

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

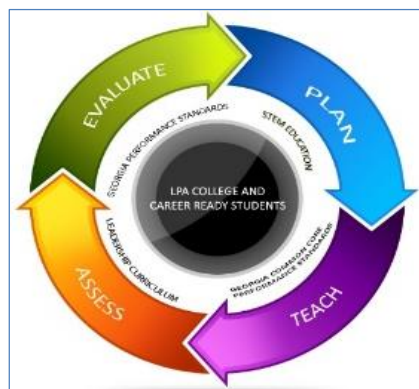
Expected Enrollment at the end of the Charter Term: 720

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:

Goal 1: LPA will meet all targets required by the CCRPI 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 improvement on national norm referenced measurements; Goal 3: In each year of the charter 100% of the

Figure 1: LPA's Teaching and Learning Framework

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 charter; Goal 5: LPA shall be economically sustainable; Goal 6: LPA shall ensure that all Governance Board Members will receive effective training; and Goal 7: LPA promotes a positive school experience that engages students, parents, and teachers. 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 21st Century. To accomplish this mission, LPA trains and develops its students to become 21st 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 maximizes students' potential to lead in the 21st 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 21st 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 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. The Leadership Studies curriculum has not been audited or evaluated.

The Leadership Studies curriculum was developed to bridge the gap between leadership skills offered in middle/ high school curriculums to be offered in the early years of school. This is limited empirical data on the link between leadership studies and academic achievement. The research does affirm the importance of teaching leadership skills especially in the early grades. There now exists limited research on the implementation of Social Emotional Learning activities in the classroom. During the first year of the renewal petition cycle, LPA will align these activities with the current Leadership Studies curriculum in order to be able to ascertain measurable data on the overall impact of the curriculum on academic achievement along with student attendance factors and discipline data.

Since the inception of Leadership Preparatory Academy, it has served as a viable option for many parents who are pursuing a different learning environment for their student. Because of the limited classroom space in our current leased facility, we can only accommodate a set number of students. As a result of this, we

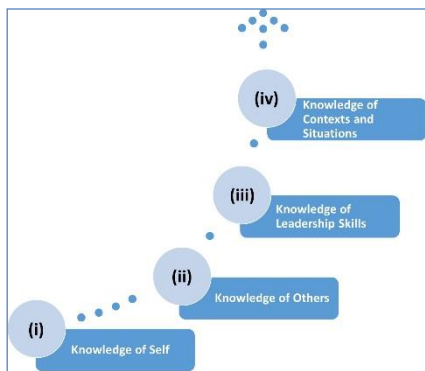
have had an active wait list. There exists an immediate need to locate a facility to accommodate the proposed growth. In preparation for the anticipated growth The Student Recruitment Plan ([Exhibit 31](#)) has

Figure2:

The Four Leadership Strands

been developed to guide specific strategies to assist in meeting the enrollment goal by Fall 2020 in a new facility. The data reflected in the chart states that we can enroll up to the number of students listed in the chart.

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 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 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.

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 21st 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, and 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 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 certified educators, the flexibility to employ professional teachers who have a deep content knowledge is essential to staffing our school. 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.

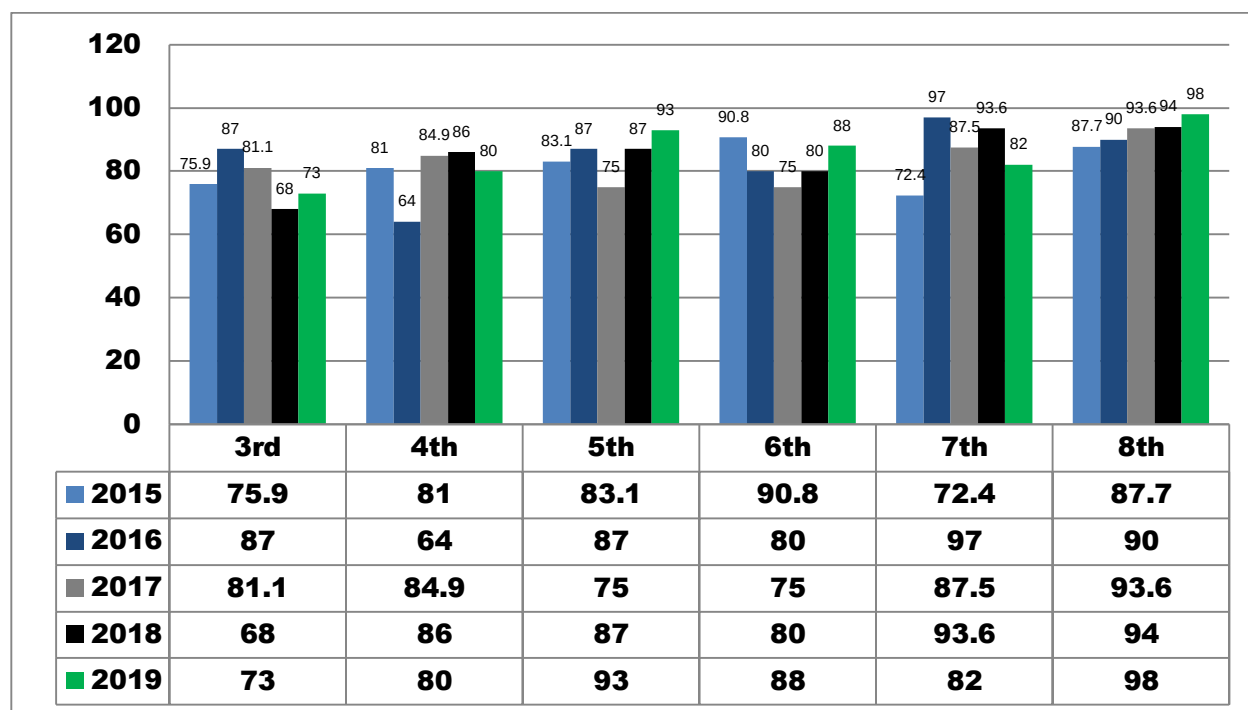
Past Performance

- 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 level 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

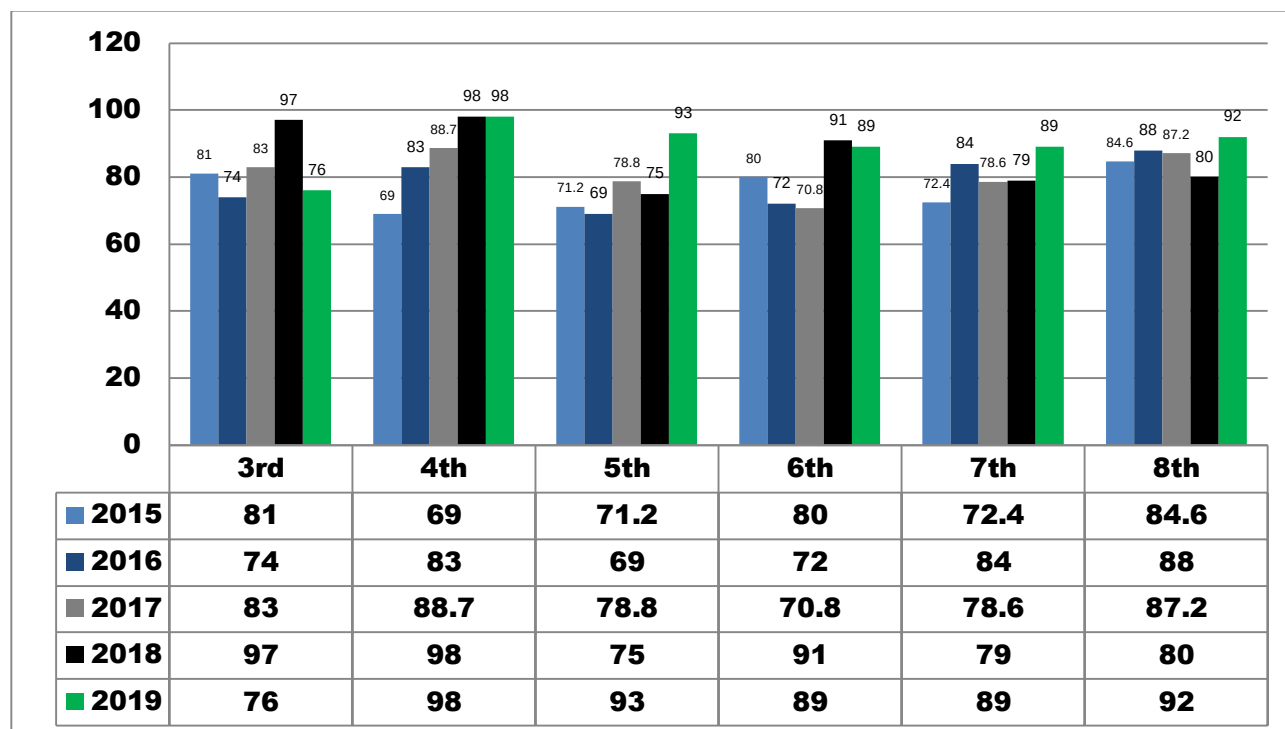


Over the course of the last five years, the percent of third grade students scoring Developing and Above on the state standards has had mixed results. While there was a five percentage (5%) increase from 2018 to 2019 school year, we recognize that there is additional work that needs to be done in developing 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.

