



LINCOLN *Academy*

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CHARTER RENEWAL

Application 2024

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2024-2025 Charter School Renewal Application

PART A. RENEWAL NARRATIVE

School name(s)	Lincoln Academy Charter School
Charter school network?	No
School leaders (name and title)	Paul Hurst: Principal Jennifer Thomson-Brozovich: Assistant Principal Heather Frick: Assistant Principal Lori Woods: Operations Director
Executive Directors	Paul Hurst: Executive Director (Academics) Lori Woods: Executive Director (Operations)
Governing board chair	Micah Gilbreath
School mission	The mission of Lincoln Academy Charter School is to help students attain their highest social and academic potential through an academically rigorous, content-rich educational program in a safe, orderly, and caring environment.
School vision	The vision of Lincoln Academy is to prepare all students for their future endeavors by providing a comprehensive Core Knowledge education.

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SECTION I. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Question 1: Describe and reflect on the school's mission and vision, and the school's progress towards achieving the stated mission and vision.

The mission of Lincoln Academy (LA) Charter School is to help students attain their highest social and academic potential through an academically rigorous, content-rich educational program in a safe, orderly, and caring environment. Our vision is to prepare all students for their future endeavors by providing a comprehensive Core Knowledge education.

At Lincoln Academy, we are clear in our approach to educating our students in a holistic manner that includes demanding academics paired with the social-emotional intelligence necessary to succeed. This requires the ability to perform with excellence, navigate social situations, treat others with kindness and respect, and face challenges with confidence. This is how we would describe our understanding of the mission in which we operate.

Since the school's inception in 1997, Core Knowledge has been the foundational approach at Lincoln Academy to growing knowledge through sequential layering of new information on previously introduced topic areas. There is a growing body of evidence including studies by the Fordham Institute and the University of Virginia, that students who are immersed in Core Knowledge curriculum can experience increased academic achievement with a well-rounded foundation of knowledge. This is the driving force behind the decision to implement Core Knowledge as well as a perfect expression of the meaning behind our vision statement. Lincoln Academy has experienced the benefits of this approach first-hand through high test scores, exceptional classroom performance, and even in feedback from alums who voiced gratitude for the preparation they received for high school. Today, we continue to be entirely focused on utilizing the Core Knowledge sequence to best support our students. It is a critical element of providing the "academically rigorous, content-rich educational program" of our mission statement. The expectations at Lincoln Academy are high, and our students are demonstrating the capacity to achieve challenging goals. This is evidenced in more detail in subsequent question responses that describe our academic standing and performance through test scores and School Performance Framework results.

Over the past year, we introduced a common language for staff to use when addressing students to strengthen our school's educational environment. For example, we now have a consistent approach for directing students to walk in a ZAP line (Zero voices, Arms at side, Purposeful walking) throughout the school. All teachers use the same call to attention, ensuring that both students and staff are clear on expectations. Additionally, we established a list of non-negotiables to maintain consistency. A "safe, orderly, and caring environment" is achieved through relationship building, clear expectations, and consistent enforcement. One area of focus has been classroom management and behavior expectations commensurate with creating such an environment. For example, we have introduced a clear process for student redirection to ensure students are getting the support they need. To complement these changes, our mental health team works very closely with students in either a



one-on-one or small-group setting. They also work intently with the staff to help them successfully implement our Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) instruction. In 2022, we adopted the Second Step curriculum that teaches students how to make wise decisions related to the way they treat others, and how to establish healthy perceptions about themselves. These behavioral elements contribute significantly to the environmental aspect of our mission. Our families also contribute to achieving this ideal environment. Engaged parents partner with the school by participating in volunteer activities on campus, supporting a very active Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), and serving on the Board of Directors (BoD). We are also constantly evaluating safety from a facilities standpoint. Example upgrades include new security doors, a secure vestibule, and the installation of campus-wide cameras. We are proud of the work that has been accomplished and our ability to address feedback and are committed to continue to best support our students.

In early 2022, we took our mission and vision statement a step further as the whole staff paused to work intently to deepen their understanding of these statements and how we apply them to all aspects of the school. One key result was the derivation of three core values: Excellence, Kindness, and Hard Work. These values allow us to articulate the heart of our mission in simple, embraceable terms, and are easy to understand by our students and community. This year, we have implemented Core Value Assemblies where we focus on one value at a time to make sure students have a clear understanding of the meaning and also celebrate and reflect on how it applies to their role at Lincoln Academy. These words have since become prevalent in all teachings, communications, operations, student awards, and are even proudly displayed on our spirit wear. We have structured every part of our day so that our students can grow into Excellent, Kind, and Hardworking individuals, a direct correlation with our mission and vision.

Daily operations reflect this as well. We have revamped several aspects of our hiring process, and now include these core values in our evaluations, seeking only candidates who can already demonstrate them. We recognize our staff for excellence in personifying these traits during various meetings throughout the year and through formal awards at year end.

The mission and vision of Lincoln Academy are at the forefront of every decision made by our organization. The entire school focuses on a rigorous academic program using the Core Knowledge Sequence. Our goal is to provide a rich and balanced educational opportunity for all students while maximizing their learning potential in a disciplined environment.



Question 2: Describe and reflect on the school’s performance as measured by the 2024 School Performance Framework (SPF). Please address the school’s strengths and growth areas.

In the 2024 School Performance Framework, Lincoln Academy received a rating of “Performance Plan” by the state as they evaluated our performance. Both our elementary and middle schools were rated as “Performance” as we earned 71.6% of the points available as a whole school. Lincoln Academy has earned a “Performance Plan” rating every year during this contract period and we have consistently outperformed both the state and the district in both our ELA and Math CMAS scores. We are proud of the unwavering staff efforts that have yielded these results year after year.

Our elementary school earned over 70% of the points available in the Achievement category. This indicates to us that the focused work on sensemaking, integrated SEL instruction, and the coaching and evaluation cycles used by the administrative team have been effective at raising instructional levels. This also tells us that the curriculum and content (Core Knowledge) that we are using are effective at supporting students. The Growth category score was 48% of the points available. A closer look determined that one grade level and subject area significantly underperformed on the CMAS test, which contributed to the root cause. At the end of last year, significant changes were made in this grade by modifying the structure and schedule to better support our students. Changes were also made to the master schedule to ensure a consistent and uninterrupted time in the day for small-group intervention for this content area. This, along with our continued focus on developing sensemaking, integrated SEL work as a whole school, and then coaching cycles for teachers in all content areas, will address this concern effectively. We also see that both minority students and those eligible for free and reduced lunch are students who have not grown as they should. An emphasis on the small-group intervention time will also be effective at addressing those concerns.

Our middle school continues to perform at an exceptional level earning over 80% of the points available in both Achievement and Growth and received a rating of “Exceeds” in Growth. As mentioned above, the work that is happening to set and hold high expectations for learners and the fact that these teams are internalizing our work with sensemaking and integrated SEL is making the difference. We are very proud of our students and staff for this success.

One area that we continue to evaluate is our CMAS participation rate. With just above 85% of students taking the test, our school was rated for “Low Participation”. We continue to refine and increase communication that expresses the importance of participating, while also abiding by all state laws regarding the ability of families to opt out of the testing. This continues to be an area of growth and focus.



Question 3: What are the school's major improvement strategies (MIS) for the 2024-2025 school year? What are the root causes that these strategies are intended to address? *Please note that this question is intended to align with the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP). The school may use the exact language that is submitted in the UIP.*

The scope of this year's Lincoln Academy UIP expanded to incorporate not only academics and test scores, but also elements that impact the health of our organization. This more holistic view allows us to ensure improvement in all areas of student and community impact. The following Major Improvement Strategies (MIS) were structured with this in mind.

MIS 1 is focused on our entire community embodying our core values of Excellence, Kindness, and Hard Work. The issue that we are working to address is a desire to improve our community culture. The root cause is a lack of enforcement of these values in terms of student behavior, consistency in instructor approaches, and parent engagement. We have identified markers of an excellent, kind, and hardworking school and when these are accomplished, our staff and student culture will see a marked improvement. Success criteria for achieving this goal is as follows:

- Classroom demonstration of proficiency in abiding by the [LA Non-Negotiables](#) through classroom observations conducted by administrators and instructional coaches.
- Identification and implementation of interventions for our Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. This is accomplished by our MTSS teams and is evaluated by a reduction in disciplinary referrals to 20 per month from this group of students.
- A 25% increase in our volunteer hours and PTO involvement as compared with last year.
- Demonstration of proficiency in teaching our Social-Emotional Learning curriculum as evaluated through our [Teacher Rubric](#).

