowledge but may not have met the requirements to be certified through the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC). LPA ensures that the degree and courses taken establish the professional qualifications of the instructor and that the teacher embarks on a monitored plan in order for the teacher to become credentialed through the PSC. Additionally, because of the shortage of math and science teachers across the nation, the flexibility to hire teachers who have a minimum of a college degree and an extensive background knowledge in these subject areas is essential to the continued success of our school. The flexibility that exists with this waiver assists us in attracting and retaining a faculty who embraces innovation, demonstrates initiative and demands high expectations from all of their students.

LPA represents a vital kindergarten-to-college pipeline for the families of DeKalb County. Through its innovative leadership curriculum, rigorous academic curriculum, and our multi-faceted continuous school improvement model we are fervent in our pursuit of our vision.

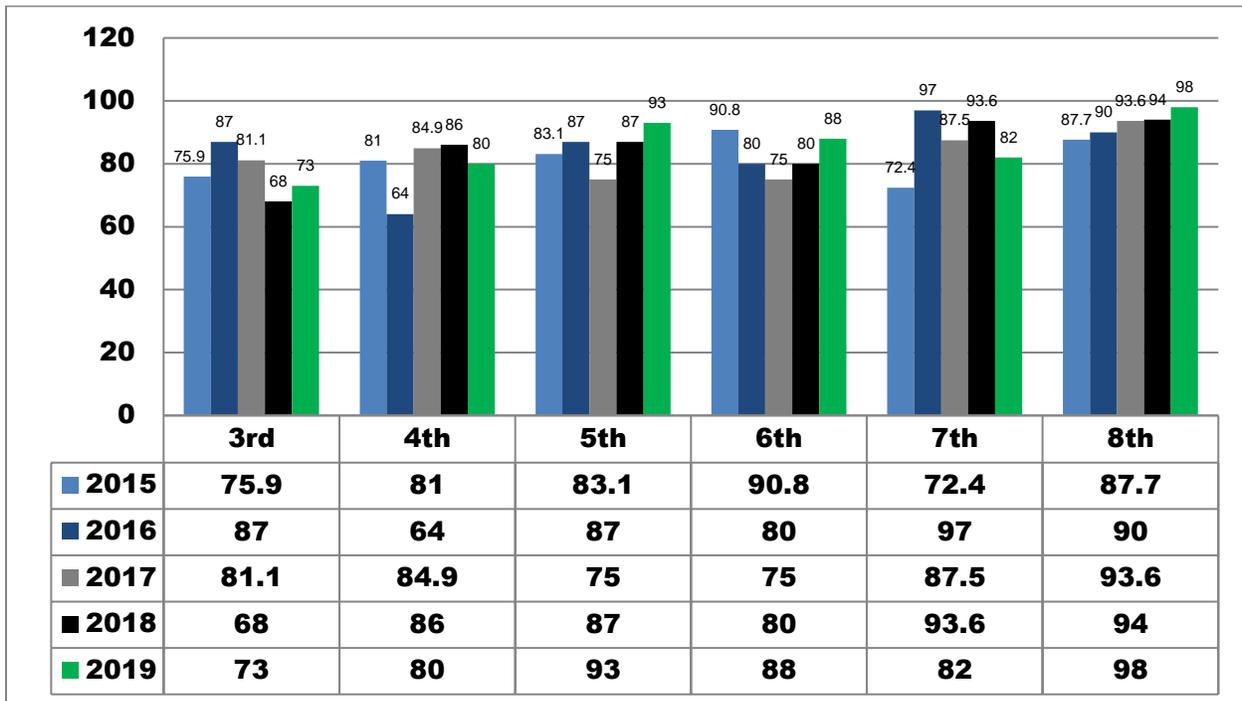
## Past Performance

- 1. Page# 8 Provide a narrative describing how the charter school performed in meeting the academic and organizational goals set forth in its current charter contract. In your narrative:**

Leadership Preparatory Academy's Accountability and Assessment Team (A&AT) has maintained a laser focus on the progress of each student and cohorts of students. The data gleaned from student performance has been used to determine student placement, evaluation of instructional resources, refinement of enrichment programs and teacher grade level and subject assignment. We believe that data serves as a powerful tool in the school-wide decision making process. In each year of the charter term, our objective was to meet and/or exceed DeKalb County Schools and the State of Georgia on annual performance measures. While many may perceive those objectives as being audacious, we see it as a circle of opportunity to continue developing an institution that will be a pillar of the community.

The Georgia Milestones Assessment is a comprehensive summative assessment program designed for students in grades three through eight. The charts and tables on the following pages indicate how LPA students in each grade levels progressed toward meeting the state standard over this charter term. The tables will also show how LPA students performed relative to all students enrolled in the DCSD. Our evaluation of the data reported in science scores continues to be an area of concern although, there has been improvement. LPA recognizes the importance of the continued implementation of STEM. LPA was recently awarded a grant from Project Lead the Way for the next two years to provide teachers with professional development and to purchase additional science resources.

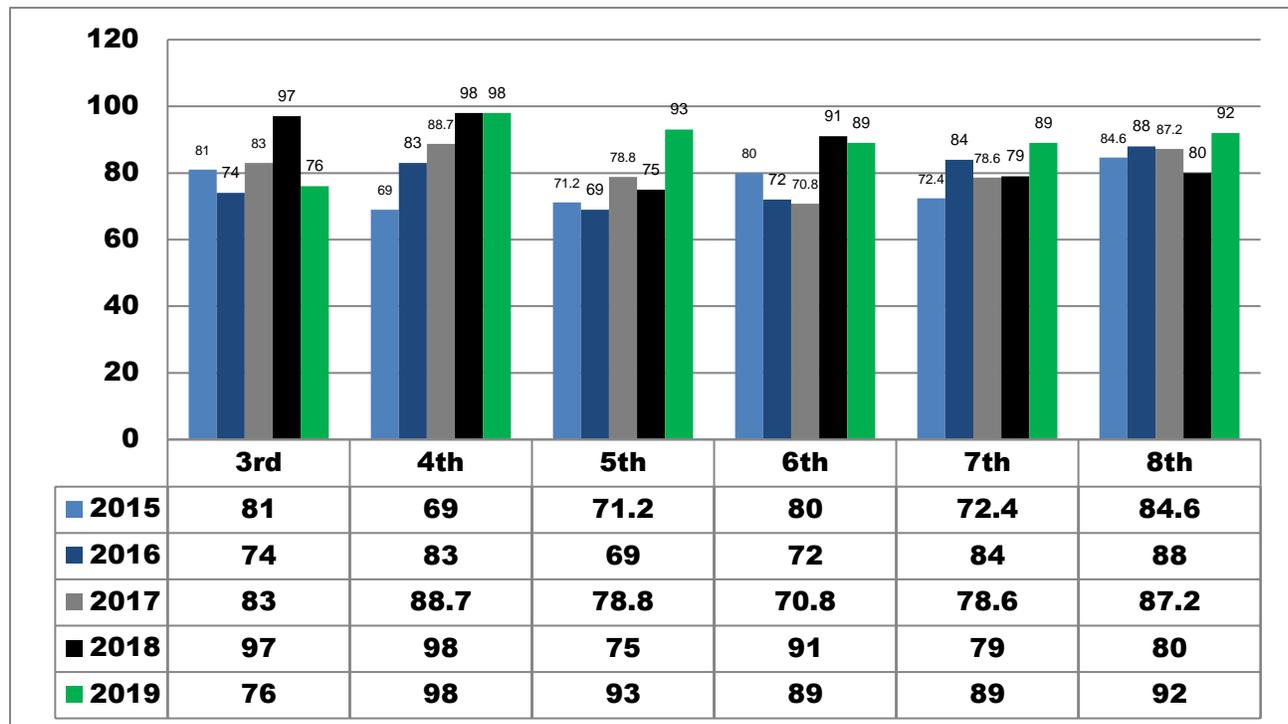
**LPA GMAS ELA - % of Students Developing and Above 2015-2019**



Over the course of the last five years, the percent of third grade students scoring Developing and Above on the state standards has had mixed results. While there was a five percentage (5%) increase from 2018 to 2019 school year, we recognize that there is additional work that needs to be done in developing student literacy skills in the earlier grades. During the 2019 school year, the school employed a full time Literacy Coach to focus on developing the pedagogy of the teachers in the early grades to assist in addressing the literacy skills. Students in grade four consistently performed at the Developing and above levels during the four-year period. In 2016, we experienced an unacceptable decrease in student performance in some areas. As a result of this decrease, additional support was provided to these students during a carefully crafted after school enrichment program titled “Boot Camp”. Additionally, the CLO initiated, as part of the enrichment programs, a “War on Math” initiative. The following year demonstrated an increase in performance as a result of this laser focus on these cohorts of students. Students in grade five consistently performed at the Developing and Above range with the highest rate occurring in the 2019 school year, the year most current data is available. Students in grade six continue to increase their performance level over time. Seventh grade students saw an eleven percent (11%) drop

over grade level performance; however, the LPA cohort group increased 2 points over its previous year’s performance. Eighth grade students at LPA continue to increase their performance year over year. When we compare the LPA cohort data from 2015, demonstrates a steady increase in the number of students who perform at the Developing and Above range. Finally, ninety eight percent (98%) of the LPA eighth graders who will be matriculating to the high school grade levels in the 2019-2020 school year are at a proficient achievement level and have obtained the knowledge and skills necessary to be on track for ninth grade work with a very minimum need for additional academic support.