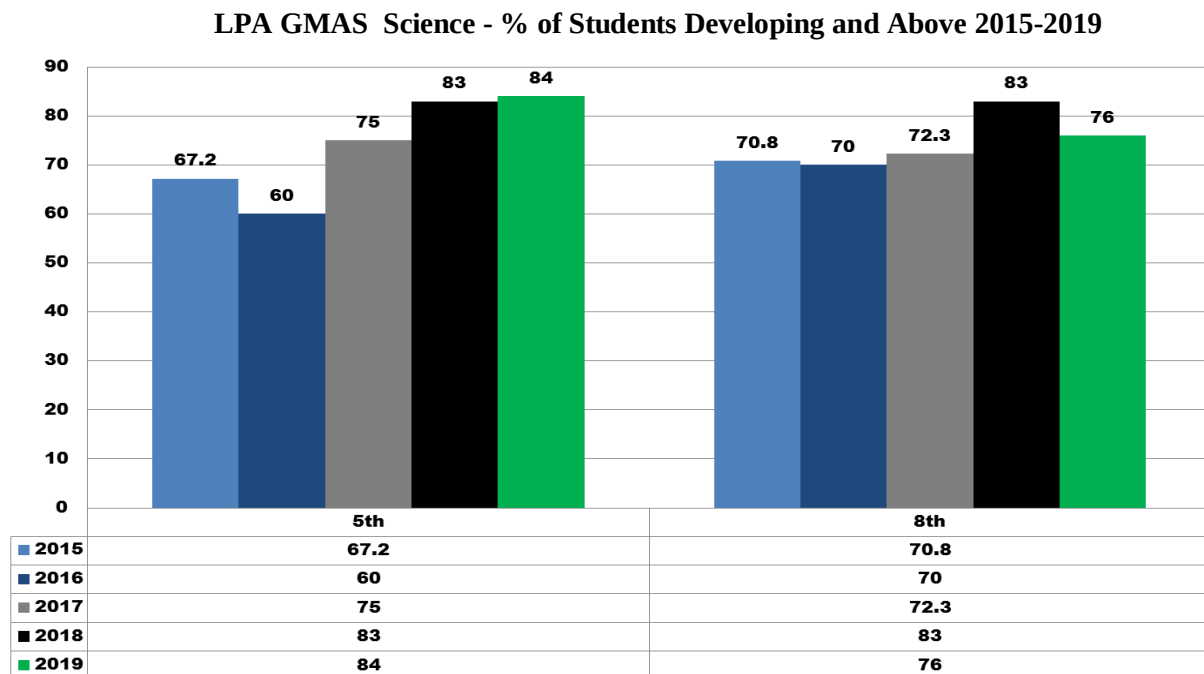
There are many factors that lead to the inconsistent math performance of students; some of those are student related, teacher related and school related. An examination of those factors revealed that the biggest factor was teacher related. The student related factors included their attitude toward mathematics, and the school factor included resources and material for mathematics instruction. Many of the teachers who are employed at LPA have taught less than five years. That inexperience lead the AT &T team to determine that these teachers needed additional job embedded professional development in mathematics.

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 mathematics cohort data from 2015, it 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

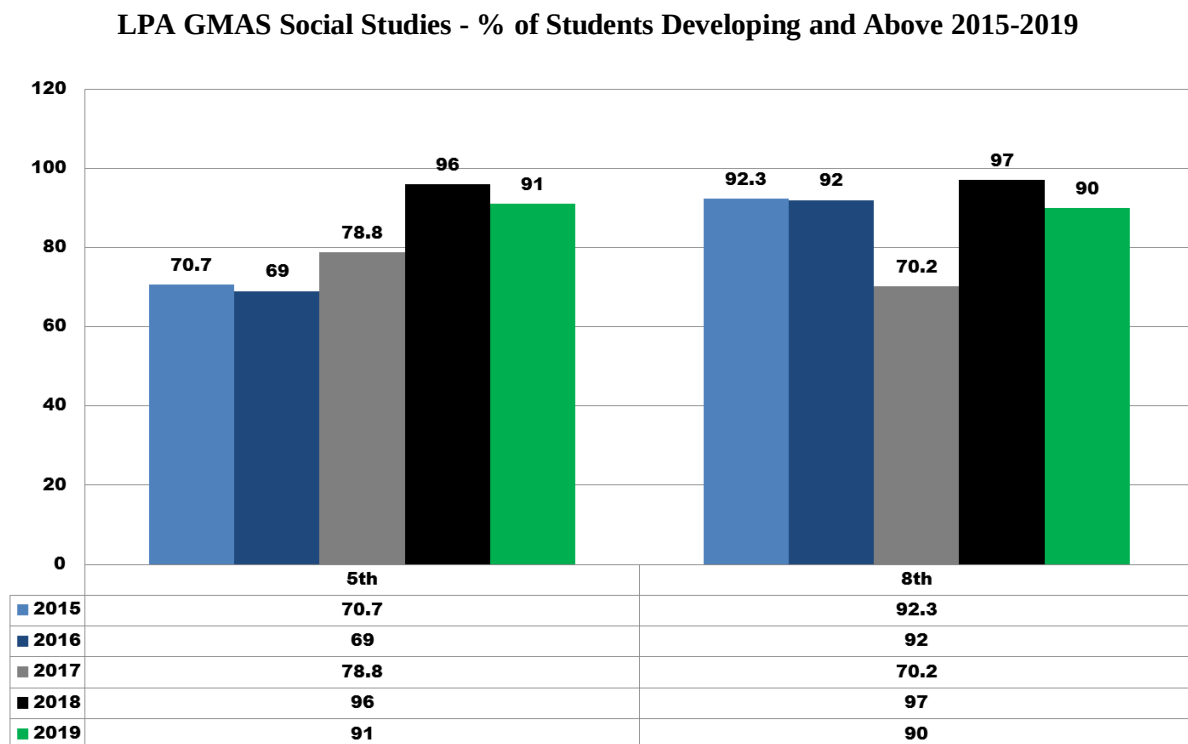
Students' performance in grade 3 from 2015 to 2018 showed increases with a slight decrease occurring in 2016 but rebounding in 2018. The results in 2019 showed a significant drop in math performance. The Assessment and Accountability Team (A & AT) meets regularly to examine student performance and make 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 ([Exhibit 34](#)) 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 Comprehensive Mathematics Action Plan (CMAP) works in tandem with the schoolwide improvement plan and includes best practices that are research and evidence based to improve academic achievement in mathematics. The CMAP ([Exhibit 32](#)) is monitored continuously by the Math Coach to ensure fidelity with implementation. The AT & T along with the newly hired Math coach developed the plan based on

current research on improving mathematics instruction. The plan is reviewed at the end of each 9 weeks and modified based on student performance metrics. 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.



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. Project Lead the Way is being implemented in all grades through the Technology connections classes and in the 8th grade science classes during the 2019-2020 school year. The program will continue to expand to all

science teachers as modules are being added to their platform. The grade levels being exposed to PLTW is 6-8 and it occurs during students Technology Class and during their Science Classes.

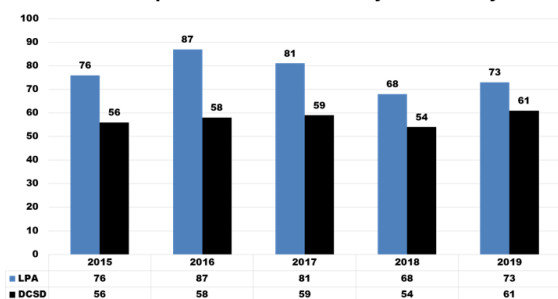


Fifth grade students at LPA have consistently made gains in the area of social studies over the charter term. Scores have increased over 21 percentage points since 2015. Eighth grade students have also performed well. In 2018, ninety seven percent (97%) of eighth grade students scored in the Developing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

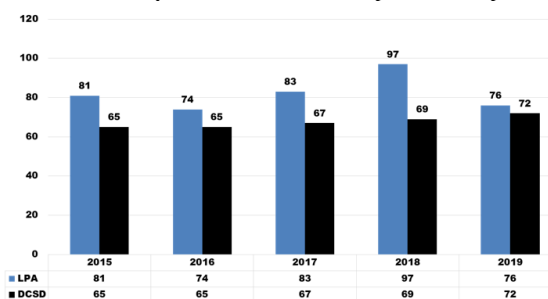
Leadership Preparatory Academy



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



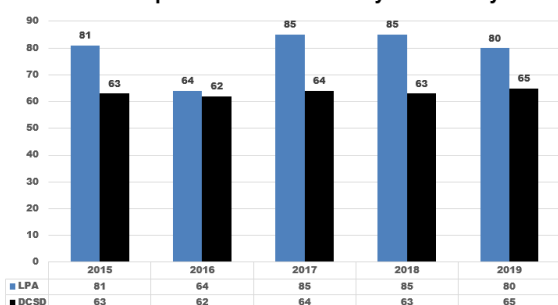
Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard
Georgia Milestones Assessment
3rd Grade Mathematics
% of Students Developing and Above
Compared to DeKalb County Schools System