MIS 2 sets the focus on sensemaking in our academic program. Professional development has centered around equipping teachers with the knowledge and resources to integrate sensemaking into our classrooms. We first defined "sensemaking" as an organization and then developed markers as described in the [Sensemaking Observation Tool](#) for incorporating it into each classroom. The issue we are addressing is lower than desired growth scores in MAP math and ELA assessments. Through our internal evaluation, we determined the primary root cause was a lack of structured sensemaking instruction and so we are addressing this through the professional development for all staff about what this looks like (see Section II Q 5) and then through the observation and feedback process. This approach begins with regular classroom observation by administrators and instructional coaches and results in consolidated team feedback to each staff member. The staff is categorized as Tier 1, 2, or 3 based on the amount of support needed to reach the defined skill level of sensemaking instruction. Staff identified as Tier 3 receive weekly feedback and directives as necessary while those in Tier 1 and 2 are tasked with moving to the next skill. Growth is then measured in the following ways:

- Teacher rubric evaluations
- Spring MAP assessment results:



- Math Median Growth Percentile greater than 60% across all tested grade levels.
- ELA Median Growth Percentile greater than 65% across all tested great levels.

Finally, MIS 3 addresses student behavior support. The issue we are working to address is ensuring a safe, orderly, and caring learning environment, which only happens when we can effectively address behavioral concerns. The root cause is a lack of consistent expectations and enforcement of behavioral corrections. The following success criteria define our progress:

- By year end, all staff will consistently implement our [Five Steps Approach](#) to address student behavioral concerns.
- The administrative team will receive fewer than 20 disciplinary office referrals per month.
- 85% of staff surveys will indicate agreement that student behavior has improved due to the Lincoln Academy Behavior Support System.

We expect that when all staff are adequately trained and the practices are in full use across the organization, referrals will decrease, and teacher efficacy will increase.

Question 4: What changes, if any, have been made to the school's educational program or model since the last renewal?

Through continued evaluation of the Core Knowledge sequence, and ongoing successes experienced, Lincoln Academy stands firm that this curriculum is in the best interest of our students and community. As a result, we have intentionally endeavored to make as few changes as possible to our educational model. The only modifications were due to requirements or based on significant benefits to our community.

The most significant change has been to our math curriculum. Since Lincoln Academy's inception, we have used Saxon Math to accomplish the Core Knowledge sequence. However, several years ago, it was announced that Saxon Math materials would no longer be printed for lower elementary starting in 2023-24. We had to decide if we would use a different curriculum for lower grades only or if we would make a wholesale change in the interest of using the same math curriculum across all grades. It was determined that it would be more beneficial to students to experience consistency in the same math curriculum from start to finish, and so the curriculum evaluation process began. A committee of staff members evaluated many different curricula over two years. The committee consisted of staff across all grade levels including representation from grade-level math teachers, Department of Student Success (DSS), Gifted and Talented (GT), instructional coaches, staff on the School Accountability Committee (SAC), and the administrative team. Parent feedback was received through the PTO and SAC Committee. Evaluation criteria included considerations such as the use of best mathematical teaching practices, alignment with both Core Knowledge and Common Core State Standards, quality of publication, opportunities for professional development, discussions with local high schools for student readiness, and intervention curriculum for students who are struggling. After much investment, the committee made the



recommendation to the Board of Directors to adopt Reveal Mathematics as Lincoln Academy's new math curriculum and the BoD agreed. This launched the intensive process of adoption involving staff training and community math nights. We are now in year two of this adoption and while there was an initial learning curve, as expected, the adjustment has been a success and our students are demonstrating growth.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) has been an important part of Lincoln Academy class offerings since the 2019-20 school year. However, after intense evaluation of the effectiveness and growth of our students in these areas, we made the determination that students would be more effectively served through the integration of STEM content into our science classes. Previously, STEM was a core class for our 5th-8th graders, but through this evaluation process, we determined that lengthening our science classes and incorporating STEM would be more beneficial because students would be able to delve more deeply into the science lessons and labs while also exercising the inquiry-based critical thinking skills that STEM can help develop. STEM continues to be a critical offering for the future success of our students, which is why we have ensured its ongoing presence in the science curriculum.

The final modification made was the expansion of the Lincoln Academy PreKindergarten (PreK) program to include a full-day option in addition to the existing half-days. This was based on extensive evaluation of state expectations, facilities space, the needs of our students and community, and opportunities for both financial growth and the ability to serve more families. Since implementation, we have seen an immediate and significant improvement for full-day students in both the programming (the amount of time spent learning in class as well as the ability to interact with our specials teachers) and family interest in our PreK program at Lincoln Academy. In fact, the waitlists have shown upward of 80 children interested in the program since opening a full-day option. We recognize the importance of a strong PreKindergarten to better prepare students for the significant expectations of Core Knowledge curriculum and Colorado state standards, and will continue to evaluate how we can improve this program each year.

Question 5: What major changes, if any, do you propose making to your educational program or model? (For example, transitioning from a Core Knowledge model to an Expeditionary Learning curriculum).

As described in Section I, Question 4, we are fully committed to and recognize the surpassing value of Core Knowledge, therefore, we do not anticipate any major changes to our educational program. Inside our commitment to Core Knowledge, we will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of our supporting curricula like our use of Open Court for ELA and our use of Reveal Mathematics for math to make appropriate changes as necessary to best support our students and community.



Question 6: Discuss the discipline data from the most recent school year, including strengths and any shifts underway based on your analysis. In your discussion, please include the strategies you are implementing to address any disproportionate discipline data.

As reported in Infinite Campus, for the 2023-24 school year we had 14 students suspended a total of 23 times. Thirteen of those suspensions were categorized as disorderly conduct, either fighting or putting their hands on a staff member or another student. While suspensions are not the solution to all problems, Lincoln Academy does not tolerate harming others and, therefore, the action to suspend a student is sometimes necessary. Suspensions help us put the right supports in place to help the student be successful while also protecting other students and our staff.

Prior to suspension, it is our goal to use alternative methods to resolve issues. We have implemented the Jeffco discipline matrix and are using it to help us better support our students. Our mindset and communication to staff, families, and our community is that we are seeking to exercise the least invasive intervention that fully addresses the concern and is most effective at changing behavior. With this in mind, we emphasize the fact that the majority of the suspensions noted above occurred as a result of repeated behavior concerns after multiple alternative interventions were already attempted.

Because we firmly recognize the value and importance of understanding and responding to trends in our behavior data, we collect, monitor, and evaluate our disciplinary referral data regularly to ensure consistent enforcement of the expectations set in our [Family Handbook](#). Discipline referrals are then categorized by grade, location, infraction, time, and other metrics that are also evaluated for trends. When we see a common trend (e.g., a particular grade's overall referrals are high in the cafeteria during lunch) we evaluate the available interventions and implement the most logical solution.

We also use this data to develop school-wide reports regarding the effectiveness of our interventions and track the number of referrals per student to ensure that our students are effectively supported and are responding appropriately. When appropriate, we then partner with our Mental Health and Special Education departments to discuss how we can better support students who are struggling. This then culminates in our annual Triangle Report, which is how we visualize the distribution of total students across three categories of referral frequencies. This past year, 95% of our students received 1 or fewer office referrals, 4% of our students received between 2 and 5 referrals, and then 1% of our students received 6 or more referrals. This showcases the effectiveness of our structures and systems.

At Lincoln Academy, we prioritize relationship building as the foundation for a positive and supportive school environment. By focusing on preventative measures and implementing alternative consequences, we aim to address student behavior before it escalates, fostering a sense of safety and trust. Our commitment to equipping staff with essential tools is reinforced by the district's outstanding support in providing comprehensive de-escalation training for all team members. Additionally, the integration of a Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum (Second Step) further enhances our approach, ensuring students develop



essential life skills and to avoid disciplinary action. This work is guided by data-informed Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), allowing us to understand student behavior and then tailor our interventions to meet the diverse needs of every student effectively.

Question 7: Is the school effectively serving all students? Include any relevant outcome data as well as any key elements of service provision.