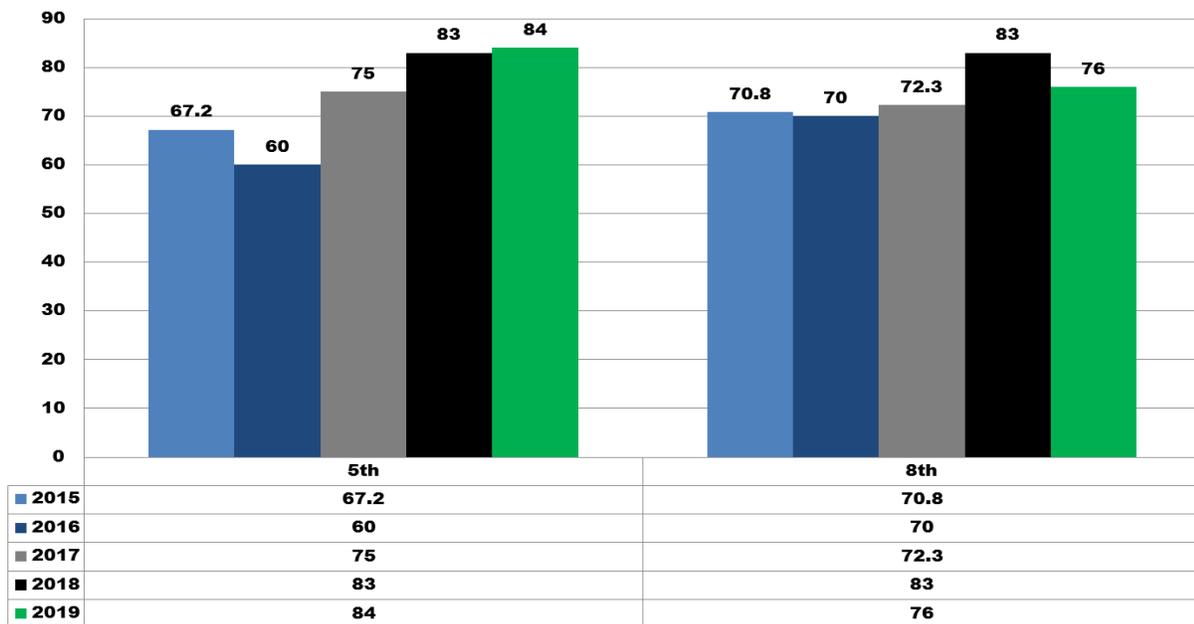
**LPA Mathematics - % of Students Developing and Above 2015-2019**



Students’ performance in grade 3 from 2015 to 2018 showed increases with a slight decrease occurring in 2016 but rebounding in 2018. The results in 2019 showed a significant drop in math performance. The Assessment and Accountability Team (A & AT) meets regularly to examine student performance and make recommendations for instructional improvements. The A & AT have examined the many factors that led to the drop in achievement for these students and have already developed a comprehensive math

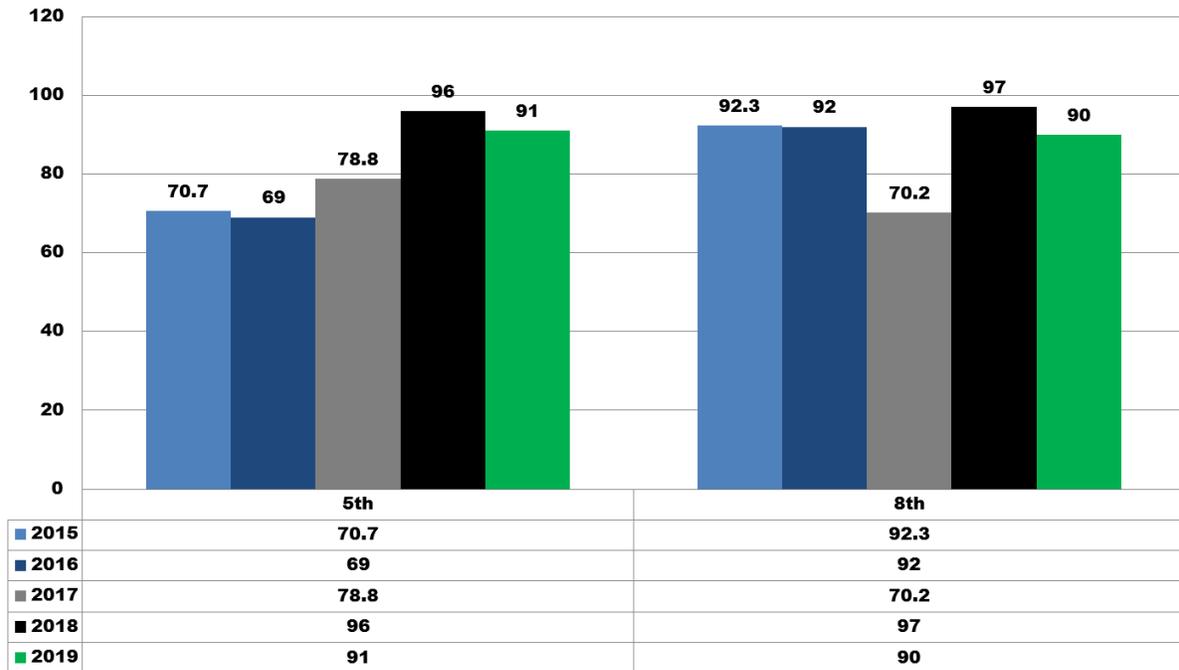
plan to address students’ weaknesses based on the specific domains. LPA employed a Math Coach in the Fall of 2018 to begin addressing the challenges that we were viewing with student performance. The Math Coach will be working more closely with the fourth grade math teacher to button up the identified areas of concern. Students in grades four through eight have continued to show significant improvement over each year in mathematics. The addition of the Math Coach, who will begin at the start of the 2019-2020 academic school year, will dramatically enhance our multi-level approach in improving mathematics performance for our students.

**LPA GMAS Science - % of Students Developing and Above 2015-2019**



Students in grade five have seen a steady increase in their performance in the area of Science on the GMAS. Scores have increased by seventeen percentage points (17%) over the charter term. Our implementation of the “Project Lead the Way” curriculum as an infusion into our Science program has yielded positive results. Eighth grade students have had a slight increase over the years, with the highest performance occurring in 2018. Overall, student performance continues to outpace the DeKalb District.

**LPA GMAS Social Studies - % of Students Developing and Above 2015-2019**



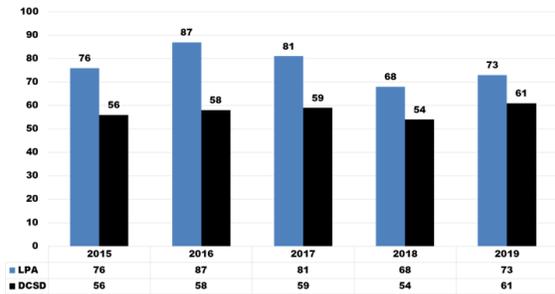
Fifth grade students at LPA have consistently made gains in the area of social studies over the charter term. Scores have increased over 21 percentage points since 2015. Eighth grade students have also performed well. In 2018, ninety seven percent (97%) of eighth grade students scored in the Developing and Above range on GMAS.

The third grade students at LPA have consistently outperformed DCSD in ELA and Mathematics. In 2019, LPA students outperformed DCSD by 12 points in ELA. LPA had its highest performance in Mathematics in 2018. It outperformed the district by twenty eight percentage points (28%). The following year, student performance experienced a decline; however, LPA students still demonstrated performance above the DeKalb District levels.