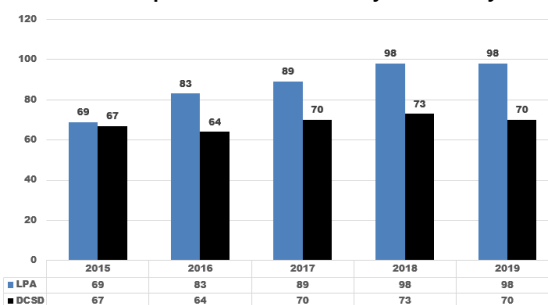
The third grade students at LPA have consistently outperformed DCSD in ELA and Mathematics. In 2019, LPA students outperformed DCSD by 12 points in ELA. LPA had its highest performance in Mathematics in 2018. It outperformed the district by twenty eight percentage points (28%). The following year, student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



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

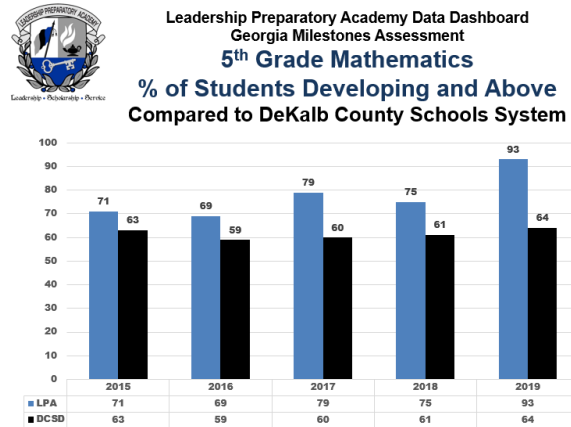
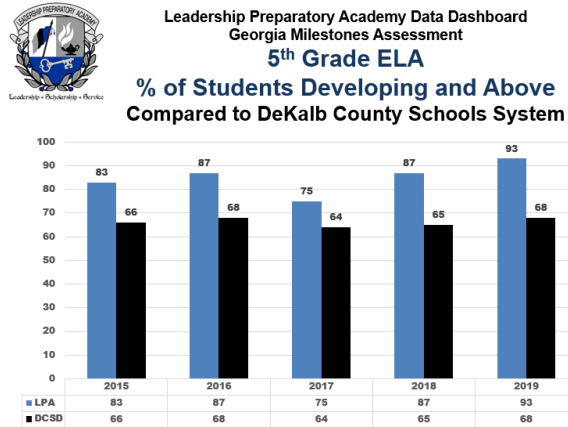


Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard
Georgia Milestones Assessment
4th Grade Mathematics
% of Students Developing and Above
Compared to DeKalb County Schools System

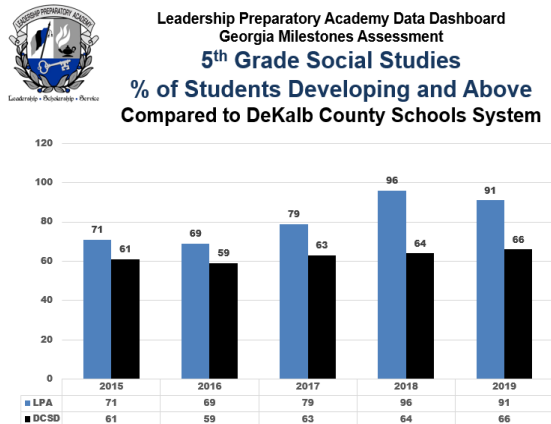
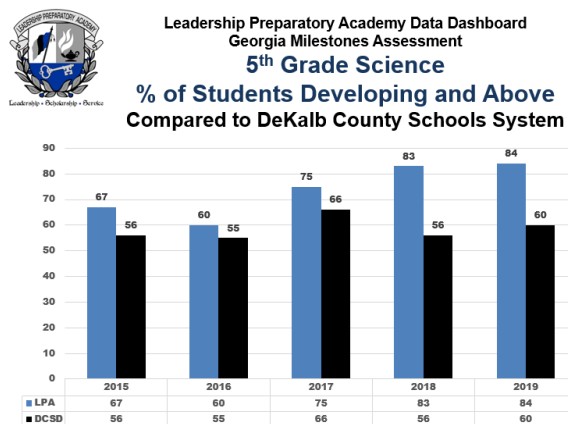


LPA's 4th graders consistently outperformed DCSD in ELA and Mathematics. Over the course of this charter term, the fourth graders at LPA steadily increased the number of students who score Developing and Above. Fourth graders are making more academic progress given where they were at the beginning of the charter term in mathematics. Fourth grade students continue to make academic gains each year.

Leadership Preparatory Academy



Over the charter term, LPA 5th 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.

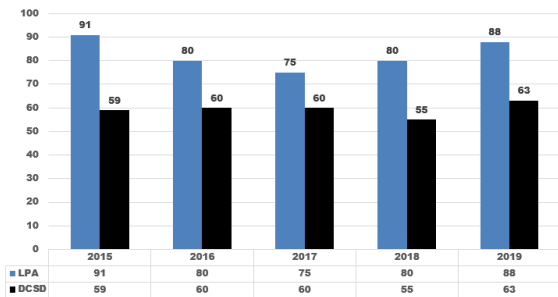


LPA fifth graders outperformed DCSD in science and social studies. Fifth grade student made more academic progress as compared to DCSD students in these areas.

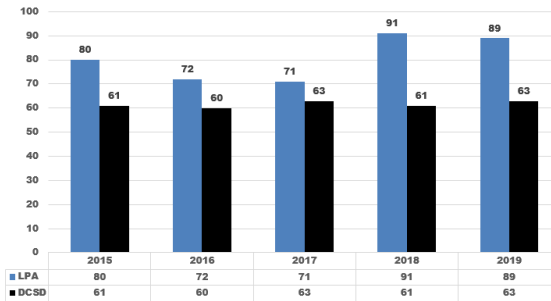
Leadership Preparatory Academy



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



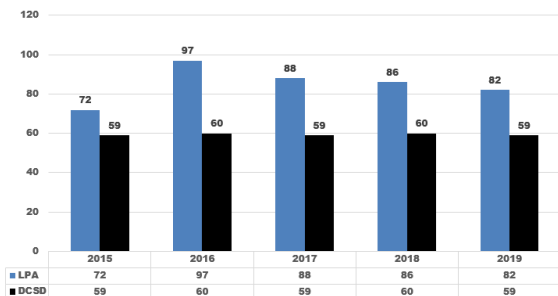
Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard
Georgia Milestones Assessment
6th Grade Mathematics
% of Students Developing and Above
Compared to DeKalb County Schools System



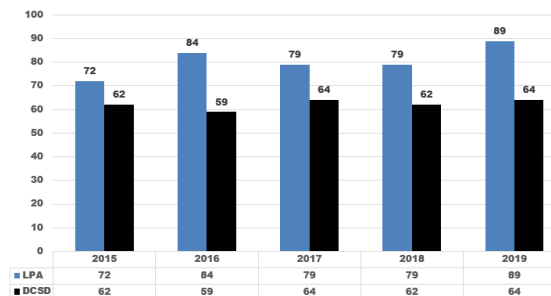
Many of our sixth graders began LPA in kindergarten. As a result of this continuous matriculation, this cohort group has performed above average when compared to DCSD. These students are making more academic progress from one grade to the next grade as compared to DCSD.