At a minimum, the data must be disaggregated by Multilingual Learner (MLL) status, students with IEPs, students who qualify for free or reduced lunch (FRL), and students of color.

Lincoln Academy has a proven ability to effectively serve all students. This is evidenced through the markers identified below and the demonstration of our service through the presented data.

Our continued SPF rating of "Performance Plan" over the course of this contract shows consistent dedication to responding to the needs of our students and community. Even among the incredible challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, our overall scores have continued to show growth year after year.

Student performance on CMAS testing is also a strong indicator. Our ratings consistently exceed both the district and state in overall achievement and Median Growth Percentile (MGP). This past school year, LA ratings on 8 out of 10 grade/subject areas outperformed the district in MGP while our achievement outperformed the state and district in both ELA and Math. This also demonstrates a consistent commitment to the success of our students.

Lincoln Academy has established a robust student support framework. This is comprised of a Department of Student Success (DSS) that includes two licensed Special Education (SpEd) providers, five SpEd Educational Assistants, a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) teacher, a Speech Therapist, an Occupational Therapist, a Newcomer Tutor (CLD support), a Guidance Counselor, a Social-Emotional Learning Leader, and a School Social Worker. This significant support team helps lead the Multi Tiered System of Support (MTSS) process at Lincoln Academy and serves students who need academic and/or behavioral support. They lead the school in making data determined decisions for these students and ensure that all students are provided a level playing field for their academic endeavors.

Lincoln Academy has an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) Coordinator who meets weekly with our gifted and talented students identified as having an ALP to support both academic and affective growth in their area of giftedness. Non-ALP students who excel in specific areas can also join enrichment groups. These groups are fluid, allowing classroom teachers to rotate students based on the monthly theme, providing more students with enrichment opportunities.



As discussed in Section I, Question 6, we also have a robust behavioral support plan and process for all students, teachers, and families as they navigate their own growth and development. This is part of our emphasis on developing all aspects of our students in addition to their academic competencies.

While there are many points of data that we could use to emphasize our success in these areas, our School Performance Framework is a great source for proof of this success. Our demographics do not allow for consistent reporting of the achievement of students on IEPs or Multilingual Learners (MLLs) and so we will be using other reports below to demonstrate our success in these areas.

Tables 1.1 and 1.2 below show a six-year history of SPF achievement ratings for Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) and Minority students. There is a consistent trend that by 2024 we have improved ratings in all but middle school math to receive a rating of “meets” official standards. In that category, we have already made changes in staffing and curriculum to better support our students. We are also seeing fluctuation partially due to the low percentage of middle school students taking the test (below 80%). Please note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools did not receive an SPF for the 2020 or 2021 school years.

Free/Reduced Lunch Students Achievement				
Year	Elem ELA	Elem Math	MS ELA	MS Math
2024	Meets	Meets	Meets	Approaching
2023	Approaching	Approaching	Meets	Meets
2022	Approaching	Approaching	Meets	Approaching
2019	Approaching	Approaching	Meets	Meets

Table 1.1: 2019-24 SPF Achievement Ratings for FRL Students

Minority Students Achievement				
Year	Elem ELA	Elem Math	MS ELA	MS Math
2024	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets
2023	Approaching	Approaching	Meets	Meets
2022	Approaching	Approaching	Exceeds	Meets
2019	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets

Table 1.2: 2019-24 SPF Achievement Ratings for Minority Students

Our Department of Student Success has consistently upheld high expectations while providing strong support for students who require additional assistance beyond what is universally offered. Demonstrating the impact of this work with data can be challenging,



as the number of students with IEPs falls below the reporting threshold for CMAS data and, consequently, our School Performance Framework.

To showcase our success, we’ve analyzed data from the 2023-24 Fall to Spring MAP assessments. (See Table 1.3) The results highlight that students with IEPs frequently achieve typical to high growth—an encouraging outcome, especially for a demographic that traditionally shows lower growth. We attribute this to several factors. First, we have two highly skilled veteran Special Education teachers (20+ years in Special Education) who can expertly determine the deficit and then assign appropriate interventions. Next, we have invested in CDE approved intervention curricula including “95% group,” Orton Gillingham, and Reveal Math Intervention. Our skilled teachers can then use these tools to better support our students. Finally, we have a dedicated small-group time for each grade level, each day. Students can receive interventions right away when help is needed. We are immensely proud of the progress our students have made, thanks to the dedicated efforts of our staff.

That said, we recognize there is room for improvement. Growth among our third-grade students has not met expectations, and our team is actively working to provide the targeted support through the processes that have been identified above to ensure their success.

2023-24 Fall to Spring MAP Growth for IEP students			
<i>Grade</i>	<i># of students</i>	<i>MAP Reading</i>	<i>MAP Math</i>
<i>Second</i>	5	Typical Growth	NA
<i>Third</i>	7	Low Growth	Low Growth
<i>Fourth</i>	8	Typical Growth	Low Growth
<i>Fifth</i>	6	Typical Growth	Typical Growth
<i>Sixth</i>	9	Typical Growth	Typical Growth
<i>Seventh</i>	5	High Growth	Low Growth
<i>Eighth</i>	1	Low Growth	High Growth

Table 1.3: 2023-24 MAP Growth Data for IEP Students

As mentioned earlier, we have a dedicated team supporting a growing population of MLLs, and our students are outperforming district averages. While there are several ways to measure success, one of the most meaningful indicators is the percentage of students advancing to the next tier on their annual ACCESS test. Every February, all identified MLLs take the ACCESS assessment, which evaluates their proficiency across multiple language domains. Success is reflected when students move up through the tiers of language proficiency.



Table 1.4 below demonstrates how our MLLs have consistently achieved higher growth compared to the district average, which correlates to Lincoln Academy’s ability to serve this portion of our population.

Percent of MLL's Moving Up to Next Tier			
<i>Year</i>	<i>Lincoln Academy</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Difference</i>
23-24	56.5%	41.5%	15.0%
22-23	42.1%	39.2%	2.9%
21-22	70.0%	40.8%	29.2%
20-21	38.9%	31.5%	7.4%
19-20	42.3%	39.7%	2.6%
5 Year Average	50.0%	38.5%	11.4%

Table 1.4: 2020-24 ACCESS Growth Data for MLLs



SECTION II. ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Question 1: What are the current strengths and growth areas for operations and governance?

Lincoln Academy's Board of Directors continues to demonstrate strength through their governance and support of the operations team. The BoD governs the school leadership through professional directors who support the work of the school with strong policy and bylaws. They continue to guide organizational health and growth through long-term perspective. The current BoD makeup provides great insight and perspective on various topics affecting the school.

During this contract period, the Board of Directors supported school leadership through the COVID-19 pandemic, a leadership structure change, effective policy change through the addition of grievance policies, and a large-scale site improvement project.

The BoD will continue to grow their current directors by providing quality board training through veteran directors and outside professionals. The BoD will ensure each member continues to understand their roles and responsibilities while serving as a director. We will continue to recruit qualified parents and community members as future board members. BoD will continue to improve this strategy by increasing board visibility in the school community and fostering strong relationships with staff and PTO who are able to refer potential candidates.

Volunteerism from families has been a vital part of the LA community since its founding. Each family typically contributes between 10 to 20 hours of volunteer work annually. This engagement fosters collaboration between the PTO and the Board of Directors, which, in turn, aids in recruitment for both groups. Many board members have previously held officer roles in the PTO, helping parents connect with staff and the broader LA community while playing a significant role in their children's education.

Additionally, the LA BoD and administrative team have been diligently working from the most recent [Strategic Plan](#). The priorities listed in the plan drive the work of the school, and progress on the plan is formally reviewed yearly and informally throughout the year. While the exact timelines for all the goals aren't 100%, significant progress has been made in all categories. Work on the next 3-year plan will begin later this school year with the support of an outside professional. This work will be completed by the end of the 2024-25 school year.

Question 2: What shifts have there been in board membership since the last renewal? How have you supported the onboarding of new board members?