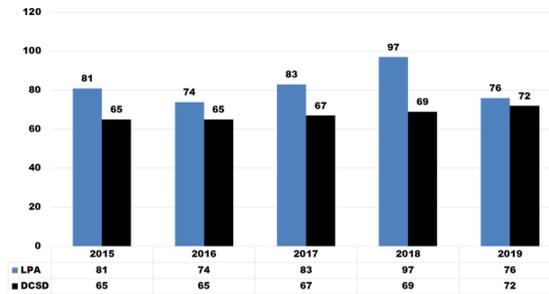
# Leadership Preparatory Academy



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard  
Georgia Milestones Assessment  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade ELA**  
% of Students Developing and Above  
Compared to DeKalb County Schools System



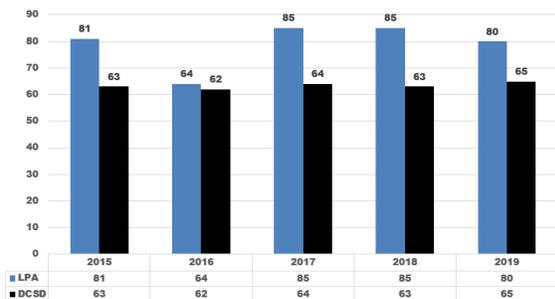
Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard  
Georgia Milestones Assessment  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Mathematics**  
% of Students Developing and Above  
Compared to DeKalb County Schools System



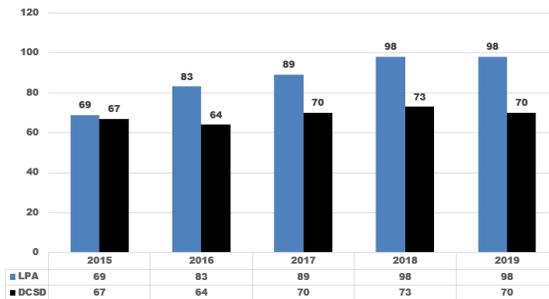
LPA’s 4<sup>th</sup> graders consistently outperformed DCSD in ELA and Mathematics. Over the course of this charter term, the fourth graders at LPA steadily increased the number of students who score Developing and Above. Fourth graders are making more academic progress given where they were at the beginning of the charter term in mathematics. Fourth grade students are making above average year over year academic improvement in ELA and Mathematics.



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard  
Georgia Milestones Assessment  
**4<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA**  
% of Students Developing and Above  
Compared to DeKalb County Schools System



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard  
Georgia Milestones Assessment  
**4<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics**  
% of Students Developing and Above  
Compared to DeKalb County Schools System

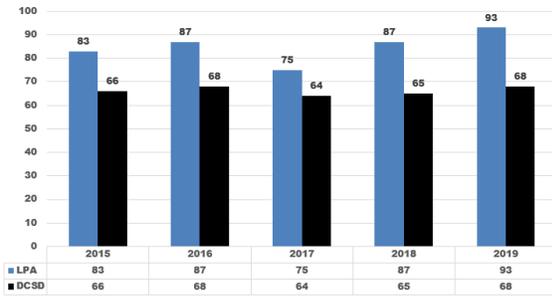


Over the charter term, LPA 5<sup>th</sup> graders have consistently outperformed DCSD. During the charter term, a renewed focus on mathematics occurred in 2016 which has yielded continuous academic improvement for these students. There was a 25 point gain in student performance in ELA as compared to DCSD during the 2018- 2019 school term.

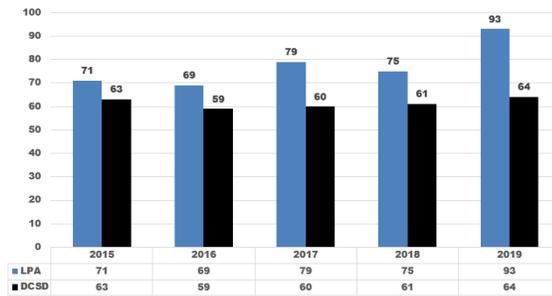
# Leadership Preparatory Academy



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard  
Georgia Milestones Assessment  
**5<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA**  
% of Students Developing and Above  
Compared to DeKalb County Schools System



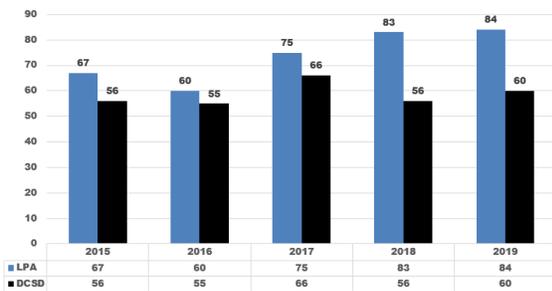
Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard  
Georgia Milestones Assessment  
**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics**  
% of Students Developing and Above  
Compared to DeKalb County Schools System



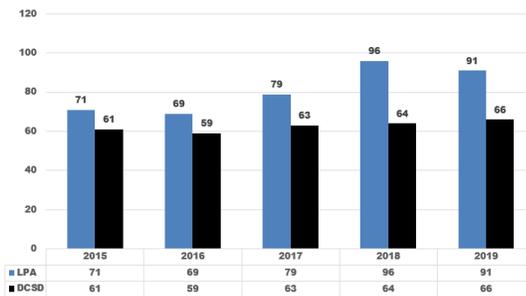
LPA fifth graders outperformed DCSD in science and social studies. Fifth grade student made more academic progress as compared to DCSD students in these areas.



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard  
Georgia Milestones Assessment  
**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Science**  
% of Students Developing and Above  
Compared to DeKalb County Schools System



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard  
Georgia Milestones Assessment  
**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies**  
% of Students Developing and Above  
Compared to DeKalb County Schools System

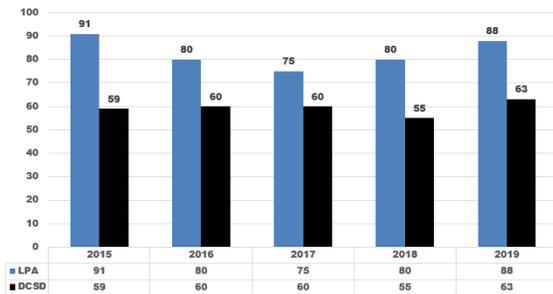


Many of our sixth graders began LPA in kindergarten. As a result of this continuous matriculation, this cohort group has performed above average when compared to DCSD. These students are making more academic progress from one grade to the next grade as compared to DCSD.

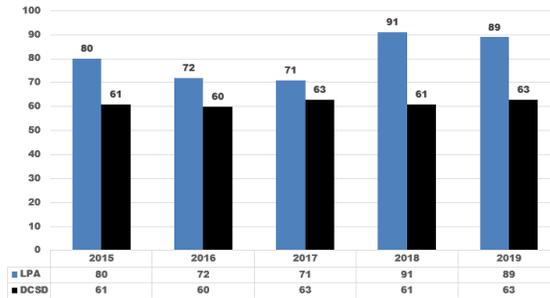
# Leadership Preparatory Academy



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard  
Georgia Milestones Assessment  
**6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA**  
**% of Students Developing and Above**  
Compared to DeKalb County Schools System



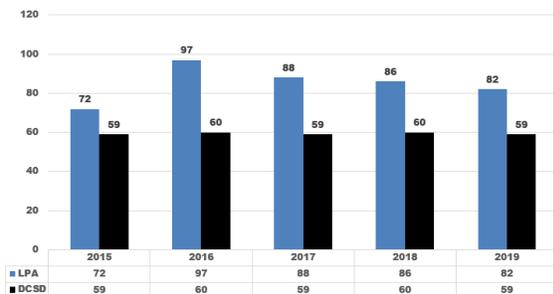
Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard  
Georgia Milestones Assessment  
**6<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics**  
**% of Students Developing and Above**  
Compared to DeKalb County Schools System



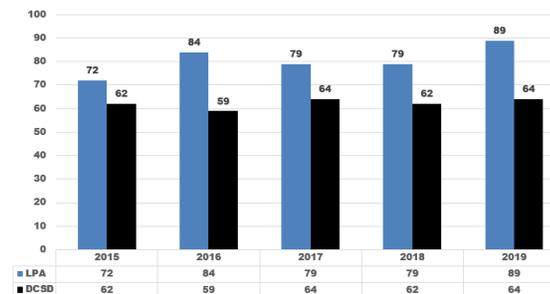
The seventh graders at LPA have made great strides in the area of ELA and Mathematics. In each year of the charter term, over 80% of the students scored Level 2 or above on the Georgia Milestones in comparison to DCSD whereby, a little above 60% scored Level 2 or above on the Georgia Milestones.



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard  
Georgia Milestones Assessment  
**7<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA**  
**% of Students Developing and Above**  
Compared to DeKalb County Schools System



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard  
Georgia Milestones Assessment  
**7<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics**  
**% of Students Developing and Above**  
Compared to DeKalb County Schools System

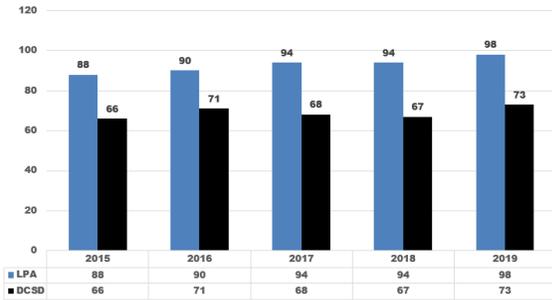


When we examine the performance of the LPA 8<sup>th</sup> grade students compared to the DCSD, we find that over 90% of our students score at Level 2 or above in ELA and Mathematics. The performance at this grade level has continuously outperformed DCSD. The majority of these students have matriculated at LPA since kindergarten. These data points reflect the rigor of instruction that these students have received since enrolling at LPA. When we compare those figures to DCSD, we recognize that the intensity of instructional practices in which our students are engaged, yields high results on standardized assessments.