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

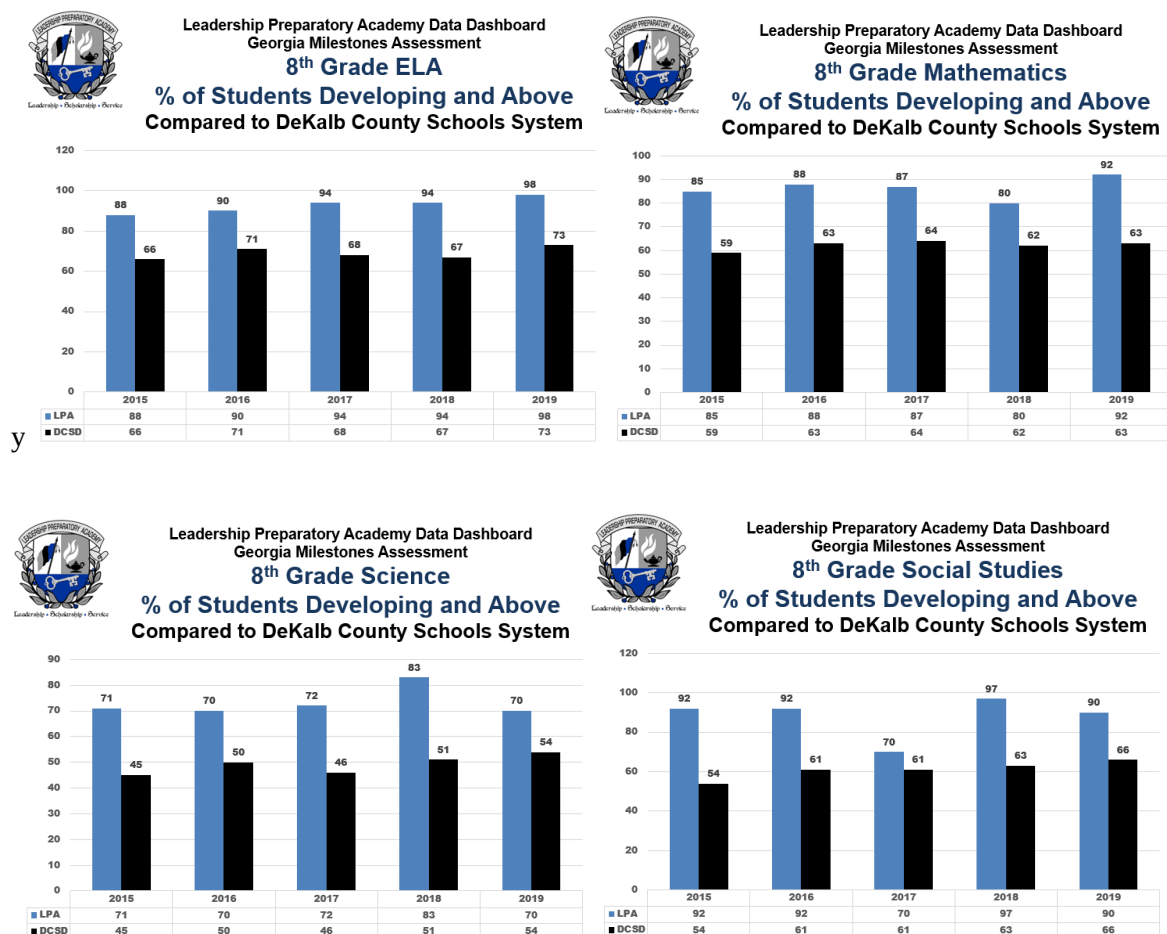


Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard
Georgia Milestones Assessment
7th Grade Mathematics
% of Students Developing and Above
Compared to DeKalb County Schools System



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

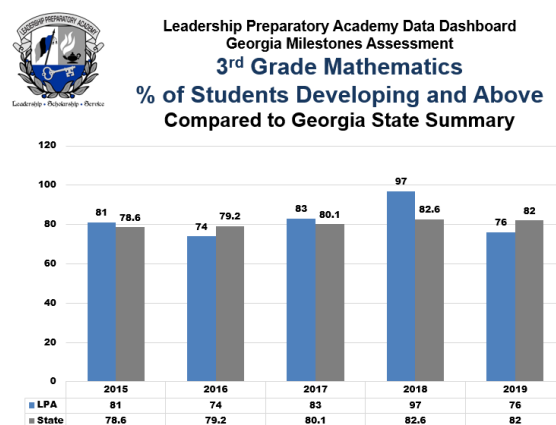
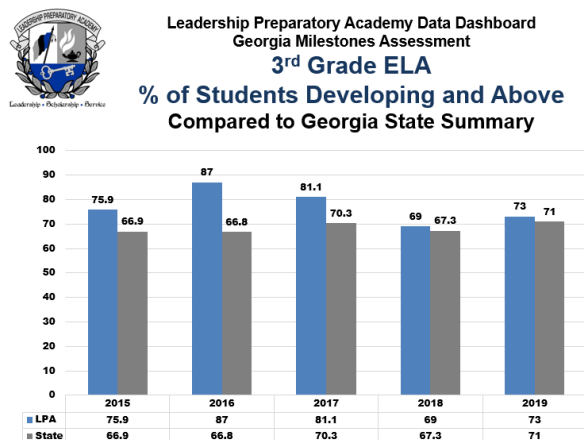


When we examine the performance of the LPA 8th grade students compared to the DCSD, we find that over 90% of our students score at Level 2 or above in ELA and Mathematics. The performance at this grade level has continuously outperformed DCSD. The majority of these students have matriculated at LPA since 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.

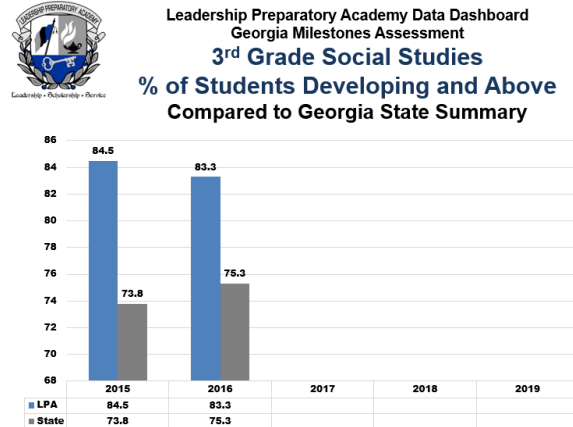
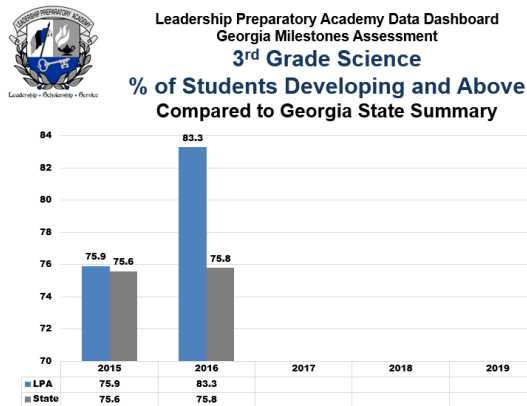
As we further evaluate the goals we established in our previous charter, our Leadership Curriculum is an essential component of our student's educational experience. The Leadership Studies curriculum has not been audited or evaluated. The Leadership Studies curriculum was developed to bridge the gap between leadership skills offered in middle/ high school curriculums to be offered in the early years

of school. There is limited empirical data on the link between leadership studies and academic achievement. The research does affirm the importance of teaching leadership skills especially in the early grades. There now exists a limited amount of research on the implementation of Social Emotional Learning activities in the classroom. During the first year of the renewal petition cycle, LPA will align these activities with the current Leadership Studies curriculum in order to be able to ascertain measurable data on the overall impact of the curriculum on academic achievement along with student attendance factors and discipline data.

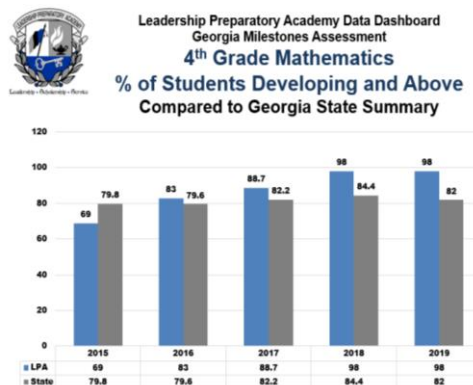
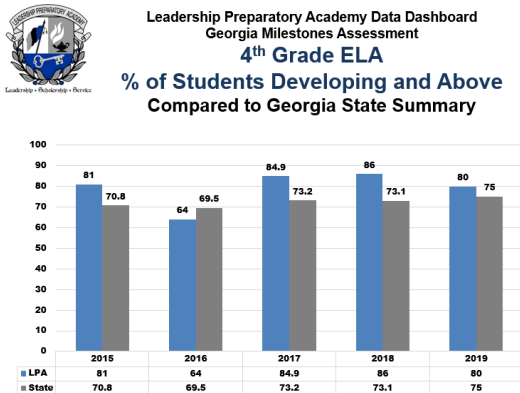
The objectives of the Leadership Curriculum are interwoven throughout the general curriculum and students are expected to demonstrate competencies in the leadership curriculum as evident in their leadership activities, community service and project presentations. STEM is an important element in the educational 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.



Leadership Preparatory Academy

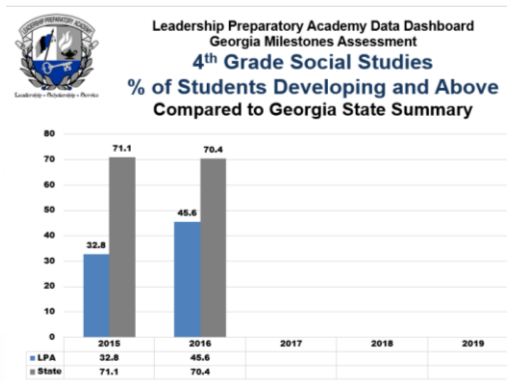
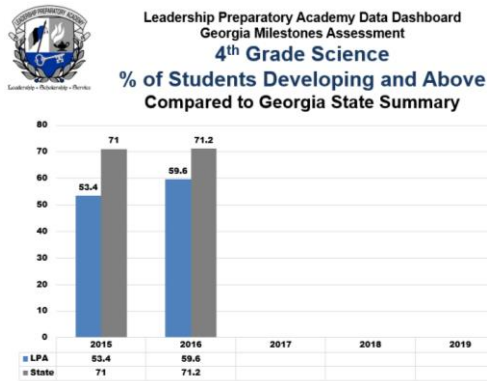


Leadership Preparatory Academy has met or exceeded the state average each year of the charter in ELA. LPA has met and/or exceeded the state each year with the exception of 2016 and 2019. During those two years we missed the target by an average of four points.