Since the previous charter renewal in 2020, the Board of Directors has seen some membership changes unrelated to term completion. To address challenges in certain areas, updates were made to both board personnel and the school's grievance procedures. As a



result, the board transitioned to a new President and Vice President to help implement these necessary changes. This included the critical implementation of formal grievance policies for families and staff as well as the establishment of external Human Resources (HR) support, modifications to [Board Policy](#), and the development of a robust [Board Handbook](#). The grievance policies were also made available through incorporation into both the [Family Handbook](#) and the [Employee Handbook](#), and remain a valuable resource. A contract was approved to provide ongoing third-party HR support to the staff and Board of Directors. This gave rise to improved professional assistance and best practices such as consistent staff surveys and exit interviews that provide better insight into the health of the organization. The Board Handbook documents roles and responsibilities, expectations, and various standard processes. It was developed to reflect [Board Bylaws](#) and incorporate the mission and vision of the school. The handbook is a living document that serves as a training resource for new members as well as a reliable reference throughout the term of office. As a result, these cumulative changes have enhanced procedural consistency in board and administrative operations, fostering a greater sense of approachability and accountability for the staff and families.

Since the appointment of new board leadership in 2021, the board has only experienced natural transitions as volunteers have served their terms to completion. The board consists of parents with strong professional and leadership skills paired with a passion for the future of our school. Our BoD professional experience includes advanced degrees and careers in various engineering disciplines, computer science, music education, and business and finance. Our directors bring a variety of skill sets, many of which include heavy leadership experience, that directly support the work required by a board. They include large-scale project management, business strategy, business development, technical leadership, customer-facing leadership, multi-system project budgets, cost center forecasting, estimating, engineering design, data analysis, financial controls, process improvements, and management of large teams. Additionally, the board composition includes parents representing nearly every grade level, K-8, as well as parents of LA alums, which offers a diverse perspective and depth of knowledge of Lincoln Academy and Core Knowledge.

New Member Onboarding Process:

It is our goal to begin preparing members before they even apply for a position on the board. Our handbook outlines application requirements that include serving on a committee for a minimum of one year prior to elections. This allows future candidates to come up to speed on board topics, processes, and projects. It also allows for an understanding of committee chair roles and responsibilities prior to taking office and potentially leading in a chair position. This not only benefits upcoming members, but also the board by establishing a succession plan that enables smooth transitions when experienced members complete their terms. This is also true for existing board members as they are trained for the next steps in their membership. For example, the vice president serves closely with the president for at least a year to ensure they are prepared to take office upon president term completion.



In addition to hands-on experience with a committee, the BoD requires future members to read E.D. Hirsh's book, "The Schools We Need, and Why We Don't Have Them." This text is written by the founder of Core Knowledge, the chosen curriculum at LA, and gives future board members a great understanding of the need for fact-based, content-rich curriculum. This is directly aligned with our mission and vision and therefore a critical message to embrace as an aspiring board member.

Following elections, the official new member onboarding process begins with orientation and training during the annual Board Retreat, which includes a Board Binder with calendars, Board Handbook, Board Bylaws, Board Policy documents, and current Strategic Plan. Our in-person training addresses roles and responsibilities, expectations of board member behavior, legal conduct (sunshine law, reporting requirements, etc.), and areas of focus for the current school year. During this training, all members also take Oath of Office and sign Conflict of Interest forms. New members are also required to complete the CDE Charter Board online training during their first year as a director. Outgoing board members mentor new board members as they transition into their officer roles. Additionally, Lincoln Academy carries a budget line item to pay for board members to attend the Colorado League of Charters Conference which has provided invaluable training, context, and networking for our board members and administrative team over the years. Existing board members continue to expand their knowledge base via working sessions with professionals outside the organization throughout the school year as well.

Question 3: Discuss the stability or transitions in the school's leadership team over the course of the charter contract and any systems in place to ensure future stability, including any succession plans that are in place.

During year two of the current charter contract period, the Principal brought forward a request to the BoD to add an Executive Director to help manage the leadership load of running the school. Adding this position allowed for the academic leaders of the school to focus solely on those priorities while trusting the business focus to others. It also created great positive momentum both academically and culturally among the school community. The Executive Director hired at the time served Lincoln Academy for 3 years before entering retirement, at which time the role was assumed by Co-Executive Directors with solid loyalty and experience. The current Executive Director (Operations) is in her 6th year at Lincoln Academy while the Executive Director (Academics) is in his 3rd year at Lincoln Academy with a career in similar Core Knowledge classrooms and leadership. Dividing the executive director role into two distinct categories continues to ensure a focused emphasis on academics while maintaining the efficiency of school operations. Yearly, the BoD votes to approve an emergency succession plan and will continue to evaluate the leadership structure to balance both the required work and the necessary budget, always looking to maximize return on investment for the school community.

Additionally, Lincoln Academy's instructional coaches, mental health team, and assistant principals bring a wealth of experience to the school's leadership team, with a combined total



of more than 80 years in education and 50 years with Lincoln Academy. Their extensive backgrounds enrich the leadership team's ability to support both students and staff by providing valuable insights into effective teaching strategies, student well-being, and school operations. An added benefit to the leadership team has been the recent establishment of the school's Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). Formed as a result of our latest Strategic Plan, the ILT leverages the inherent leadership skills and teaching expertise of our staff, enhancing our ability to drive educational excellence and support school-wide initiatives. The members of this team represent diverse grades, topics, and perspectives of the entire teaching staff. While many members of the team are long-term veterans of Lincoln Academy with 20+ years of service, several recent hires also bring fresh perspectives as well. The team meets monthly to develop practical steps to help guide professional development and excellent teaching. This team works to develop and present teaching exemplars and success criteria. This collective experience enhances the team's capacity to address diverse educational challenges and foster a supportive learning environment. The goal is to continue to follow a shared leadership model while developing future leaders from within our staff.

Question 4: Please describe your school's educator retention rate, providing at least one year's worth of data. You may include additional information that may be helpful in understanding your data (for example, retirements, teachers who moved out of state, teachers recruited by other districts, etc). Additionally, please explain any strategies you have taken to ensure that you are retaining and recruiting high-quality staff.

Lincoln Academy has experienced an average teacher turnover rate of 16% over the past 5 years. Specifically, in the last year, we have seen 3 teachers pause their teaching career or choose to retire. Four teachers have moved to another school in the district. And, 2 teachers have moved out of the Denver area. These statistics fall in line with the [national average](#). Lincoln Academy uses employee surveys along with data from exit interviews to track trends and identify opportunities for growth as well as identify areas of success. This information about staff culture guides decision-making as we revise policies and practices.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has truly affected our staff's energy and stamina, we have worked hard to support staff needs through the recovery process by protecting planning time throughout the school day, compensating for summer teacher work sessions, as well as bringing back educational assistants to all elementary classrooms and across all middle school grades. Over the years, our teachers have consistently highlighted the invaluable support that educational assistants provide, enriching both their work and our educational program. It's important to note that neighborhood schools often don't receive the same level of educational support as Lincoln Academy, making the contributions of our assistants even more vital.

We continue to prioritize staff compensation to stay competitive with surrounding schools and districts as the rising cost of living in the area proves to be the highest trend on exit interviews over the past few years. We also continue to execute robust hiring practices as well. Our hiring team has intentionally recruited staff members with high skill and high drive



who align with our core values and mission and vision. As we continue to add highly qualified employees to our community, we expect our staff retention rate to continue to rise. Beyond compensation and classroom support, we continue to build a positive staff culture by providing current professional development via work with our instructional coaches and third-party trainings like Orton Gillingham (see Section II, Question 5 for more detail). We know that teachers who feel competent and confident are more likely to stay in the profession. We celebrate staff members who embody our core values and best practices by continual staff shout-outs at weekly meetings as well as yearly awards. An additional culture builder includes the Leopard Experience Team (LET) composed of staff members dedicated to fostering a highly connected and supportive teaching community at Lincoln Academy. Some of the activities planned by the LET include secret staff spirit days, art club for teachers, holiday celebrations, and numerous after-school get-togethers. We have several staff members with more than 20 years of experience at Lincoln Academy, with nearly one-third of the staff having served here for 10 years or more. Many teaching teams have worked together at LA for several years building a camaraderie that has supported longevity and perseverance through tough seasons of teaching such as the COVID-19 pandemic. We are proud of the staff at Lincoln Academy and we will continue to highlight them as our strongest asset.

Question 5: Describe the professional learning opportunities for educators in the school. What are this year's established professional learning priorities, and how are they aligned with the mission, values, and goals of the school?