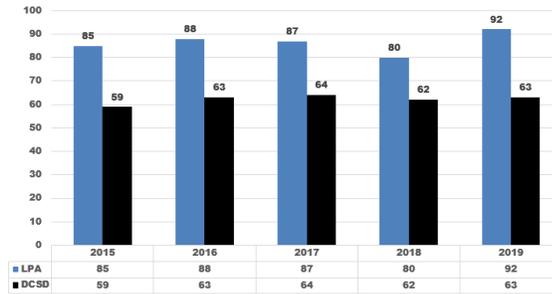
# Leadership Preparatory Academy



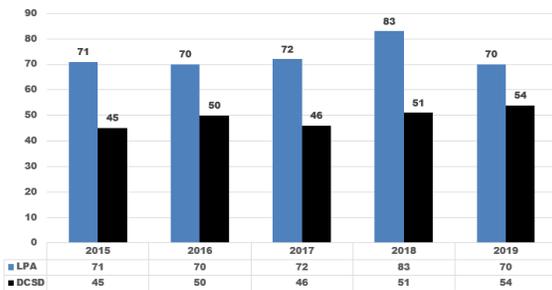
Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard  
Georgia Milestones Assessment  
**8<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA**  
**% of Students Developing and Above**  
**Compared to DeKalb County Schools System**



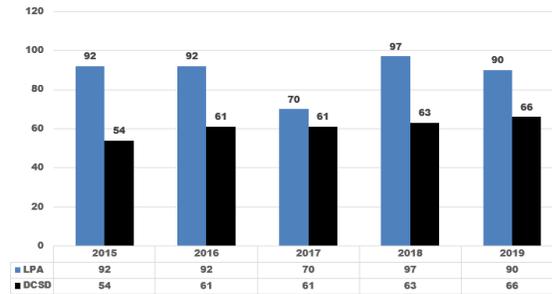
Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard  
Georgia Milestones Assessment  
**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics**  
**% of Students Developing and Above**  
**Compared to DeKalb County Schools System**



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard  
Georgia Milestones Assessment  
**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science**  
**% of Students Developing and Above**  
**Compared to DeKalb County Schools System**



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard  
Georgia Milestones Assessment  
**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies**  
**% of Students Developing and Above**  
**Compared to DeKalb County Schools System**



As we further evaluate the goals we established in our previous charter, our Leadership Curriculum is an essential component of our student’s educational experience. The objectives of the Leadership Curriculum are interwoven throughout the general curriculum and students are expected to demonstrate competencies in the leadership curriculum as evident in their leadership activities, community service and project presentations.

STEM is an important element in the educational fabric here at LPA. Accordingly, LPA recognizes the need to expose students to STEM related concepts through an evidence based curriculum in multiple ways. The implementation of PLTW has yielded some very positive results as demonstrated on students’ performance on the science portion of the GMAS. While we are poised to become a certified STEM school, our self-evaluation revealed that we need to

continue to develop our partnerships with community members who support our vision and mission. Therefore, we are still working towards Goal 4. LPA has been successful in gaining corporate support through our grant writing. Organizations such as the Dart Foundation, PLTW, No Kid Hungry and the GCSA have all provided generous corporate support through the awarding of grants for projects that support the vision and mission of our school.

As part of our continuous improvement model, we have identified the need to establish long term relationships with corporate sponsors to ensure continuity and fluidity of our programs. Our annual audit has been conducted each year without any material findings and no deficiencies have ever been identified in the annual report that is presented to the Governance Board.

Further, our Administrative Team and Governance Board are fully committed to being effective stewards of the funds allocated to LPA. This fiduciary responsibility is affirmed through the various policies and procedures that maximize savings in order to provide additional resources for our students. Additionally, financial statements are available on-line for our stakeholders to review. The budgeting process allows for many opportunities for stakeholders to provide suggestions on ways that we can reduce spending and providing input on the priorities for the school's budget. As a result of our keen focus on Goal 5, the school is economically sustainable.

An additional organization goal, Goal 6, required that all Governing Board Members receive effective training. The GADOE requires that new board members receive nine hours of training annually and veteran board members receive six hours of training annually. Three of the nine required hours include whole board governance training. The Governance Board for LPA has expanded its training requirements beyond the minimum that is required by GADOE by attending local and national charter school association's conferences along with attending an annual Board retreat. The members of the Governance Board recognize that they have a

fiduciary responsibility to ensure that LPA is sustainable well into the future. The Governance Board members volunteer their time to attend regular Board meetings, committee meetings, school events, and they serve as a critical component in the overall success of LPA.

Our final organizational Goal 7 is to promote a positive educational experience that engages students, parents and teachers. Each year our stakeholders participate in a variety of surveys to provide feedback to gauge how well we are ensuring that the culture and climate of LPA is optimum for student learning. LPA participates in the Georgia Department of Education's Annual School Climate Survey. The results of this survey are used to by the Governance Board and the school administration to peer into the perceptions of our stakeholders on the climate of the school. A portion of the survey provides schools with a School Climate Rating. The School Climate Star Rating is a diagnostic tool to determine if a school in on the right path to school improvement. It looks at four components: student, teacher, and parent perceptions of a school's climate; student discipline; a safe and substance free learning environment; and school-wide attendance. In 2018, LPA received a climate rating of three stars and 79.231% of the parents who participated in the survey were highly satisfied with the school experience.

**2. Page #18** Describe the school's current financial situation.

At all levels, LPA has been diligently focused on insuring efficient utilization of the financial resources provided to the school. The Governance Board is skilled in directing the allocation of these resources. Our CFO and CEO work in concert with the school level administration to ensure there is fidelity with the tactical and strategic goals, as well as the mission and vision of the school. Accordingly, we have exceeded, by significant and substantial measures, the SCSC's Accountability Framework of Standards which relate to financial reporting and fiscal strength. Evidence of this success is illustrated in our successive Annual Reports submitted to both the

local and the state authorizers which demonstrate consistently strong fiscal control over the financial affairs of the school since its inception.

Our successes include the strong financial position we enjoy and continue to strengthen on a monthly basis. This is true, even when taking into consideration certain strategic financial decisions such as the purchase of our own MAP license. We attribute this strong financial position to clearly defined financial goals, clear budgetary focus and support from the appropriately experienced human capital resources from which we draw. Early on, we elicited proven financial advisors, and the Governance Board quickly endeavored, from inception, to fully understand and embrace best practices and financial success models in this unique sector of the education industry. Our road to financial success is punctuated by deliberate fiscal strategies that have resulted in cost efficiencies, the elimination of duplicative efforts, the improvement of inefficient but necessary methodologies. The focus on leading edge practices and technologies yields significantly higher, long term results that fuel even greater student academic successes. Additionally, we regularly review, re-evaluate, and recalibrate our fiscal strategies to remain closely matched with the tactical goals, strategic mission, and enduring mission and vision of the school's founders and the Governance Board. Currently, the school has no short term nor any long term debt.

The school is building a sizeable reserve fund; however, these funds are restricted and earmarked for particular purpose; therefore, we do not anticipate having any surplus funds. Currently, the school is engaged in a major capital campaign focused on acquiring a permanent location for the school. As is expected, part of that campaign's focus is on the requirement for accumulating a significant cash infusion to help mitigate the high cost of building construction and/or remodeling.

Accordingly, during our first charter term, the Governance Board established a reserve fund to

serve as a reservoir for uncommitted, unrestricted funds. During our second charter term, the Governance Board, in its annual fiscal review, determined the need to more narrowly define and earmark a substantial percentage of our unrestricted reserve fund for building construction/acquisition/remodeling, depending on the final site candidate selected for the location of our permanent facility. Additionally, the Board recognizes the requirement for significant preconstruction costs that would not be covered by long term financing. Consulting with industry experts suggests to us that these costs will exceed 3.6% of the gross value of the project. The translated gross dollar value of this percentage, based on the projected cost of the project will, at the recommendation of the Finance Committee Chair, the CFO, and the CEO, also be moved into the restricted funds category. The Governance Board continues to seek the guidance of our experienced CFO and our CPA, both of whom help us to navigate this exciting, albeit challenging endeavor. However, because of the strong commitment, unique talents, and broad based experiences of our Governance Board, coupled with the skills of our assembly of chiefs (CEO, CLO, CAO and CFO), we are certain the effort to claim, develop and occupy our permanent home will be realized during this new charter term. This capital campaign effort will not compromise the educational opportunities for our students.