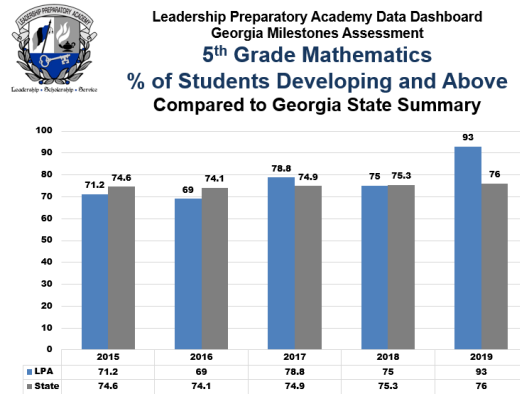
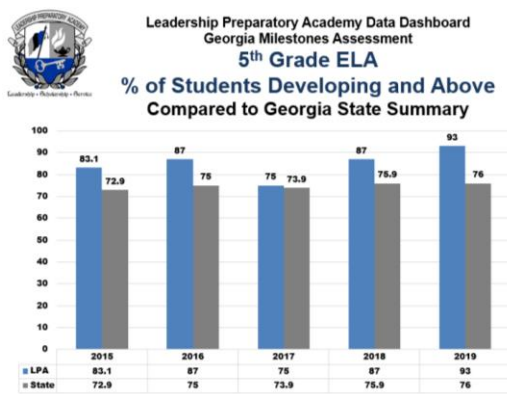


Leadership Preparatory Academy's fourth graders outperformed the state in ELA in all of the years of the charter. In 2018 was our highest performance year with 86% of our students scoring in the Developing and Above range. Our students outperformed the state in Mathematics each year of the current charter, with the 2019 school year posting 14 points above the state average.

Leadership Preparatory Academy



During the administration of the CRCT, in fourth grade science, students scored below the state in 2015. However, LPA demonstrated a 6% gain during the 2016 school year. This data revealed that we needed to do significant more work in the area of science. Students in grade four scored below the state in the area of Social Studies. There was a slight gain year over year but not enough to meet and/or exceed the state.

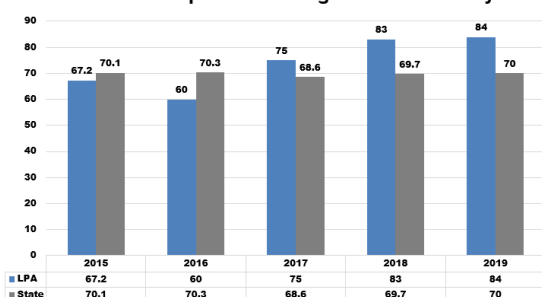


LPA fifth grade students outperformed the state each year of the charter term in ELA. The highest performance was made in 2019 with 93% of our students scoring developing and above. For the last three years of the charter, fifth graders met and/or exceed the state in mathematics.

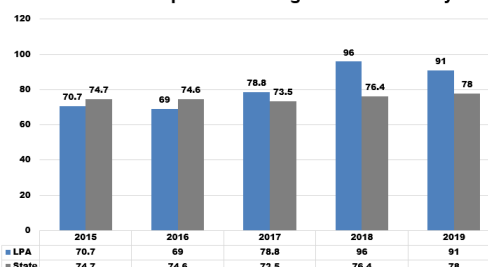
Leadership Preparatory Academy



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard
Georgia Milestones Assessment
5th Grade Science
% of Students Developing and Above
Compared to Georgia State Summary



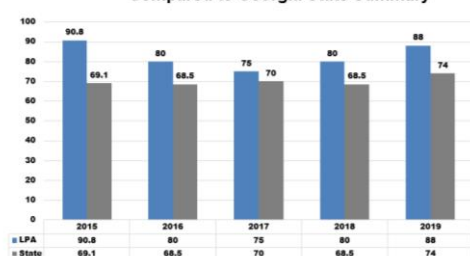
Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard
Georgia Milestones Assessment
5th Grade Social Studies
% of Students Developing and Above
Compared to Georgia State Summary



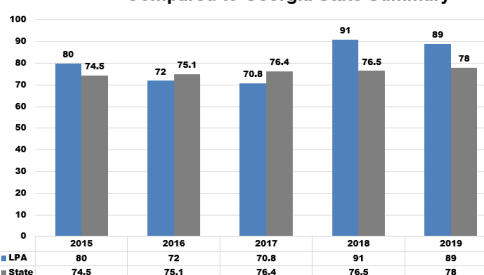
Fifth grade students have been making steady gains in Science. From 2017 to 2019, there has been a 9 point gain. In 2018, 96% of LPA's fifth graders, outperformed the state in Social Studies.



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard
Georgia Milestones Assessment
6th Grade ELA
% of Students Developing and Above
Compared to Georgia State Summary

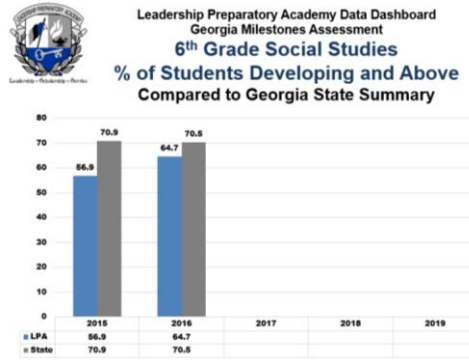
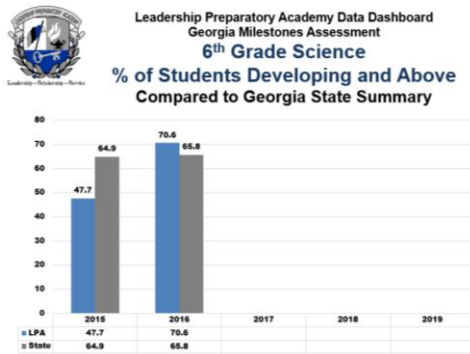


Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard
Georgia Milestones Assessment
6th Grade Mathematics
% of Students Developing and Above
Compared to Georgia State Summary

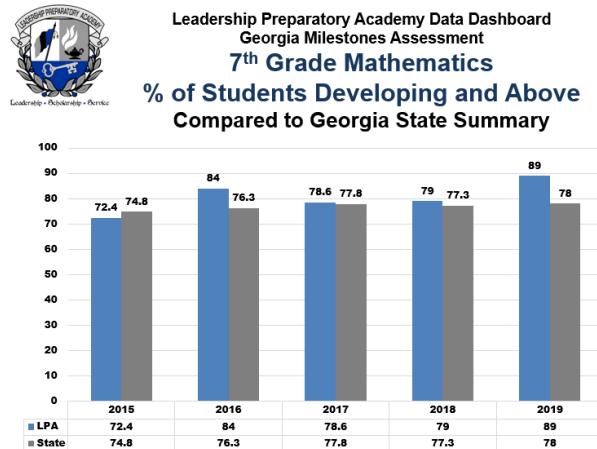
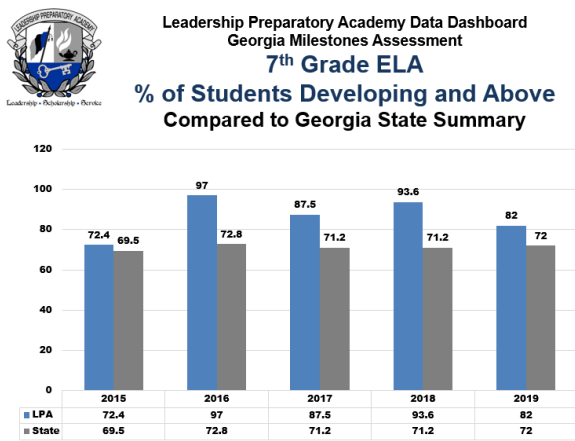


Students at LPA continue to show great progress in ELA. In each year of the charter term, students outperformed the state. In 2016 and 2017, LPA 6th graders did not meet the state goal by 4-6 points. However, the students made significant progress in years 2018 and 2019, with about 90% or more students scoring above the state's average.

Leadership Preparatory Academy



During the 2015 school year, 6th graders performed below the state average in science. However, they surpassed the state average in the following year. Social Studies for 6th graders continued to be a challenge. In 2015, 6th graders performed 6 points below the state average. The gap began to close in 2016, but fell short by three points in meeting the state's average.

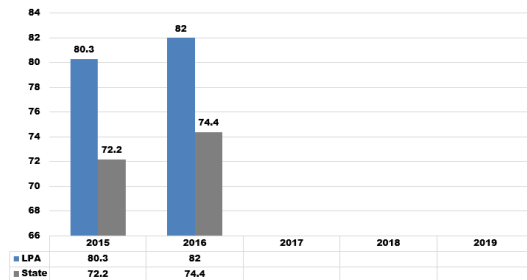


Students in grade 7 outperformed the state in ELA and Mathematics in each year of the charter term. 7th graders posted their highest performance this past school term with 89% performing above the state average in ELA and exceeded the state by 10 percentage points in the same year.