OPTIONAL. What systems are in place to promote teacher coaching?

At Lincoln Academy, we are committed to providing robust professional development opportunities that align with our mission to foster an academically rigorous and content-rich classroom environment for all students. Our offerings are designed to equip educators with the skills and knowledge they need to excel; the tools necessary to maintain a safe, orderly, and caring environment; and the ability to advance our vision of cultivating academic excellence and strong character development.

Some of our Key Professional Development Opportunities:

- Trauma-Informed Practices and De-escalation Training - We prioritize trauma-informed practices and de-escalation strategies to ensure that staff are well-equipped to support students' emotional and behavioral needs. This is one of the ways that we have partnered with the district team as they present this development to our teachers.
- Instructional Coaches and Support Systems - Our Instructional Coaches are an integral part of our high-quality teaching support system. They engage in coaching cycles, conduct observations, and provide ongoing feedback in partnership with administration to align teaching practices with the evaluation cycle.



- Orton-Gillingham Training for K-4 Teachers - All K-4 staff receive Orton-Gillingham training to strengthen our approach to literacy instruction, ensuring that our teachers are provided with the tools necessary to meet diverse learner needs.
- Collaborative New Staff Onboarding - We partner with the district to provide induction for new Jeffco staff, and at the school level, we also offer "LA 101." This program helps new staff acclimate to our culture and provides valuable collaboration opportunities with our instructional coaches.
- Professional Learning through District Support and Conferences - We are grateful for the multiple professional learning opportunities offered by the district, including platforms such as Vector. Additionally, we allocate budget resources to support staff attendance at various conferences, including those focused on Gifted & Talented (GT), technology, the arts, music, and physical education.
- Continuous Learning and Summer Preparation - Many of our dedicated staff voluntarily spend part of their summer preparing for the upcoming school year. In recognition of their commitment, we provide financial compensation for their time and effort.
- Ongoing Professional Development Calendar - We maintain a yearly professional development calendar that includes weekly staff meetings and targeted training sessions to ensure continuous growth.
- Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) - Our ILT, developed in alignment with our school goals, plays a crucial role in shaping the professional growth of our staff, providing leadership and guidance throughout the year. This is a group of staff members who have demonstrated high quality instructional practices and have committed to being the lead learners in the school.
- Integrated Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) - We embed SEL into our professional development, helping teachers incorporate these important skills into their daily instruction.

These opportunities directly support our mission of delivering high-quality education and maintaining a positive, inclusive school culture. By investing in our staff's professional growth, we create a learning environment where both students and teachers thrive.

This year's professional learning priorities were determined by our ILT in response to disappointing academic growth scores from the 2023 CMAS assessment. After analyzing the data, the ILT identified a key gap: students were not fully developing the metacognitive skills necessary to become "sensemakers" of their own learning. To align with our mission of providing academically rigorous instruction in a content-rich environment, we defined sensemaking as: helping students engage deeply with content and actively manage their own learning. This is a critical step toward ensuring all students reach their highest potential.

The ILT has identified specific markers of sensemaking in the classroom and is conducting peer observations to guide professional development for the whole staff. Their next focus is training staff to develop clear lesson outcomes and use tasks aligned with success criteria to help students meet learning goals.



Additionally, the ILT recognized the need for integrated SEL as part of creating the safe, orderly, and caring environment that supports academic rigor. Teaching students the social and emotional skills to work adaptively with others is vital to fulfilling this aspect of our vision.

We are addressing these priorities in several ways:

- **Dedicated SEL Time:** We adjusted our master schedule to include a homeroom period every morning across all grades for consistent SEL instruction using the Second Step curriculum.
- **SEL Support Staff:** We hired a dedicated SEL support staff member as a mental health professional to monitor SEL instruction school-wide and provide feedback to teachers.
- **Trauma-Informed Practice Training:** All staff will receive training in trauma-informed practices during our October professional development, supported by Jeffco. A follow-up series will be led by our Trauma-Informed Practice Team (TIPT), which is a group of teachers trained to lead the rollout of these practices at Lincoln Academy.

By focusing on both academic rigor and the social-emotional development of our students, we ensure that our professional learning efforts align directly with our mission: to help students attain their highest social and academic potential through an academically rigorous, content-rich educational program in a safe, orderly, and caring environment.

Question 6: Describe the teacher evaluation process. What measures does the school use to measure teacher performance? How are areas of growth identified in evaluations, and how are the evaluation standards communicated to teachers?

Lincoln Academy's mission and vision is significantly achieved through excellence in classroom support and instruction. To maintain our high standards of instructor performance, it is a top priority to not only support our teachers with professional development and various support teams, but also to measure their success and enable their growth through structured feedback. Our commitment drives a schedule that includes at least 180 minutes of classroom observation every week, resulting in frequent feedback.

The Lincoln Academy [Teacher Rubric](#) is used to evaluate teacher performance and describes the foundations of effective instruction and performance at Lincoln Academy. These qualities build rigorous instruction and a content-rich classroom environment to help all students meet their highest potential.

The [Evaluation Process](#) at Lincoln Academy is summarized below:

- Every teacher is required to start the year with a goal-setting meeting with their supervising administrator.
- The administrator then conducts a series of informal observations (not preplanned) of the staff on their caseload. These informal observations are usually around 20-30 minutes each. Administrators use the following [Teacher Observation Template](#).



- Around the beginning of the second trimester, each teacher is required to schedule a formal observation with their supervising administrator. This prescheduled meeting includes a pre-observation discussion where the teacher identifies the goal of the lesson and the structures they will use. The administrator then observes the staff member and schedules a post-observation meeting to discuss successes and next steps.
- In December, each administrator will schedule a mid-year evaluation meeting with each teacher on their caseload where the administrator will fill out the teacher rubric (see above) and the staff member and administrator will discuss the preliminary rubric.
- Informal observations continue throughout the year.
- Administrators can assign a second formal observation if they determine that the staff member is not demonstrating adequate progress toward the goal.
- At the end of April, administrators schedule an end-of-year evaluation meeting with each teacher to fill out the rubric and discuss the evaluation.
- At any point, if the staff member is not making adequate progress toward the stated goal as determined by the teacher rubric (see above), the administrator can put the staff member on a Professional Improvement Plan ([Teacher Success Plan](#)).

Through this evaluation process, teachers receive consistent feedback aligned with the expectations outlined in the Teacher Rubric. The frequent observations and formal meetings allow teachers to track their progress toward delivering academically rigorous, content-rich instruction, ensuring that they are fully equipped to help students reach their highest potential.

As demonstrated by our robust evaluation system, teacher performance is measured frequently and transparently, with feedback accessible year-round. By maintaining this rigorous approach, we ensure that our instructional practices continually evolve to meet the high standards set by our mission and vision.

Question 7: How are members of the leadership team coached and evaluated? What criteria are included in the evaluations, and what types of growth and professional development opportunities are offered to members of the leadership team?

The leadership team at Lincoln Academy consists of two Assistant Principals and the Executive Directors (Academic and Operations). Our answers are categorized as such below.

The Executive Directors (Academic and Operations) are evaluated based on the criteria found in the [Executive Director Evaluation Rubric](#). The contents reflect board priorities and the mission/vision of our charter school. Each voting member of the BoD participates in the evaluation for an overall calculated score.

The Board of Directors provides formal evaluation in the Spring of each school year, with a check-in mid-year and open communication and feedback throughout. The BoD has established mentorships for the Executive Director roles to provide external guidance and counsel from veteran members of the community with recognized expertise. This additional



resource will not only offer personal coaching, but will also provide the BoD with high-level insight related to the health of the organization.

Assistant Principals at Lincoln Academy are evaluated using the [Administrator Rubric](#) that reflects the leadership qualities essential to our school. This rubric focuses on developing a positive school culture and improving classroom teaching and learning. The evaluation process mirrors that of teachers, ensuring consistency. In addition to the rubric-based evaluation, assistant principals engage in district-led professional development and receive mentoring from the principal to ensure alignment with the school's academic and social goals.

At Lincoln Academy, assistant principals play a far more comprehensive role than just managing discipline. To fulfill our mission of providing students with rigorous academics in a safe, caring, and orderly environment, we require leaders who understand the importance of balancing academic rigor with the development of a supportive school culture. Our assistant principals are key to achieving this balance, ensuring that both student learning and well-being are prioritized.