As part of its strategic plan, LPA makes a concerted effort to solicit support through grants, in-kind donations and partnerships. LPA has a successful history of grant awards for educational innovation which we hope to expand during this next charter term. The grants include:

- Georgia Department of Education Facility Grant \$90K (FY14)
- Action 4 Healthy Kids Recess Grant - \$1K (FY16)
- Georgia Department of Education Nutrition Division Equipment Grant - \$50K (FY17)
- Georgia Department of Health & Human Services After School STEM Grant - \$20K (FY19)

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- Georgia Department of Education Facility Grant - \$100K (FY18)
- Georgia Charter School Association through the Coca Cola Foundation Grant Award - \$30K (FY18)
- NWEA Professional Learning Project In-Kind Grant - \$10K (FY18)
- NWEA Innovation Partnership (FY18) – Unspecified Financial Contribution
- Project Lead The Way Implementation Grant \$20K (FY19)
- Project Lead The Way Implementation Grant \$20K (FY20)
- Dart Foundation Grant - \$5100 (FY19)
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable - \$13K (FY19)
- Zoo Atlanta Grant - \$1200 (FY19)
- MiracleGro Scott Grant – Supplies for Hydropoinic Unit
- No Kid Hungry Breakfast Grant - \$5K (FY19)

Our greatest financial challenge continues to revolve around monetary contributions from the young partnerships we have developed with our local business community. The impact of the global recession has particularly affected otherwise benevolent partnerships made possible as a result of profitable corporate earnings. Nonetheless, we continue to seek local partnerships supported by other than monetary resources.

Fortunately, LPA has not experienced any instances of fraudulent behavior nor any accusations of fraudulent behavior at any level at the school nor at the Governance Board level. We credit this to the high degree of fiscal scrutiny, financial oversight, and financial transparency we subscribe to as an ongoing practice at every level of fiscal engagement. Our Governance Board is proactive in the fiscal affairs of the school and, by extension, the CEO and the CFO ensure that the standard GAAP provisions are adhered to, and embedded in our financial practices. Finally,

the CFO and the CPA regularly engage to ensure we are, and remain, on track and consistent with the Financial Policies promulgated by our Board.

Although we have been fortunate in avoiding any fraudulent behavior, or even the appearance of such behavior during this charter period, we continue to review our Board approved Financial Policies and routinely follow recommendations by the CPA and our CFO, among other professionals, to ensure we execute our due diligence which supports the discharge of our fiscal responsibilities. Having the advice of experienced counsel on these matters has proved most helpful in preserving our fiscal integrity.

**3. Page# 22 Provide a brief overview of the school's current governance structure.**

Charter schools are typically governed by board members who have subject area expertise in the areas of law, finance, education, management or other areas that are fundamental to the successful operation of the school. Accordingly, the founders of LPA were strategic in developing the Governance Board such that the composition of the Board would be an assembly of individuals who have a specific subject level of expertise and who are willing to serve the community. The Governance Board is comprised of Board members who have specific roles and responsibilities. Those roles include Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

Member of LPA's Governance Board understand that they have a fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers and a moral and legal reasonability to fulfill the goals and objectives outlined in the charter petition. In order for there to be the widest area of participation from parents and other stakeholders, each member of the Governance Board chairs and/or serves on a Board committee. Members of the Governance Board work within their committees to address issues delegated

by the Board and make recommendations to the Board. Most recently, the finance committee met to determine if revenue would substantiate the adoption of a new, and very robust, salary schedule in order for LPA to be competitive with metro Atlanta school districts. In making a recommendation to the Governance Board, the committee had to consider several factors before making a final recommendation. As previously noted, the Board also received a recommendation from the Teaching and Learning Committee to employ a Math Coach based on student performance on the Fall MAP assessment. Because the MAP assessment data became available in the fall of the year, this recommendation was presented to the Board after the budget had been approved and adopted for the 2018-2019 school year. The Governance Board accepted the recommendation and amended the budget to accommodate the salary and benefits package. The corollary to this success is the conservative fiscal planning on the part of the Board to ensure that it can positively react to issues and opportunities that can result in greater levels of student success.

The LPA Governance Structure is composed of a collection of Chiefs that supervise the execution of the Board Policies. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of LPA is responsible for the successful operation of the school. The Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and Chief Learning Officer (CLO) are responsible for the academic performance of the students at LPA and are held accountable for specific performance measures. Therefore, the Board provides the CAO and CLO with wide latitude to make decisions that are founded in research which will yield positive student results.

For example, in early 2019, the CAO and CLO conceived and developed an after school tutorial program for the 2019-2020 SY that utilizes a blended learning model. Although this is not the traditional format for extended day tutorial, the Board recognized the importance of innovative thought and conceptual development and allowed the school administrators to develop programs that are in the best interest of the students.

Another example of evaluative, comprehensive decisions fostered by the CLO includes the decision to recommend to the Governance Board that LPA purchase its own license for MAP (Measures of Academic Progress). That decision, endorsed by the Governance Board, was made after a deliberative process that included a review of assessment data, timing issues, and feedback from the academic coaches, all of which illuminated the disadvantages of following the traditional schedule. This innovative, albeit expensive, step allows LPA to more closely align our early semester start with the opportunity to make earlier assessments, which ultimately allows individualized educational planning to commence earlier.

As a result, this offers students more opportunity to achieve, and then demonstrate, proficiency.

The Governance Board evaluates the CEO annually on specific targets in the area of operations, finance and organizational goals as outlined in the charter contract. The CAO and CLO are evaluated by the CEO using the Leaders Keys Effectiveness System from the Georgia Department of Education. The CEO, CLO and CAO collaborate with the Governance Board and ultimately, each receives specific targets for operational or student performance annually. The Governance Board believes that the latitude that is afforded to the school leaders assists them in ensuring that the level of accountability is fair and balanced. While the Governance Board

clearly recognizes that data does not tell the whole story of school performance, the recognition of other areas of achievement are included in the leader's evaluation.

The Governance Board Training Policy provides guidelines for multiple pathways to acquire supplemental Governance training. Additionally, the Governance Board adheres to the training program that is established by Georgia law. All charter school board members complete 15 hours of governance training annually, and returning board members complete 9 hours of training. Of the 9 hours, all Board members must participate in a minimum of three hours of whole board training. The Governance Board of LPA extends their training by participating in local and national conferences including the Georgia Charter School Association annual conference, the National Charter School Association annual conference, Georgia School Boards Association National Conference along with other content specific webinars, workshops and trainings.

During the past charter cycle, the majority of Governance Board members fulfilled their training requirements. The current training schedule is aligned with the state requirements for Governance Boards. However, if the Georgia Department of Education, through legislative action, makes adjustments in the training requirements, the LPA Governance Board will make the necessary modifications to remain in compliance. The current members of LPA's Governing Board recognize that they must invest significant time in training to ensure that they are utilizing best practices in school governance in order to insure fidelity in fulfilling the vision and mission of the school. In addition to the formal training schedule for Governance Board members, multiple mini training sessions are scheduled prior to Board Meetings and committee meetings on a regular basis. They are often presented by the CLO, CFO, or CEO and generally directly related to matter at hand. The Charter School office visited LPA on several occasions during the charter term and provided helpful feedback related to the Governance Board meeting. The

observation feedback reminded the Board to post the agendas to the website and provide a summary of Board actions the following day. The website has been modified to include a repository of agenda, financial statements, summary of board actions and minutes from the board meetings.

**4. Page#\_26\_\_\_\_\_Describe how the school provides state-and-federally mandated services to students with disabilities.**

**Special Education.** LPA shall continue to comply with all applicable State and Federal Laws in serving students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (“Section 504”), the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act, revised 2004 (“IDEA 2004”). The facilities to be used by LPA shall be accessible for all students with disabilities and shall provide students with disabilities equal access to all aspects of the educational program.

Further, LPA will comply with all state and federal laws related to the provision of special education instruction and related services. The school shall not discriminate against any student with a disability in the admissions process or any other aspect of School operations. Additionally, the school will ensure that appropriate accommodations and equipment are provided to eligible students. IDEA 2004 requires that all individuals, ages 3–21, in public and private schools, who may need special education and related services, shall be identified, evaluated and served. In accordance with these requirements, LPA will identify, evaluate and appropriately serve eligible enrolled students.

LPA has implemented the GaDOE’s Student Achievement Pyramid of Intervention in the general education classroom to align appropriate assessment with purposeful instruction for all students. Some classrooms may have an additional teacher to provide direct instructional services to support students in the classroom. LPA has a Student Support Team (SST) in accordance with State guidelines and DeKalb County Board of Education policies. The School will also utilize all DCSD SST Forms when working with students. When a student goes through the SST process and fails to make adequate academic

progress after the implementation of Tiers 1, 2 and 3 interventions and instruction, the student will be referred for Special Education testing (Tier 4). The student's parents or guardians and other adults who may be effective in working with the student will continue to be involved in the assessment and identification process for Special Education services. All staff members, inclusive of contractors, who may provide services to students identified as special needs will be certified as special education teachers or professionals.