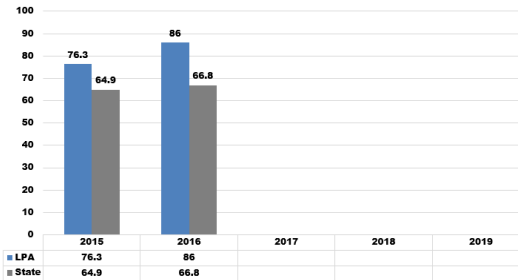
Leadership Preparatory Academy



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard
Georgia Milestones Assessment
7th Grade Social Studies
% of Students Developing and Above
Compared to Georgia State Summary



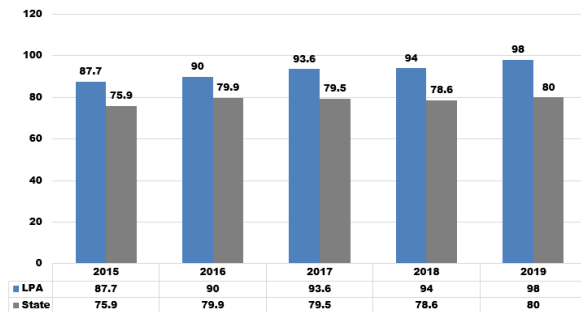
Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard
Georgia Milestones Assessment
7th Grade Science
% of Students Developing and Above
Compared to Georgia State Summary



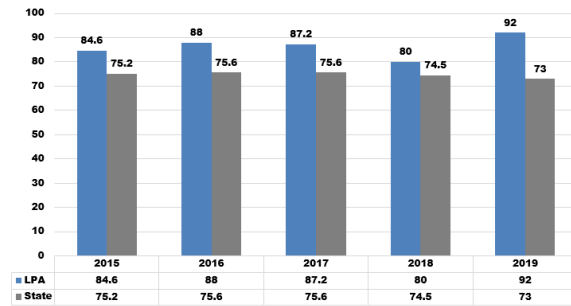
The seventh grade students outperformed the state in Science and Social Studies in both years of the administration of the Science and Social Studies portion of the Georgia Milestones Assessment.



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard
Georgia Milestones Assessment
8th Grade ELA
% of Students Developing and Above
Compared to Georgia State Summary



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard
Georgia Milestones Assessment
8th Grade Mathematics
% of Students Developing and Above
Compared to Georgia State Summary

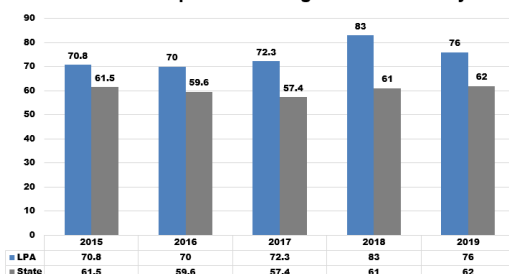


Eighth grade students continued to score above the state average in ELA and Mathematics during each year of the charter term. In 2019, 98% of eighth graders exceeded the state average in ELA and exceeded the state average in Mathematics by 19 percentage points.

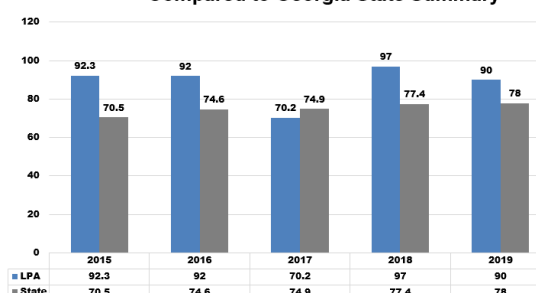
Leadership Preparatory Academy



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard
Georgia Milestones Assessment
8th Grade Science
% of Students Developing and Above
Compared to Georgia State Summary



Leadership Preparatory Academy Data Dashboard
Georgia Milestones Assessment
8th Grade Social Studies
% of Students Developing and Above
Compared to Georgia State Summary



In each year of the charter term, 8th graders met and/or exceeded the state average in Science and Social Studies with the exception of 2017. In 2017, students missed the mark by 4 percentage points in Social Studies. The gap was closed in Social Studies in 2018, with LPA's eighth graders scoring 20 points above the state average.

LPA has two subgroups that are constantly monitored on the CCRPI. Our two subgroups are Economically Disadvantaged and Black. Overall, all groups make adequate progress in ELA and Mathematics; we need to continue to have a laser focus on Science and Social Studies. A deeper analysis is contained in [Exhibit 33](#).

The Title I funds are designated to improve the educational program at Leadership Preparatory Academy (LPA). In developing the schoolwide improvement plan a comprehensive needs assessment is done which includes a review of all data sources, parent surveys, stakeholder input, which should result in improving the academic achievement of all students, particularly the lowest-achieving students. The ultimate goal is to provide support to students to achieve grade level mastery. The funds that are received from Title I are used to support students through extended day tutorial programs, the purchasing of consumable materials, the purchases of research based materials, and purchase of technology. Funds are also allocated to address the professional learning needs of teachers, staff and parents. 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 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 is 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 out of five stars and 79.231% of the parents who participated in the survey were highly satisfied with the school experience.

Leadership Preparatory Academy met all of the goals outlined in the charter contract ([Exhibit 30](#)). There were two goals that were listed in our 2nd renewal cycle charter petition that were not a part of the charter contract however, we believed they were essential in the evolution of our school. Over the past two years, LPA has taken steps to work toward securing STEM Certification. We are currently following the STEM Certification process endorsed by the Georgia Department of Education to assist us in reaching our goal. As we examine the characteristics of what STEM should look like at LPA, we have ensured that each one is woven into our comprehensive improvement plan, and the Governance Board will be integrating those characteristic that are applicable into the strategic plan. The first characteristic is project and problem based learning. This characteristic requires professional learning in this area. During the 2018-2019 school term, LPA wrote and was funded a grant from Project Lead Way to provide professional learning and supplies for the purpose of integrating Science across the curriculum. The grant will cover the next two school terms which is aligned with Step 3 of the Certification process which requires a shift in pedagogy, school culture and instruction. The ability for students to analyze and articulate interdisciplinary connections that exist within math, science and Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) will also be addressed through the professional learning modules through Project Lead the Way. LPA also developed a STEM after school program that is funded by the Department of Human Services. Additionally, Science is one of

our priority areas for the schoolwide comprehensive plan. LPA was also awarded a grant from Scott Miracle Gro for hydroponic units. During the STEM After School Program students conduct investigative research on the hydroponic units. The Governance Board has allotted funds for the Dean of Students to meet with business, college and community partners to support our effort. As a result, we are in the initial phase of developing a relationship with the Morehouse School of Medicine. LPA has coordinated federal grants, external grants and resources to systematically achieve this goal within the next two to three years.

2. Page #26 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 State Charter School Commission's (SCSC) 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 Measures of Academic Progress (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, and 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. In the early years of the first petition cycle LPA experienced a pending financial crisis when it became apparent that the QBE funding would not arrive by deposit into our operating account in time to meet our payroll commitments. The Governing Board began exploring sources for short term funding. Such funding would have potentially required personal guarantees. Although the crisis was averted, The Governance Board, in its infancy, learned from this near scare, and quickly understood the importance of contingency financial planning and the need for superior financial strength. Accordingly, the Finance, Audit, and Budget Committee of the Board developed a plan to build the school's financial strength through more conservative financial planning, and diligent, considerate spending. Seeking more guidance from fiscal management resources, the Governance Board embarked on a fiscal pathway clearly focused on these new goals of accelerated financial strengthening, and particularly, ongoing contingency planning as an integral part of the fiscal operations of the school. These new objectives became embedded in the natural course and culture of our financial planning and execution. Today, nearly eight years later, LPA is still driven by conservative fiscal planning, closely monitored financial engagement, and, from a financial standpoint, fidelity with tactical and strategic goals, as well as the mission of the school.

Currently, our contingency planning related to LPA's financial operations relies heavily on the liquid assets held in reserves and earmarked for either operational expenses or the facilities initiative, and is further defined as follows:

Categorical Financial Crisis and Response:

Stage	Plan Agent/Responsible	Monitoring Party
1	Monitor Actuals and Projections	CFO & Bookkeeping Department with CEO
2	Review trends, Monitor actuals & Evaluate Projections	CFO & Bookkeeping Department with CEO

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3	Continue to review trends, monitor actuals & evaluate projections Analyze current spending and near term obligations for priority	CFO & Bookkeeping Department with CEO
4	Continue to review trends, monitor actuals & evaluate projections CLO Analyze current spending and near term obligations for priority status Institute lowest priority non-essential spending, and near term obligation reductions	CFO & Bookkeeping Department with CEO & Notify Governance Board of assessment and
5	Institute non-essential spending and near term obligation reductions CLO Re-evaluate budget & develop recommendations for Governance Board approval	CFO & Bookkeeping Department with CEO & appropriate budget adjustment
6	Transfer funds from reserves to cover any operating shortfall N T E 10% of reserves without Governance Board Approval	CFO & Bookkeeping Department with CEO Advice and consent from the Governance Board

Stage Definitions:

1. Loss of revenue equal to or less than 5%
2. Loss of revenue greater than 5%, but less than 10%
3. Loss of revenue equal to or greater than 10%, but less than 12%
4. Loss of revenue equal to or greater than 12%, but less than 15%
5. Loss of revenue equal to or greater than 15%, but less than 18%
6. ANY loss of revenue greater than 18%

NOTE: All reviews and responses are executed on a monthly basis. However, as an additional measure, stage #4 becomes a bi-weekly review and response process.