Question 8: Describe how the board monitors the school's academic, operational, and financial performance.

The Board of Directors uses several methods for monitoring the various aspects of school performance, and values diversity in perspectives from Executive Directors, teachers/staff, students, and families. The Executive Directors are ultimately responsible for academic, operational, and financial success of the school and are evaluated by the BoD as described in Section II, Question 7. They report critical measures and general updates through a variety of methods described below.

The LA Board of Directors has standing committees, which advise the board on fulfilling its duties and report to the BoD at monthly board meetings. Each committee is chaired by a board member and made up of members of the Lincoln Academy community. In accordance with the Board Policy, committees are bound to specific deliverables, while also offering general status and updates for on-going projects.

The Finance Committee is exclusively dedicated to ensuring that a reasonable and realistic budget is established, and that the organization performs within its limits. This includes abiding by all related policies and executing in a manner that accounts for the future and strategic plans of the school. This committee currently consists of the Board Treasurer, an additional board member, a community member, the school finance secretary, the school Business Manager, and the Executive Director (Operations). The committee also ensures that an annual external audit of school finances is performed in compliance with the School Finance Act. These audits have been performed since the start of the school and have come back without findings.



The Facilities Committee provides the BoD with plans and updates on projects related to the buildings and campus. It consists of the Facilities Chair (board member), Executive Director (Operations), LA Facilities Manager, and is regularly attended by multiple LA parents/guardians who have professional experience in relevant fields such as construction management, engineering, and architecture.

The School Accountability Committee (SAC) provides insight from families and students through the use of annual survey data. The results are presented to the BoD and used to establish focus around any areas for improvement. This committee also supports student and parent engagement, and reviews documents such as the UIP and SPF. With the existence of a school Finance Committee and Facilities Committee, the SAC does not typically contribute to expenditure conversations beyond helping to prioritize academic needs. This committee consists of the SAC Chair (parent board member), Assistant Principal, at least one PTO officer, at least one teacher/staff member, and averages 4-7 other parents of students enrolled at the school. The LA SAC Chair presides over and facilitates all meetings, sets meeting agendas in collaboration with the Assistant Principal, and guides the team in making recommendations and in reviewing targets, and facilitates communication.

The Executive Committee consists of the BoD President, BoD Vice President, and the Executive Directors (Academic and Operations). It convenes two weeks prior to the monthly board meeting to review calendars and upcoming board deliverables. This meeting allows for in-depth discussion of all aspects of program performance, any concerns or issues, and overall health of the organization in preparation for presentation during the full BoD monthly meeting. This cadence was established to allow for in-person communication with board leadership every two weeks between the executive committee and formal board meetings, with any critical updates communicated virtually as needed.

During monthly meetings, the BoD is also informed through reports given by the administration. Most topics are driven by policy such as the Uniform Improvement Plan (UIP), budgets, test scores, and SPF. The full list of these required deliverables, corresponding policy drivers, and associated schedules, are consolidated in the [Executive Director Deliverables](#). The Executive Directors (Academic and Operations) are responsible for more than academic performance and report information beyond just required test scores. They also offer updates on current school events, achievement highlights, and other information deemed valuable to the board. Further insights are also gained through staff and student presentations, which provide additional perspectives relevant to school performance. The BoD may also use working sessions periodically to dive into a specific topic to learn more and assess performance.

The BoD also gains insights regarding daily operations through high-level feedback from leadership mentors, staff surveys, and exit interviews. It is a board goal to participate in school events, establish a presence and availability on campus, and encourage family engagement, which builds trust and may result in direct family feedback as well.



Question 9: How has the school and governing board ensured compliance with federal law, state law, and the school’s charter contract? In your response, please include how the board ensures compliance with ethics and open meetings requirements.

Compliance with state and federal laws, charter contract, and board governance is of critical importance in all planning and decisions made by the BoD and administrative team. These leadership teams regularly review and maintain documentation and reference materials including Board Policies and Bylaws via the aforementioned Executive Director Deliverables, the Charter Contract, and the School and District Handbooks. The board governance chair provides monthly governance review through a set schedule. In the absence of a governance chair, the President and Vice president provide governance review or appoint another director that month to present the scheduled topic. On occasion, outside professionals attend board meetings or working sessions to help ensure that board members understand and are adhering to state and local laws regarding boards.

Lincoln Academy contracts with external legal counsel to consult on all legal matters including formal document reviews, questions or concerns, updates on state and federal laws, etc. Chosen for their background and expertise in charter schools and education, their services are also available to the BoD for questions, interpreting new or complex laws, and ensuring all policies and processes are understood for general operations as well as consulting on unique circumstances. The school receives notices from legal counsel with changes in law that could impact the school.

Additionally, an external contract is in place for on-going Human Resources support available to LA staff and the BoD. This Employment Law Attorney offers guidance on all aspects of human resources including staff culture surveys, employee handbook development, at-will employment, grievance policies, ethical hiring practices, unemployment, and more.

Administrators attend monthly district cohort meetings and work closely with the district Executive Director of Charter Partnerships to continue to stay current with on-going revisions to district and state policies. Staff receive required training from the district via the Vector program to remain current on educator pertinent laws like mandatory reporting. Lincoln Academy also receives regular notices of pending and final changes in statutes from the Colorado League of Charter Schools (CLCS). LA administrators and board members also participate in online CLCS trainings as well as attend the yearly conference session that highlights changes to local and federal laws.

Finally, we ensure board compliance with ethics and open-meetings requirements by incorporating them into our annual Board Retreat to ensure new members are clear on the requirements and existing members maintain detailed understanding. Ethics and open-meeting laws are also addressed for new members through the required CDE trainings. As noted in Section II, Question 2, all board members receive a board binder with the critical reference documents including School Bylaws, Board Handbook, Board Policy documents, and current Strategic Plan, many of which address these compliance items. Quite often, these elements are also mentioned as a reminder during monthly board meetings. The BoD stays



current on changing policies and laws through the administrative team, contracted attorney, and contracted human resources representative. We aim to receive legal review training yearly by the district or outside counsel/board mentor.

Question 10: Describe shifts you have seen in enrollment trends since the last renewal. Additionally, describe shifts you have made to your recruitment and enrollment procedures, including as it relates to at least two identified student subgroups. Discuss any impact these changes have made on school finances.

Use the table in the Enrollment section to provide the school’s five-year enrollment projections.

Lincoln Academy expanded to full capacity in the last contract period. Our enrollment projections are based on a history of strong enrollment and waitlists. We are proud to serve a wide range of students from diverse social and economic backgrounds; see student enrollment and demographic history in Table 2.1 below.

	2023-2024		2022-2023		2021-2022		2020-2021		2019-2020	
	Total Count	Percentage	Total Count	Percentage	Total Count	Percentage	Total Count	Percentage	Total Count	Percentage
ALP	86	11.14%	95	12.73%	60	8.34%	52	7.16%	72	9.52%
IEP (Dec. Count)	52	6.74%	44	5.90%	51	7.09%	50	6.89%	63	8.33%
504	28	3.63%	27	3.62%	17	2.36%	21	2.89%	17	2.25%
ELL	41	5.31%	36	4.83%	37	5.15%	35	4.82%	42	5.56%
Free and Reduced	252	32.64%	192	25.74%	169	23.50%	178	24.52%	155	5.56%
Total Number of Students K-8	772		746		719		726		756	
Total Number of Students PK-8	817		809		779		773		796	
Hispanic	112	13.70%	110	13.60%	113	14.50%	103	14.19%	107	14.10%
Native American	10	1.22%	1	0.12%	0	0%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Asian	42	5.14%	16	2.00%	20	2.57%	20	2.75%	17	2.24%
Black or African American	27	3.30%	6	0.74%	7	0.90%	5	0.69%	7	0.90%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3	0.37%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
White	584	71.48%	637	78.74%	601	77.15%	568	78.23%	591	78.10%
Two or More Races	39	4.77%	39	4.80%	32	4.11%	28	3.90%	34	4.50%

Table 2.1: 2020-24 Student Enrollment and Demographic Statistics

Lincoln Academy does not offer enrollment priority based on demographics of any kind. We have also not chosen to recruit any particular subgroup of students over another. However, while our demographics remain similar to the district and surrounding neighborhood and charter schools (~76% white), we do serve a higher number of Multilingual Learners (~5% MLL) than our surrounding schools. We are proud to support this group of mostly native Russian and Ukrainian students as we have become known in the community as a safe and supportive school for these families. Working with our district partners, we recently moved from supporting our MLL students with a single Newcomer tutor to now employing both a Newcomer tutor and a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) teacher who supports our students via push-in co-teaching support 3 days a week. By continuing to provide these



supports, our MLL students are thriving in their new setting at Lincoln Academy. We also serve a population with higher Free and Reduced Lunch (31% RFL) than our surrounding neighborhood and charter schools. We are excited to support these and all of our students via the state free breakfast and lunch program. Our staff also support families in need through the mental health and clinic teams with a variety of support when in need. As called out in our mission and vision, Lincoln Academy continues to value and support all students.