Incoming students with an IEP will have their IEP reviewed within 30 days to determine how best to meet their needs. After the review, including observation of the student in the LPA environment, the IEP may be modified in order to provide appropriate interventions and supports based upon state and federal guidelines. Similarly, all incoming students who may need special education services will be evaluated in a timely manner to determine appropriate staffing. All students will be provided with a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Parents/guardians will participate in this process and have all rights consistent with IDEA 2004. The process used to appropriately place students who are eligible for Special Education services is as follows:

- A meeting of the A&AT is called to determine a student's eligibility.
- If the student is eligible for services, an IEP meeting is held and the IEP is developed.
- At least once a year, but more often if necessary, the IEP is reviewed and updated to reflect interventions and supports that meet the student's current needs.
- At least every three years a re-evaluation meeting is held to determine if continuation of Special Education Services is required.
- If required, the re-evaluation may consist of a complete psychological-education evaluation.
- If continued services are required, the IEP is updated and the student continues to receive special education services.
- If the re-evaluation determines that the student no longer requires special education services, he or she is dismissed from Special Education.

Once a student's IEP is established, LPA will provide the appropriate interventions and supports both directly and under contract with outside providers, or arrange for the provision of said services with assistance from DCSD. LPA works specifically under the DCSD Charter Guidelines for Special Education and Wrap-Around Services. LPA takes responsibility for the delivery of special education services by working with its Special Education and classroom teachers to integrate all IEP interventions and supports into the general education classroom. All special education interventions and supports will be delivered in the timeline outlined in the IEP, and a co-teaching model will be used to provide direct instructional services and support to students with disabilities in the general education classroom. All transition and assistive technology needs, as identified in the IEP, will be provided to students. LPA will employ highly qualified special education teachers to ensure compliance with IDEA 2004 Rules and Regulations. LPA will also contract for services with related personnel, including school psychologists, school social workers, and other personnel who meet the required regulations from the DCSD. The forms utilized in the identification and placement for special education students will be the forms authorized by the DCSD. LPA shall comply with the treatment of Special Education records pursuant with all procedures and guidelines in the Federal Regulations for IDEA 2004 including, but not limited to: access rights, record of access, records on more than one person, list of types and locations of educational records, fees, amendment of records at parents' request, opportunity for a hearing to challenge records hearing results in finding of violation, finding of no confidentiality safeguards, and destruction of information.

Teachers, social workers, parents, licensed physicians, registered nurses, or representatives of related agencies may refer a student suspected of having a disability. IDEA (2004) identifies certain categories under which a student may become eligible for services. These disabilities are defined as: Autism spectrum disorder, deaf-blind, deaf/hard of hearing, emotional and behavioral disorder, intellectual disability (mild, moderate, severe, profound), orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, significant

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developmental delay, specific learning disability, speech-language impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment. When a referral is received, LPA will notify the parents in writing and must receive parental consent to conduct an evaluation.

LPA will follow all procedures that are outlined in the DCSD document “Your Rights as Parents Regarding Special Education” (Revised 2007). LPA will follow the mandated procedures relating to parental consent for initial evaluation. Parental consent must be received prior to initiating the evaluation process. Parents/guardians will be kept informed throughout the process and will be invited to attend any meetings concerning their students. Parents/guardians will have the right to refuse evaluation and placement in any program. When there is a difference of opinion related to any part of the referral/placement process, all efforts will be made to reach a satisfactory agreement regarding an arrangement that will benefit the student.

Additionally, LPA shall develop a Section 504 support team in accordance with state guidelines and DeKalb County Board of Education policies. The School will utilize DCSD 504 Forms when working with students. The School’s staff will: (i) be trained to handle all discipline issues regarding Section 504 students in accordance with federal regulations, state guidelines, and DeKalb County Board of Education policies including the DCSD’s Student Code of Conduct; and (ii) participate in workshops, in-service and/or trainings offered by the District. Through regular reporting and coordination of services with DCSD, the school will notify the DCSD’s Director of Charter Schools of any complaints made by a parent/guardian or student concerning Section 504 and/or IDEA 2004, furnish a copy of the complaint, and cooperate fully with the DCSD on any investigation, defense and resolution of such complaint.

All special education students will receive instruction based on the core curriculum and will have the same opportunity, as other neuro-typical students, to participate in all extended learning activities which include, but are not limited, to the following: early morning tutorials, after school tutorials, Saturday programs, and web-based activities. The A&AT will intentionally monitor Special Education students to ensure they are accessing curricula content that improves their skills. In the event that they are at-risk of

not accessing curricula content, the A&AT will convene an IEP/BIP/504 meeting, within 14 days, to development a plan or action.

**5. Page # 30 Describe how the charter school provides state-and-federally mandated services for English Learners (ELs).**

**Educational Services for English Language Learners.** LPA expects to have a small number of students who speak a language other than English enrolled at the School. The school believes that having fluency in multiple languages, including English, is critical to 21<sup>st</sup> Century success. The English Language Learners (ELLs) program shall ensure that every student assessed as an ELL masters written and spoken English. We encourage families to assist students with retaining and building fluency and literacy in their home language as well. LPA administers the Home Language Survey upon a student's initial enrollment at the School. All students indicating that their home language is one other than English will be screened using the W-APT to determine which services will be most appropriate for them. LPA will make every effort to employ a teacher who has an ESOL endorsement. Additionally, ELLs will be assessed annually using the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) to evaluate their proficiency in the following areas of English: listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities. The assessment will be given at least annually between July 1 and September 30 until each student is designated as English proficient. The school will use multiple criteria for determining whether to reclassify a student as English proficient and include the following: (i) assessment results from ACCESS for ELLs (ii) staff determination that the student is able to access curricula in English at or above native English speakers, (iii) school and teachers evaluations/assessments that demonstrate that the student has mastered grade level standards; and (iv) parental opinion and consultation. ELLs will have full access to the school's educational program and will receive most of their English Language Development (ELD) program throughout the school day. ELLs will have ELD goals, activities and lessons integrated into their overall academic learning. LPA will have trained staff to ensure that ELLs are meeting their ELD goals, achieving mastery of standards, and are able to fully

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access core courses content. With the appropriate help and support provided as needed, ELLs at LPA will be expected to meet state standards in all academic and non-academic areas of the program.

Each classroom will be designed for differentiated instruction and to facilitate a number of instructional methods including project based learning. The physical setting and layout of classrooms will provide for as much flexibility as possible by devoting areas within the classroom for individual, small, and large group purposes. Instructional methods and materials allow students to work concretely with many concepts (especially geometry, arithmetic, and geography) while acquiring the English vocabulary to communicate those concepts. The on-going collaboration between students and their teachers offers almost continuous opportunities to hear and speak English. The non-competitive school environment and low student-teacher ratio support the ELLs in trying to communicate in a new language. In addition, the School understands that effective English Language Development requires:

- Systematic and explicit instruction in ELD standards specific to the student's English proficiency level and based on results of diagnostic assessments.
- Sheltered English Instruction Strategies used throughout the entire program such as: low affective filter, contextual clues, multisensory experiences, use of visuals and examples, frequent comprehension checks, use of informal formative assessments, use of multiple summative assessments, appropriate lesson design with scaffolding, vocabulary emphasis, pre and post reading/writing tests, grouping, modeling, tapping prior knowledge, pacing, and content-driven assignments.
- Opportunities to practice and use the English language in authentic and challenging tasks, wherein students get the opportunity to apply and practice their ELD lessons using Academic English and doing rigorous work.

ELLs who do not make the minimum expected growth of one level per year on the ACCESS will be referred to the SST process. Language development will be tracked and monitored. ELLs will have access to the same interventions described above for all other students. ELLs will have fair and equal access to all extracurricular activities at LPA. Students not making adequate progress on their individualized ELD goals will receive the appropriate Tier 1, 2, 3 or 4 interventions. The School will meet all applicable legal requirements for ELLs related to annual notification to parents, student identification, placement, program options, reclassification of fluent English proficient status, monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness, and standardized testing requirements. The School will implement policies to assure proper placement, evaluation and communication regarding ELLs and the rights of students and parents.

All ELLs will receive instruction based on the core curriculum and will have the same opportunity as all other students to participate in all extended learning activities which include, but are not limited, to the following: early morning tutorials, after school tutorials, Saturday programs, and web-based activities.

The A&AT will intentionally monitor ELLs to ensure they are accessing curricula content that improves their skills. In the event that they are at-risk of not accessing curricula content, the A&AT will convene a meeting within 14 days of discovery to develop a plan of action.