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.

Beginning in 2014, LPA has engaged in a strategic effort to build a significant reserve fund to address the issue of financing a newly acquired facility. At that time, the strategic financial plan was focused on building financial strength, and its acid test ratio, which measures that financial strength. Once the reserve fund crossed the predetermined threshold, the focus of the plan shifted to a capital improvement/acquisition plan for a new facility. Driving this secondary focus, was the forecasted need for a facility and site which could demonstrate 1) the capacity to address long term growth of the school's student population, and 2) the capacity of such a facility and site to accommodate the specific needs of the academic and technological aspects of the school's offerings. This new focus is the foundation for mitigation of the anticipated increase in facilities costs and the planning for such. Essentially, we are willing to accept a short term increase in the facilities cost in return for greater opportunities for DeKalb students to enjoy a superior educational opportunity, due in part to the availability of appropriate, supportive facilities.

The Facilities Task Force, in conjunction with the Finance, Audit, and Budget Committee, has met on a few recent occasions with the CFO and CEO in an effort to strategically plan for the budgetary impact of a new, expanded facility. The CEO has elicited professional expertise to guide the discussion about construction and pre-construction costs, including the environmental impact study and other engineering feats required in consideration of a new facility. The CFO has elicited professional expertise in the specialized funding markets to guide the discussion about various funding models and approaches to debt retirement. The fruit of these efforts help to inform the discussions between the CEO, the CFO and the Facilities Task Force, and the subsequent, ongoing conversations with the Governance Board.

The Governance Board, the Facilities Task Force, the CEO and the CFO are on one accord about the increase in facilities costs, and the plan to reduce that impact by initially increasing the payments to debt service over the first five years, and then make a significant single payment (from reserves) to reduce the principal balance.

Impact: We anticipate the Facility Costs under the SCSC Framework will exceed the 15% threshold (rising to approximately 15.6%-16.9%) for the duration of this third charter term. This is quite a departure from our current and historic 9.6%-12% experience over the last several years. However, doing so makes the anticipated funding commitment remainder (unretired debt), and the related debt service (which combined, is the greatest portion of the facility cost in that framework), substantially easier to refinance during the proper market timing opportunity.

Mitigation: This aggressive, but strategic, approach is designed to retire the debt in a significantly shorter period of time as compared to the traditional approach to long term debt financing. This model is also extremely effective for organizations with higher liquidity, such as the case with LPA. A significant part of the mitigation is to make a lump sum payment, from the reserve fund, at the end of the first five years, which would significantly impact, by reduction, the principal balance. We would then, at the appropriate time, refinance the remaining net principal balance.

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)
- Georgia Department of Education Facility Grant - \$100K (FY18)

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- 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 Hydroponic 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 General Accepted Accounting Practices (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# 33 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 the 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#_36__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 employs Special Education teachers who are specifically trained to address the needs of students who have an Individualized Educational Plan. The Special Education teachers work collaboratively with the classroom teacher to implement the IEP for each student. The Lead Special Education Teacher, who is employed by DCSD, provides support to the Special Education teachers through the monitoring of each teacher’s caseload and providing feedback on strategies to assist students in reaching the goals identified on the IEP. Progress monitoring is done by the Special Education teacher throughout to determine each

student's progress toward their goals. While LPA has a small percentage of students who received Special Education services, a concerted effort is made to ensure that those students participate in all before and after school tutorial programs. We believe that these additional layers of support have an impact on the student's ability to reach their goals. During the reevaluation the data from participation into these programs are used in order to determine if the student has achieved the goal and what modifications need to be made to the existing goal and/or to develop new goals.

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 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 2014). 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 # 40 Describe how the charter school provides state-and-federally mandated services for English Learners (ELs).

Because LPA isn't simply a neighborhood school, we do not attract students on the basis of location alone, which creates one of our greatest challenges. To address this challenge, we get the word out through various media and have worked with marketing professionals to refine our brand. The promotional plan to be followed in publicizing the School is designed to reach the entire Community and, accordingly, all racial/ethnic groups within it. The School implements a community awareness plan that reaches the surrounding communities and homeowner associations, and the County residents via community newspapers. The School provides copies of its promotional materials and announcements in English and Spanish to community organizations to make sure those "harder-to-reach" families (e.g. single parent families, low socio-economic households, diverse language speakers, people who work in the area, etc.) are aware of the school and their eligibility to apply for enrollment. The School conducts general

information meetings that are open to the public and announced through public service announcements. The School posts flyers in local public facilities such as the post office, community centers, and other locations of public access, in order to reach these parents to inform them of the educational opportunity available for their children at Leadership Preparatory Academy. Recruitment efforts are not limited to the area surrounding the School. On the contrary, it is the aim of the School to attract students from throughout the region in order to achieve a mix that is representative of the district. In anticipation of enrolling students who speak a language other than English, the school has developed the English Language Learners (ELs) program to ensure that every student assessed as an ELs masters written and spoken English. LPA will make every effort to employ a teacher who has an ESOL endorsement. We will encourage families to assist students with retaining and building fluency and literacy in their home language by, utilizing such strategies as making frequent trips to the public library, engaging their children in meaningful conversation, and watching educational children's television programs together that promote English language and literacy development.

All students indicating that their home language is one other than English will be screened using the WIDA Screener to determine which services will be most appropriate for them. The WIDA Screener will be the primary assessment used to determine a student's level of language proficiency. LPA will use the WIDA Screener for incoming second semester 1st grade and 2nd-8th grade students. LPA will officially adopt the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment English Language Development standards (referred to as the WIDA ELD standards) as part of the larger Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners (RETELL) initiative in our school. Educators at LPA will administer the W-APT for incoming Kindergarten & first semester first grade students. The WIDA Screener is an English language proficiency assessment given to new students in Grades 1–12 to help educators identify whether they are English language learners (ELs). It is a flexible, on-demand assessment that can be administered at any time during the school year. WIDA provides several assessments for use with English language learners. The W-APT (WIDA ACCESS Placement Test) is most often used as a screening test to determine the language level of students entering a school system. The WIDA ELD standards provide useful data and research-based

resources for promoting language development along content area learning. In addition, they provide a common language between content and language teachers to maximize collaboration on behalf of ELs. Each classroom will be designed for differentiated instruction to facilitate a number of instructional methods including project based learning. The curriculum will be embedded with specific strategies for ELs such as scaffolding of classroom discussions with ELs, using technology to incorporate student(s)' native language in instruction and providing opportunities for students to engage with material in multiple ways. 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 ELs 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.

ELs who do not make the minimum expected growth of one level per year on the ACCESS will be referred to the RTI team. Language development will be tracked and monitored. Essential components of RTI include Using screening and formative assessment data to identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes ,monitoring the effectiveness of instruction (i.e., progress monitoring), implementing multi-leveled evidence-based instruction that is matched to students' instructional needs, data-based decision making for instruction, movement within the multi-level system, and disability identification (in accordance with state law). Additionally ELs, will have access to the same interventions available to all students. ELs 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 ELs 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 ELs and the rights of students and parents.

All ELs 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 ELs 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. The exit criteria provided for English Language Learners (ELs) will represent valid and reliable evidence of a student's English language proficiency to exit from an English language instructional program with a prescribed mandatory two-year monitoring plan. As outlined by the GADOE ESOL Resource Guide, an initial follow-up will be made within two weeks of exiting ESOL services: (a) To verify the student can compete academically and (b) To check on the student's social and psychological adjustment.

If necessary, teachers will make adaptations to content material and present it to all ELs in an accessible language format. Following their exit from language assistance services ELs should be coded as EL-1 on state assessments and continue to be eligible for appropriate standard accommodations as outlined on their EL/TPC forms.

At the end of each progress reporting period over the two-year period, ESOL support staff will contact each of the ELELs student's teachers to find out if the student is adjusting and succeeding academically and to identify any academic or adjustment need. If there is evidence that the student is struggling in one or more content areas, LPA support staff will ensure that the student is provided any instructional supports available to all students within the school, and to ensure that the RTI team is made aware of the student's lack of academic progress and success. The RTI team and the school support staff will determine whether the exited EL is struggling because of a lack of content knowledge or whether the exited EL is struggling because of a lack of English language proficiency. This group will meet, review the evidence, and determine whether the exited ELs should be placed back into English language assistance services.