For recruitment, our school hosts tours and prospective family nights every year. The majority of our new families have found Lincoln Academy through word-of-mouth. Social media has also become a significant source of positive LA reviews shared across local neighborhood forums. Our reputation of high school readiness and student support stands for itself in the community.

Lincoln Academy is included in the EnrollJeffco system and adheres to the district's strict enrollment methods, timelines, and procedures. With the rest of Jeffco, Lincoln Academy holds a blind lottery through the EnrollJeffco process to ensure all applicants have equal access to our education program. Our enrollment preferences for waitlists are the following: 1) children of LA faculty, 2) siblings of LA students, 3) currently enrolled PreK students, 4) displaced in-district students from closing schools, 5) Jeffco residents, 6) non-Jeffco residents.

We did experience a decline in our enrollment numbers through the COVID-19 pandemic but saw a return to full capacity last year (even slightly over our budgeted student headcount) and are near capacity again this year with only kindergarten showing a fluctuation of more than a few students. With a history of such strong 1st grade waitlists each year, we are expecting a return to full enrollment in the current kindergarten cohort by next year. This year's low enrollment in Kindergarten is directly due to our previous year's challenges with the state's Universal PreKindergarten funding and enrollment processes, which led to reduced PreK enrollment at Lincoln Academy. This year's PreK program is back to full enrollment and thriving in both half-day and full-day settings. Each spring, we enroll up to 776 K-8th students to allow for the natural fluctuations in summer enrollment, ensuring we meet or exceed the projected capacity enrollment of 764 by fall. We are not projecting any major enrollment changes in the next 5 years and have modeled 764 K-8th graders as well as 64 PreK students moving forward. These slight fluctuations in enrollment have not had a significant impact on our budget or financial status. Lincoln Academy continues to operate from a net positive operating budget every year, excluding any approved carry forward capital projects, while also increasing staff compensation in order to stay competitive with Jeffco and other districts.



Enrollment.

Please complete the following table with the school’s grade-level planned enrollment. These numbers should reflect the school’s planned enrollment that is used as a basis for budgeting. If a school’s projected enrollment in any year is less than 80% of the 2023 October count, it must also submit a budget narrative describing how the educational program can be sustained at the projected lower enrollment rate. Please add or delete rows as needed.

5-Year Enrollment Projections							
Grades	2023 October count	2024-25 preliminary enrollment	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Early Childhood	45	64	64	64	64	64	64
Kindergarten	90	82	88	88	88	88	88
1st Grade	90	91	88	88	88	88	88
2nd Grade	87	87	84	84	84	84	84
3rd Grade	87	83	84	84	84	84	84
4th Grade	87	87	84	84	84	84	84
5th Grade	89	87	84	84	84	84	84
6th Grade	88	86	84	84	84	84	84
7th Grade	75	78	84	84	84	84	84
8th Grade	79	78	84	84	84	84	84
Total enrollment, not including homeschool students	772	759	764	764	764	764	764

Table 2.2: 5-Year Enrollment Projections



SECTION III. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Question 1: Provide an analysis of the school's financial strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth. In your analysis, you must include data about TABOR, restricted reserves/bond reserves, unrestricted reserves, and lease payment.

If your budget is largely dependent on external funding sources, please describe committed funding for the next five years.

At Lincoln Academy, we pride ourselves on a history of conservative fiscal management and strong governance, emphasizing a healthy Carry Forward Balance. Our Board of Directors is dedicated to upholding the highest standards of fiscal responsibility, ensuring that every decision aligns with our mission and vision to provide a quality education for all students. This commitment leads to several key strengths:

- **Investing in Our People:** We recognize that our teachers and staff are our most valuable resource. Our financial strategies allow us to reward their hard work and dedication.
- **Maintaining Our Facilities:** We are committed to preserving our capital assets by continually improving the maintenance, safety, and security of our buildings, ensuring a conducive learning environment, following the lead of the District's warm, safe, and dry initiatives.
- **Sustaining Enrollment Growth:** Despite challenges in the surrounding areas, we have successfully maintained high enrollment levels, reflecting our community's trust and satisfaction in our educational offerings.

Through responsible governance and strategic financial management, Lincoln Academy positions itself as a leader in both fiscal integrity and educational excellence.

Our [Internal Financial Policies](#) maintain goals for a 2% operating margin and 90 days cash on hand, which surpass the requirements of our bond restrictions (40 Days Cash on Hand (DCOH)) and TABOR, see Table 3.1 below. Through the last 5 years, we have continued to balance these priorities while building up reserves and have over 75 DCOH above our internal requirements, building our total unrestricted reserves up to \$2.4M.



Fiscal Year	Unrestricted Carry Forward	Bond Restrictions (40 DCOH)	TABOR
2019-20	\$3,170,505	\$852,499	\$233,371
2020-21	\$5,237,915	\$1,611,306	\$441,095
2021-22	\$5,835,471	\$924,141	\$252,983
2022-23	\$6,087,966	\$999,194	\$273,529
2023-24	\$5,194,783	\$1,272,074	\$348,230

Table 3.1: Bond Restrictions and TABOR over the past 5 years

In 2021, Lincoln Academy worked with the City of Arvada to come to an agreement to sell a portion of our property to the city for a Right of Way road project that allowed them to widen the two major roads surrounding our property. With support from legal counsel, the operations team and Board of Directors negotiated a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the City of Arvada to ensure the school was receiving appropriate compensation. We were able to couple the proceeds from this land sale of \$625,000 with a cash-out refinance of our bond to fund a major \$2.6M upgrade to our student driveline and parking lots. This project has greatly enhanced parking, the driveline, play spaces, site drainage, and infrastructure. Most important, it has significantly improved safety for our staff, parents, and students during recess, drop-off, and pick-up. We successfully refinanced the bond on our property at a rate that our annual payments were unaffected, averaging \$465,000 over the next 5 years. This allows us to prioritize any future increases in per pupil funding toward addressing ongoing challenges, such as the necessary cost of living increases for staff, rising insurance premiums, and any other facilities upgrades as necessary. While the revenue for this land sale and cash-out refinance were realized in 2021, the final payments for this project occurred in FY24 (\$2M) with another \$235,000 planned to be paid in FY25.

The Board of Directors' Finance Committee currently includes the Board Treasurer, another board member, a community representative, the school finance secretary, the school business manager, and the Executive Director (Operations). This committee meets monthly to review the budget and spending trends and subsequently makes any budgetary recommendations to the Board of Directors. Moreover, with staff input, the Finance Committee and the Facilities Committee work together to create a yearly Budget Priority List that drives expenditures for the year. This list is divided into two categories: deferred maintenance and capital improvements. It includes items such as safety, capital needs, and technology. As defined in the Strategic Plan, we continually revisit this document and the annual Unified Improvement Plan, which serve as the planning sources for any major Lincoln Academy expenditures. This ensures that spending matches the School's priorities of both operations and academics. These practices provide sound fiscal management as we continue to cover the operational needs of the school with the per pupil funding we receive from the state and the district.



Over the last five years, we have steadily increased staff salaries, thanks to careful planning, savings due to qualified ESSER reimbursements and additional Per-Pupil Revenue (PPR), and mill levy override funds. We have consistently achieved our internal Lincoln Academy goal of matching 90% to 95% of Jeffco staff salaries on average, while also supporting our certified teachers with educational assistants in their classrooms which, as mentioned in Section II, Question 4, has been invaluable support to our teachers. These salary increases and classroom support, paired with our policy of offering full credit for years of experience, improve our ability to attract and retain quality teachers and staff.