**6. Page#\_32\_\_\_\_\_ Explain how the charter school determines which students need remediation in each core content area, and the frequency of which this is monitored.**

**Teaching and Learning Framework: ASSESS** – Classroom assessment is one of the teacher’s most essential educational tools. The purpose of classroom assessments is to support students’ learning (Black and Williams, 2002)<sup>1</sup> and to communicate that learning to all stakeholders. At LPA, the assessment of learning will comprise three types—(1) initial or diagnostic (benchmarks), (2) formative, and (3) summative assessments. Using assessment results, teachers will know at the outset where their students are in terms of their learning and will continually check on their progress through monitoring and

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<sup>1</sup> Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B., & William, D (2003). *Assessment for learning: Putting it into practice*. Buckingham. England: Open University Press.

strengthening student feedback. Teachers will utilize multiple sources of formative assessments, both formal and informal. The types and methods of assessment teachers utilize will depend on the following:

- The nature of the information being taught
- The purpose of the instruction
- What the teacher wants to learn from the assessment

Since assessment and instruction go hand-in-hand, teachers will use ongoing assessment data to inform instruction and determine whether or not the educational goals of each student are being met. To answer the question, "Are we teaching what we think we are teaching?", teachers use pre-assessments to find out what students already know and where the gaps and deficiencies exist. Through formative assessments, teachers will also be able to check their students' understanding during instruction and keep track of which students will need remediation or acceleration. This answers the question, "Are students learning what they are supposed to be learning?". Summative assessments are used to measure students' expected levels of proficiency in Georgia Standards of Excellence and to determine if they are ready to move to the next grade.

LPA's Assessment and Accountability Team (A&AT)—composed of the Academic Coaches, the Chief Academic Officer, and selected classroom and gifted teachers—works with teachers to review and analyze student and school-wide assessment data. Members of the A&AT believes that assessments should not be used to simply judge how much students know but to comprehend the nature of their knowledge and understandings as well as to identify patterns of strengths and needs. The A&AT answers the question, "Is there a way to teach the subject better, thereby promoting better learning?" The school's approach to utilizing data ensures a data-driven decision-making culture at the school, that:

- Ensures academic success for all students.
- Makes data part of the ongoing cycle of instructional improvement.
- Maintains the school's assessment and data system.

- Continues to provide support in the interpretation of assessment data for teachers and students.

**Teaching and Learning Framework: EVALUATE** – One of the keys to student success at LPA is the engagement of teachers in systematic reflection on their teaching (Saphiers, Haley-Speca and Gower, 2008)<sup>2</sup> since it plays such a critical role in the transformation of teaching and learning. Reflection helps



Figure 7: Areas of Teaching and Learning Reflection

teachers better understand their practice and what works in the classroom. It provides an opportunity for teachers to examine the effectiveness of a lesson and to use the evaluation to drive future instructional decisions. Further, reflection helps teachers to grow and learn more holistically. This ongoing evaluation is a form of problem solving (self-assessment) to improve teaching and learning and to ensure success for all students (see Figure 7: Areas of Teaching and Learning Reflection).

Teachers actively engage in reflection and from time to time ask and answer a series of questions (Danielson, 2007)<sup>3</sup> which may include, but are not limited to, the following: How do I interact with students? How do I respond when students ask questions? What kind of classroom atmosphere do I create? What kinds of questions do I ask students? Is my classroom predictable or spontaneous? Are my students actively involved in learning? Why did a particular lesson not go over well? Why did a particular lesson go over well? Am I using wait time before and after I receive responses to questions? Are my students listening to each other? Are my students taking the time to think about problems, ideas, questions, etc.?

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<sup>2</sup> Saphiers, J., Haley-Speca, M. A., & Gower, R. (2008). *The Skillful Teacher: Building Your Teaching Skills*. Acton, MA: Research for Better Teaching.

<sup>3</sup> Danielson, C. (2007). *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Ultimately, through reflection and with the help of the A&AT, teachers strive to create a classroom where students are: talking to each other, disagreeing, challenging, and debating; willing to take risks; explaining their ideas clearly and precisely; and reflecting on their learning experiences to identify what was hard or easy for them, what worked or did not work, and what they liked or did not like. LPA understands that change is difficult and supports its teachers in their self-reflection process by encouraging them to identify their own positive classroom practices and continue to use them and to implement changes one piece at a time and not try to make too many changes all at once.

- Ensures academic success for all students
- Makes data part of the ongoing cycle of instructional improvement
- Maintains the School's assessment and data system
- Continues to provide support in the interpretation of assessment data for teachers and students along with their families

In summary, LPA's comprehensive approach to assessment ensures:

1. *Appropriate diagnostic feedback*: What is each student's knowledge base? What is each student's performance base? What are each student's needs? What has to be taught?
  2. *Suitable standards are set*: What performance demonstrates understanding? What performance demonstrates knowledge? What performance demonstrates mastery?
  3. *Continuous progress monitoring*: How is the student doing? What teaching methods or approaches are most effective? What modifications to a lesson are needed to help the student?
  4. *Teaching and learning related to students' progress*: What have students learned? Can students talk about their new knowledge? Can students demonstrate and use new skills in other areas of study?
  5. *Motivation and performance*: Student self-evaluation—Now that I'm in charge of my learning, how am I doing? Now that I know how I'm doing, how can I do better? What else would I like to learn? Similarly, for teacher self-evaluation—What is working for students? What can I do to help students more? In what direction should we go next?
7. **Page #\_35\_Provide the number and percentage of students receiving In-School Suspensions, Out-of-School Suspensions, or Expulsions during the current charter term (e.g., the past 5 years).**

**a. How does this discipline and dismissal data compare to the Office of Civil Rights data?**

	In-School Suspension		Out-of-School Suspension		Expulsions	
Ethnicity/Race	Number & Percentage of Total Population					
Latino/Hispanic	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
American Indian	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Black/African American	179	10.10%	75	4.2%	0	0%
White	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Two or more races	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total Population</b>	1778		1778		0	

LPA has collected data on its in-school and out-of school suspension since its inception. Over the past five years we have seen an increase in the number of students who have been assigned in-school suspension. When we compare our data to schools that are similar in size and demographics, the school has had lower incidences of discipline issues across the board.

**8. Page#\_36\_\_\_Describe in detail any difficulties faced during the charter term that were not already addressed above.**

Leadership Preparatory Academy’s Governing Board and the Administrative Team, through collaboration, have created a process whereby a continuous flow of information to address any challenges that would impact the vision and mission of the school are explored and resolved wherever possible. The Governance Board annually schedules a “Town Hall” for parents to voice any concern or provide any feedback on the current state of the school. Depending on the nature of the concern or feedback, this information is provided to the school administration. The information is researched and, when appropriate, an Executive Summary is provided to the Governance Board at their next regularly scheduled meeting. The Executive Summary serves as the blueprint for the next steps. In many instances the concern being raised has already been addressed through a policy, protocol or procedure. Because we have created this two way communication flow, we do not have lingering challenges that remain an issue for the school. In the upcoming charter renewal, we plan to continue the “Town Halls” and expand opportunities for real time feedback through our website portal.

## **PROPOSED CHANGES**

### **A. Page#\_37\_\_\_\_\_Academic Changes**

- I. The academic program and curriculum
- II. The use of waivers/innovations
- III. School programs-this includes Students with Disabilities, Gifted and Talented, English Learners, etc.
- IV. Any assessments used
- V. Any administrative positions.
- VI. Use of student achievement data

Leadership Preparatory Academy's curriculum encompasses the standards from the Georgia Standards of Excellence to provide instruction to students in the core curriculum coupled with the standards from Project Lead the Way. Through our professional learning communities, we will continue to study the latest research on leadership studies in order to revise and update our current Leadership Studies curriculum. By infusing the latest evidence based research on leadership, we will ensure that our Leadership Studies curriculum remains relevant and innovative. Further, we recognize that the study of Leadership continues to evolve, and new trends and topics are emerging.

Leadership Preparatory Academy believes that there exists opportunity for subject area experts to share their knowledge and talents with the students that we serve. The continued use of the waiver on teacher certification, except where it is prohibited by ESSA, will remain. LPA has greatly benefited by having this waiver with the hiring of individuals who have had a content based science terminal degree but were not certified by the standards ascribed by the Georgia Professional Standard Commission.

LPA will continue to follow the laws, policies and procedures as it relates to Students with Disabilities, Gifted and Talented, English Language Learners, etc. There are no changes being proposed to these programs.

The use of assessments is an integral part of the teaching and learning framework at LPA. The implementation of Measures of Academic Progress has validated the use of diagnostic measures to inform instruction. We will continue to put the tools, processes, and training, as well as supports in place for

teachers to accurately understand data and put it into action. Our focus will continue to be on a more balanced, critical appreciation of the value of data, which is a fundamental part of teaching and learning. As new assessments are validated through research and practice, we will review them to determine if they meet the needs of our program.