LPA will monitor and regularly assess the progress of all ELs, including those who have opted out of EL programs, in both English language proficiency (ELP) and content knowledge. This includes conducting an annual ELP assessment and, at least annually, measuring their performance in grade-level core content areas. By establishing a rigorous monitoring system that includes periodic benchmarks, this allows teachers and school support staff to monitor ELs' progress over time, determine when students are not making appropriate progress, and provide additional support to enable ELs to reach English proficiency and gain grade-level content knowledge. AT LPA, one such system for supporting students, including ELs, is Response to Intervention (RTI). RTI can provide additional systems of support for ELs in areas such as assessment, screening, intervention, and monitoring, which when combined can help improve instructional outcomes for ELs. Through ELELs meetings, school support staff and teachers can continually monitor students' progress and adjust instructional strategies to target and support students' needs. Teachers then target instruction and provide additional support services, as needed.

An EL must demonstrate the ability to access challenging academic content and interact with other students and teachers both academically and socially in an English language setting in order to be considered for reclassification. Once ELs attain English proficiency as defined in the state reclassification procedure, they will be reclassified as former ELs.

Currently, we do not have ELs enrolled in the school and no teachers of ELs. As we plan for professional learning annually, providing opportunities for teachers to improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness, we consider the need to provide equal opportunities for teachers of ELs (ESL and content) as well. We have determined that effective and worthwhile professional development for ESL teachers will: build upon their foundation of skills, knowledge, and expertise; will include many opportunities to engage ESL teachers as learners and offer them the opportunity to apply new skills and knowledge; and will explain to content-area teachers three basic concepts about ELs and the process of learning English.

As the need arises, LPA is committed to communicate information to limited English proficient parents in a language they can understand about any program, service, or activity that is called to the attention of parents who are proficient in English. The school will provide translation or interpretation from appropriate and competent individuals and will not rely on or ask students, siblings, friends, or untrained school staff to translate or interpret for parents. LPA will design a process to identify all limited English proficient parents, including parents and guardians whose primary language is not common in our district. A current list of professional interpreters and translators who provide quality will be developed and maintained, to be utilized in the event that ELs students are enrolled.

Accommodations for ELs will be determined at a documented ELs' meeting and will be made only when appropriate documentation is filed for each eligible student. These accommodations will be consistent with the instructional accommodations required for the student. Decisions will be based on individual characteristics and needs. The Student Assessment Handbook will be used to identify appropriate and state-approved accommodations.

6. Page#_46_____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)¹ 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 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.

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

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. During the 2017-2018 school year, the Administrative Team along with Teacher Leaders participated in the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement where we participated in team based learning to address school challenges in order to improve academic performance. One of the many quality tools we learned was how to lead our teams in analyzing and displaying data. Once a quality tool i.e. the five ways analysis is deployed we are left with actionable causes in which you use to develop a plan to address the problem statement. Members of the A&AT believe 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.

Figure 22: Areas of Teaching and Learning Reflection



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)² since it plays such a critical role in the

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

transformation of teaching and learning. Reflection helps 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 22: Areas of Teaching and Learning Reflection).

As a means to teacher development, teachers are encouraged to engage in self-reflection which offers them an opportunity to think about what works and what doesn't in their classroom. The complexity of teaching requires teachers to question their practices for their own professional development in order to improve and to increase learner performance. Teachers actively engage in reflection and from time to time ask and answer a series of questions (Danielson, 2007)³ 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 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.? There is continual dialogue with peers about teaching in the mutually cooperative environment rather than a competitive one. Collaboration with peer members increases the probability that teachers will be successfully reflective and more confident in their professional development. Teachers who explore their own teaching through critical reflection develop changes in attitudes and awareness which they believe can benefit their professional growth as teachers, as well as improve the kind of support they provide their students.

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

Reflective teaching therefore, implies a more systematic process of collecting, recording and analyzing our thoughts and observations, as well as those of our students, and then going on to making changes. As a result of the reflective practice, teachers are more confident, are willing to experiment with new ideas and embrace innovation, are actively engaged in shared planning and collegial discussions.

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%
Total Population	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. When we compared our data against another high performing charter school, that has a similar socio economic status and demographics, we found that our in

school and out of school suspension rates are similar to their rates. In most years, there in school suspension rate is higher than LPA. See chart below.

LPA Discipline Data Comparison to DeKalb PATH (DP)

	In School Suspension		Out of School Suspension		#Students With Incidents	
	LPA	DP	LPA	DP	LPA	DP
2018	3.5	9.2	6.8	7.0	59	55
2017	7.0	8.4	6.2	3.9	58	53
2016	0.4	2.7	5.0	2.4	33	25
2015	0.0	2.1	1.7	3.5	16	18

In order to reduce the number of suspensions (ISS and OSS), LPA has implemented school wide expectations for teachers to teach positive behaviors that are constantly reviewed with students. Additionally, Peer Mediation is a positive behavior intervention that has worked well for us. The School counselor trains student volunteers to mediate incidents involving their peers. Further, the counselor presents monthly lessons that center on learning social and emotional skills, such as friendship, bullying, and conflict resolution and academic skills, such as organizing and good study habits. Finally, professional development for teachers is provided to improve capacity of teachers to manage behavior and discipline within their classrooms and on the school campus, to enhance teachers' cultural understanding, and to reduce student misbehavior and improve classroom and school climate.

8. Page#_52____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#_53____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. A list of additional waivers are listed in [Exhibit 35](#).

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 Assesslets 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 Assesslets mirror that of the Georgia Milestones. The utilization of this assessment requires extended reasoning and critical thinking beyond basic recall. As we continue to develop 21st 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#_54_____Governance Changes

I. The school Governance structure

The 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 Governance 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 student it serves while maintaining the tenants of its succession plan.

VI. Page#_55_____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#_56___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. What is the anticipated impact of the purchase of a new facility on the school's financial standing? How will this impact be mitigated?

Beginning in 2014, LPA has engaged in a strategic effort to build a significant reserve fund to address the issue of financing a newly acquired facility. At that time, the strategic financial plan was focused on building financial strength, and its acid test ratio, which measures that financial strength. Once the reserve fund crossed the predetermined threshold, the focus of the plan shifted to a capital improvement/acquisition plan for a new facility. This new focus is the foundation for mitigation of the anticipated increase in facilities costs and the planning for such.

The Facilities Task Force, in conjunction with the Finance, Audit, and Budget Committee, has met on a few recent occasions with the CFO and CEO in an effort to strategically plan for the budgetary impact of a new, expanded facility. The CEO has elicited professional expertise to guide the discussion about construction and pre-construction costs, including the environmental impact study and other engineering feats required in consideration of a new facility. The CFO has elicited professional expertise in the specialized funding markets to guide the discussion about various funding models and approaches to debt retirement. The fruit of these efforts help to inform the discussions between the CEO CFO and the Facilities Task Force and the subsequent conversations with the Governance Board.

The Governance Board, the Facilities Task Force and the CFO are on one accord about the increase in facilities costs, and the plan to reduce that impact by initially increasing the payments to debt service over the first five years, and then make a significant single payment to reduce the principal balance.

Impact: We anticipate the Facility Costs under the SCSC Framework will exceed the 15% threshold (approximately 15.6%) for the duration of this third charter term. This is quite a departure from our current and historic 9.6-12% experience over the last several years. However, doing so makes the existing funding commitment, which is the greatest portion of the facility cost in that framework, substantially easier to refinance during the proper market timing opportunity.

Mitigation: This aggressive, but strategic, approach is designed to retire the debt in a significantly shorter period of time as compared to the traditional approach to long term debt financing. This model is also extremely effective for organizations with higher liquidity, such as the case with LPA. A significant part of the mitigation is to make a lump sum payment from the reserve fund which would significantly impact the principal balance, and then, at the appropriate time, refinance the remaining net principal balance.

After careful consideration and analysis, the CFO has proposed, and fully supports, this recommendation to the Governance Board. The Governance Board will certainly evaluate this unique funding, debt service and debt retirement model. After being fully vetted and, if accepted, the Governance Board will favorably endorse this approach to long term debt service and the subsequent elimination of that debt.

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#_59_____**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. LPA invests in its teaching staff and has developed a recruitment and retention plan to ensure that it is employing the best and brightest staff to work with our students ([Exhibit 32](#))

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 during the school day whereby they 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.

Financial contingency planning:

In the early years of the first petition cycle LPA experienced a pending financial crisis when it became apparent that the QBE funding would not arrive by deposit into our operating account in time to meet our payroll commitments. The Governing Board began exploring sources for short term funding. Such funding would have potentially required personal guarantees. Although the crisis was averted, The Governance Board, in its infancy, learned from this near scare, and quickly understood the importance of contingency financial planning and the need for superior financial strength. Accordingly, the Finance, Audit, and Budget Committee of the Board developed a plan to build the school's financial strength through more conservative financial planning, and diligent, considerate spending. Seeking more guidance from the fiscal management resources, the Governance Board embarked on a fiscal pathway clearly focused on these new goals of accelerated financial strengthening, and particularly, ongoing contingency planning as an integral part of the fiscal operations of the school. These new objectives became embedded in the natural course and culture of our financial planning and execution. Today, nearly eight years later, LPA is still driven by conservative fiscal planning, closely monitored financial engagement, and, from a financial standpoint, fidelity with tactical and strategic goals, as well as the mission of the school. Currently, our contingency planning related to LPA's financial operations relies heavily on the liquid assets held I reserves and earmarked for either operational expenses or the facilities initiative

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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