We have successfully implemented significant capital improvements without pulling from our Cash Carry Forward. These include improvements and upgrades to the kitchen and lunch room, the life safety public announcement system, and the camera systems campus-wide. We have replaced external doors and windows throughout the campus, including a safer main entry vestibule, and have replaced multiple HVAC systems, as well. With the most recent state elimination of the Budget Stabilization Factor, we expect to be able to continue to address both our staff salaries and our facility needs moving forward.

Alongside these salary and facilities initiatives, the ESSER grant funds Lincoln Academy received enabled us to make significant strides in supporting our community's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. We have prioritized extra planning and preparation for staff to address the learning loss experienced during that period. We have purchased 6 years of Reveal Mathematics curriculum and added mental health resources and staff to directly address the impact our students felt socially and emotionally. Students continue to receive support via the Mental Health Team and their Integrated Social-Emotional Learning curriculum, as called out in our UIP and Strategic Plan. The IT infrastructure has been improved and expanded by providing more student devices while upgrading the required server and internet infrastructure to support our students academically. Most important, we have not added any grant-funded staff or technology upgrades that we cannot maintain moving forward.

The [5-year Projected Budget](#) reflects our ongoing commitment to conservative budgeting practices and is sustainable based solely on enrollment. This year's projections are based on an October enrollment of 759 students with PPR of \$11,038, as approved by the state. This year's projection is also based on a highly conservative expenditure budget. To project future revenues, we applied a 5% increase in PPR, alongside a 1% and 3% increase in mill levy and cap construction funding respectively. These revenue projections are conservative, given recent five-year averages of 8% increases in PPR and 6% increases in mill levy funding. Expenditure changes such as payroll, technology, insurance premiums and deductibles, building maintenance and custodial support, utilities, and other fixed expenditures were also modeled with a 5% increase with a known math curriculum reorder planned in FY29. As mentioned in Section II, Question 10, we are not projecting any major enrollment changes in the next 5 years and have modeled a consistent 764 K-8th graders as well as 64 PreK students. Looking ahead, based on these assumptions, we project our Unrestricted Cash



Carry Forward to exceed \$4 million, reaching 111 DCOH by FY30, well above our internal floor of 90 DCOH and in compliance with TABOR requirements.

Overall, Lincoln Academy is in a very healthy financial position as demonstrated by providing staff with a 21% pay increase over the last 4 years. This, coupled with our ongoing commitment to maintaining a warm, safe, and dry campus while steadily building cash reserves each year, underscores our strong financial position. Although increasing donation revenue is a strategic goal, Lincoln Academy remains fully self-sufficient and does not rely on external funding sources for its ongoing operations. We will continue to prioritize maintaining a solid Cash Carry Forward along with healthy enrollment numbers to ensure a stable financial future for Lincoln Academy's community.

Question 2: Has the school met the financial metrics outlined in the Financial Performance Framework? Where it has not, what systems are being put in place to address these issues?

Lincoln Academy has successfully met all but two of the financial metrics outlined in the FY24 Financial Performance Framework. The Total Margin and the Debt Service Coverage Ratio are currently flagged yellow due to the one-time \$2 million capital expense project payments made in FY24, as noted in Question 1. Without these planned one-time expenditures, both metrics would be green. The FY24 Total Margin would be positive 10.39% and the Debt Service Coverage Ratio would be 4.89. Historically, Lincoln Academy has maintained a positive margin and a debt service coverage ratio exceeding 1.1 in all other years of the charter contract. Additionally, the now complete capital project was directly linked to bond proceeds and cash income from the city's land purchase, which were recognized in FY21. Our 5-year projected budget indicates a strong positive margin ahead, with all financial metrics expected to be green.

Question 3: Please discuss any major changes you anticipate to your finances in the next five years. This could include capital outlays, debt, refinancing, or other significant shifts.

Lincoln Academy continues to evaluate options for facility upgrades in the future, although no specific plans have been finalized at this time. One long-term focus is the potential refurbishment or replacement of our current PreK-1st grade building. Should these facility upgrades become necessary, current conversations revolve around using unrestricted reserves toward the project to prevent the need to refinance our current bond. We are additionally considering partnering with a vendor who has had significant success in obtaining the BEST Grant which could increase our purchasing power for any potential projects. However, at this time, there are no current plans in place for a capital outlay, debt refinance, or other major shift to our financial standing.



PART B. SUBMISSIONS CHECKLIST

As part of the renewal application, upload the documents on the following list to your renewal Google folder. Please only submit documents that already exist and in use in your schools; do not create documents specifically for this purpose.

Use the following naming structure for uploads: *2024_SchoolName_SubmissionDocument*. For example: 2024_NewAmericaSchool_SchoolCalendar

Academic Performance
<u>School Calendar</u>
Primary Staff Schedule (including class times, teachers, content, and location) <u>Elementary Schedule</u> <u>Middle School Schedule</u> <u>Specials and Electives Schedule</u>
<u>Staff Roster</u> (including roles, responsibilities, grades taught, etc.) Please also include responsibilities for non-classroom teacher roles
Curriculum Overview - use table provided in <u>Appendix A</u>
Teacher/Leader Evaluation Template (including criteria and rubrics) <u>Evaluation Process</u> <u>Teacher Rubric</u> <u>Teacher Observation Template</u> <u>Teacher Success Plan</u> <u>Administrator Rubric</u> <u>Executive Director(s) Evaluation Rubric</u>
<u>Employee Handbook</u>
Assessment Plan - use table provided in <u>Appendix B</u>
Graduation Requirements (High Schools only)



Organizational Health
Board Meeting Schedule
Board Roster
Strategic Plan
Board Handbook (including Bylaws, Policies and Conflict of Interest Policy)
State and District Waiver Requests State Waiver Rationale and Replacement Plans District Waiver Rational and Replacement Plans
Organizational Chart
Complaint/Grievance Policy Employee Conflict Resolution Policy Parent Conflict Resolution Policy No Retaliation Policy
Title IX Plan/Policy (including names responsible for compliance with Title IX)
Student Discipline Policy (do not need to add separately if in Parent/Student Handbook) Five Steps Approach
Parent/Student Handbooks (including recruitment and enrollment policies) Family Handbook
Stakeholder survey results (optional)

Financial Performance
Long-term budget, including 5-year projected budget
Financial policies and procedures
Most recent annual independent audit
Audit Management Letter
FY24 year-end financial statements , including balance sheet and income statement (even if unofficial)



Appendix A. Curriculum Overview

Please complete the following table indicating the school's curricular resources.

	Program type ¹	Commercial Program name (if applicable)	Level of program fidelity ²	Supplementary programs
Reading	Commercial	Open Court (K-4) CKLA (5-8)	90% Fidelity - teachers independently modify	IXL
Writing	Teacher Developed			Write Tools Write Now, Right Now CKLA IXL
If elementary: Foundational reading skills	Commercial	Open Court	90% Fidelity - teachers independently modify	
Math	Commercial	Reveal	100% Fidelity	Geometry- Illustrative Math IXL
Social studies	Commercial	CKHG	90% Fidelity - teachers independently modify	IXL
Science	Commercial	CKSci	100% Fidelity (4-8)	Previous Core Knowledge Science Sequence Open SciEd

¹ For example, school developed, teacher developed, grade-level team developed, commercial, etc

² For example, 100% fidelity, teachers independently modify, school leadership modifies, optional use, supplementary, etc



				IXL
English language development (if applicable)	N/A			
Special education	N/A			
Interventions	Commercial	Orton-Gillingham Wilson Reading 95% Group	Teachers Independently Modify	Lexia
Other (SEL)	Commercial	Second Step	100% Fidelity	



Appendix B. Assessment Overview

Please complete the following table indicating the assessments the school administers.

Assessment subject	Assessment type	Publisher (if commercial)	Assessment frequency	Grades assessed
ELA, Math, Science	CMAS	PARCC	Spring	3-8
ELA, Math, Science	NWEA MAP	NWEA	Fall, Winter, Spring	1-8 Reading 2-8 Math
Reading Comprehension	DIBELS 8	Amplify	Fall, Winter, Spring	K-3
MLL Learning Levels	ACCESS	WIDA	February	MLLs in K-8
Kindergarten Readiness	KEA	Colorado State Board of Education	Annually	Kindergarten