During the most recent year of the current charter term, LPA administered the Assesslet which was developed by the Georgia Center for Assessment. These assessments evaluate students' knowledge in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies. The rigor of the Assesslet mirrors that of the Georgia Milestones. The utilization of this assessment requires extended reasoning and critical thinking beyond basic recall. As we continue to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century thinkers this is an invaluable tool. The current organizational chart reflects positions and alignment that support the current number of students and faculty/staff to efficiently operate the school. As the school continues to grow, the addition of support services for the classroom teacher, parental engagement, operational and administrative support may necessitate additional personnel to continue to manifest the vision and mission of the school.

Currently, we utilize multiple data sources including the **Georgia Milestones Assessment, MAP**, teacher made pre and post assessment, **Georgia Assesslets** and other valid-reliable assessments to inform instruction. We recognize that student achievement data offers invaluable support for making good decisions about instruction. Our Teaching and Learning Framework makes data a part of the ongoing cycle of instructional improvement. We will continue to utilize data to ensure a clear vision for schoolwide use and provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within our school.

**Page# 38 Governance Changes**

**I. The school's governance structure**

The current governance's board is currently structured to focus on the academic achievement of all students guided by a strategic goal that encompasses the goals and objectives from the petition.

**II. The school's governing board composition**

When LPA was conceived the board was comprised of parents, the founding members and community partners. Since then the bylaws have been amended to look for individuals who had the level of expertise that was needed to ensure a well-rounded board membership. The Governance board has also developed a succession plan to maintain institutional knowledge, diversity and persons who have backgrounds that align with the needs of the school (non-profit, education, financial and legal).

**III. The school's relationship with an Educational Service Provider or other Charter Partner**

This is not applicable to LPA. We do not have an Educational Service Provider.

**IV. The relationship with the local district**

LPA strives to maintain an amicable relationship with the DeKalb County School District through their newly created Office of Innovation.

**V. The increase of diversity among the members**

The Governance Board seeks membership that reflects the students its serves while maintaining the tenants of its succession plan.

**VI. Page#\_39\_\_\_Financial Changes**

**I. The school's financial structure.**

LPA's current financial structure is designed to ensure there are checks and balances sufficient to validate fidelity for all financial functions across the school. As an example, at the operational level, documentation is required for all expenditures and multiple levels of electronic authorizations, which are initiated through the bookkeeping department and supervised by the CFO's office staff. The CFO personally reviews monthly, quarterly and annual reports and collaborates with the CPA in providing source documents for financial statements that are reviewed by the Governance Board. Further, the CPA prepares the annual report that is delivered to the GADOE. Early in LPA current charter term, LPA transitioned from a cashless system to a fully electronic system to minimize risks associated with handling cash or check transactions at school level.

**II. The school's CFO.**

There will be no changes to the duties and responsibilities of the CFO position.

**III. The school's relationship with any creditors (e.g. landlords, investors, etc.)**

LPA follows General Accepted Accounting Practices; therefore, the relationship with creditors is a positive one. All invoices are paid in a timely manner.

**B. Page#\_40\_\_\_Operational Changes**

**I. The school's facilities**

The school is currently reviewing opportunities for a new structure or renovation of an existing structure in order to allow the full mission and vision of the school to be realized.

**II. The school's attendance zone and any enrollment priorities being used (O.C.G.A. §20-2-2066 (a)(1))**

LPA does not seek any changes to its current attendance zone or any enrollment priorities at this time.

**III. Whether the school will utilize a weighted lottery to provide an increased chance of admission or educationally disadvantaged students pursuant to O.C.G.A. §20-22066(a)(1) and State Board Rule 160-4-9-.05(2)(g).**

LPA does not utilize a weighted lottery system and does not plan to utilize one in the near future.

**IV. Racial and socioeconomic demographics in an effort to align with the District.**

LPA student populations reflect the current school district's racial and socioeconomic demographics for this sector of the county.

**V. Any services provided to students such as transportation, food service, etc.**

LPA works with parents who have transportation challenges to ensure this does not serve as a hindrance in families attending LPA.

**VI. The grades the charter will serve.**

LPA will continue to serve students in grades K-8.

## Looking to the Future

**9. Page#\_41\_\_\_** Briefly describe how the school has and will continue with its proposed changes to serve the needs of its students for the upcoming (renewed) charter term.

**a. Academic Performance**

LPA will continue to implement the Georgia Standards of Excellence as they are currently written and will make modifications, if necessary, when standards are revised to ensure that we are meeting the minimum standards. The LPA curriculum is focused on rigorous instructional practices through the integration of its Leadership Studies, Project Lead the Way Curriculum and the Georgia Standards of Excellence. The instructional staff at LPA expends great efforts to create a respectful, collaborative learning environment. We will continue to give more attention to the way and the depth that teachers teach and students learn. As our world continues to move from an industrial society to a technological society, we must prepare our future leaders to drive the next wave of automation. Project Lead The Way supports LPA's efforts with the award of a two year grant to purchase materials and professional learning to implement their research based curriculum. The interweaving of the PLTW and the Leadership Studies curriculum will continue to propel the students at LPA to excel in the rigorous classroom environment. The active learning centered classroom at LPA, compels students to work at a higher level, use more brain power, think harder and be ok with making a mistake.

LPA is grounded in the belief that teachers must support students and guide them through questioning and analyzing material. Through the use of evidence based research strategies our teachers utilize strategies that help students solve problems outside of the classroom. We believe all students have the capacity to become authentic leaders and rise to the challenges the emerging generation will face. Over the last petition cycle, LPA has recognized the need to provide more

support to its students in the classroom. The new structure of the classroom will provide two teachers in every classroom, a Lead Teacher and a Teacher Associate. The presence of two teachers gives each student a more individualized education. One teacher may work with a small group of students on a certain skill, while the lead teacher focuses on a different topic with the rest of the class. In addition, other teachers "push in" to the classroom to provide further support. Because of our deep, resounding belief that all students will learn and achieve at high levels, if given opportunity, we must do more to help our scholars develop the academic and leadership strengths they need for college and choice filled lives, they will be able to build a better tomorrow for themselves, for their communities, for us all. LPA has a proven commitment to academic achievement, leadership development and enrichment opportunities to help all students reach their full potential.

The utilization of a variety of data sources has been the cornerstone to the pursuit of academic excellence at Leadership Preparatory Academy. The faculty and staff systematically and routinely use data to guide instructional decisions to meet students' learning needs. The continuation of LPA's teaching and learning framework will be an ongoing cycle of collecting multiple data sources, interpreting data to formulate hypotheses about strategies to raise student achievement and implementing instructional changes to test hypotheses. As outlined in a case study by NWEA, LPA provides teachers with a dedicated and structured time, whereby that will collaboratively analyze and interpret students' achievement data and identify instructional changes. Professional development will be provided that helps familiarize staff with components of the data system, data culture, and data use, with a particular focus on how teachers can apply data to their daily work to improve instructional planning, teaching, and learning. As our students evolve and become prepared to lead, we believe that it is essential that they examine

their own data and set learning goals. Students can better interpret their achievement data and set learning goals when they have a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn. When students are given the opportunity to explore, collaborate and expand their academic prowess we are able to build a better tomorrow for themselves and for their communities, for us all.

**b. Financial Performance**

The Governance Board and the Administrative Team ask penetrating questions when reviewing data in order to expand existing efforts to improve student learning. The school's budget is built based on the needs of the students. We take our fiduciary responsibility seriously, and we recognize that the prudent use of these funds is directly correlated to student achievement. The proposed changes and the current school structure are rooted in current evidence based research.

**c. Governance Performance**

The Governance Board at LPA is carefully composed of members who represent diverse sectors of the community, and The Board currently has representation from the legal, education, government compliance, finance, medical, business, and other sectors. Looking forward, the Governance Board has endeavored to evaluate the remaining needs of the Board and the school as we develop and expand the strategic plan and execute tactical goals in pursuit of fulfilling the mission and vision of the school. Recognizing the demand for greater training and exposure, the Governance Board has committed to expanding the Board members' exposure to leading edge, research and performance based bodies of knowledge, to augment the collective performance of the Governance Board and, ultimately, the students we serve. Understanding the connective tissue between strong Governance oversight and the ultimate goal of superior student achievement, keeps the Board focused on remaining at the forefront of advancements in public education.

**d. Operational and Organizational Performance**

As we reflect over the past ten years since Leadership Preparatory Academy was founded, the Governance Board along with the administrative team, with feedback from its stakeholders, have developed a strategic plan that aligns with the goals of the organization. This intersection of ideas, innovative concepts, performance feedback and the triangulation of data has yielded an algorithm for success that is evident in our financial and academic performance. By constantly reviewing, we are able to maintain an eagle eye on our targets and make the necessary adjustments in real time. Looking forward to the next five years, we want to maintain our fiduciary responsibilities and operate LPA in an efficient manner using advances in technology to streamline services and continue to operate at a high level. The performance of the organization is contingent on our ability to retain the best and brightest faculty/staff at all levels, asking penetrating questions and examining the baskets of issues that are presented to the school and Governance Board.

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