2020 UMSL Annual Review Report: Part 1
Lafayette Preparatory Academy

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Evaluation Standards
Ten elements of school evaluation:
I. Transformative and Innovative Vision
II. Responsible Board Governance
III. Strong School Leaders
IV. Transformational Curriculum
V. Empowering Culture of Achievement
VI. Transformational Teachers
VII. Engaged Parents and Community
VIII. Comprehensive Student Support System

NOTE:
In the Evidence columns, under Required Documents:

- Documents in **bold blue** must be submitted to the Charter School Office.
- Documents in **bold black** must be on hand, but do not need to be submitted to the Charter School Office.
Summary Page

Please note that the comments in this report reflect our analysis as of April, 2020.

1. Areas of Strength
Here are the top strengths that you can leverage to continuously improve and move you towards your vision.

- **Vision:**
  - Stakeholders maintain a strong commitment to the school’s mission.

- **Student Achievement - 2019:**
  - 2019 state assessment outcomes improved at a rate that was among the highest in the region.

- **Board Governance:**
  - The board fulfills its governance responsibilities, monitoring academic and financial performance.

- **Leadership:**
  - The Executive Director and Principal provide strong leadership that generates genuine progress in student achievement and teacher instructional skills.

- **Curriculum and Instruction:**
  - Each year, LPA makes progress on a path towards a rigorous, engaging academic program that is more student centered. All stakeholders cited the PLCs as a key factor in this area.

- **Culture of Achievement:**
  - One of the great strengths of the school. The environment is one within which children are nurtured in both socio-emotional and academic areas.

- **Teachers:**
  - Hard working teachers embrace continuous improvement and invest students in socio-emotional and academic growth.

- **Parent Relations:**
  - In general, parents are active partners in school life.

- **Student Support System**
  - The Student Support System is a significant strength of the school.

2. Areas for Growth
Here are the key areas for growth that could move you towards your vision.

- **Vision:**
  - Continue to prioritize student enrollment that reflects the diverse makeup of St. Louis’s population.

- **Board Governance:** Both of these are ongoing concerns and need to be addressed.
  - Prioritize development of board members’ knowledge and skills in school governance through internal and/or external training experiences.
  - Strengthen the process for evaluating the Executive Director.

- **Curriculum and Instruction:**
  - Continue to focus on ways to increase opportunities for students to engage in “deeper learning” and problem solving.
  - Strengthen the social studies and science areas with a focus on increasing rigor and engagement.
  - Within the written curriculum, focus on more thorough documentation of units and incorporate model unit assessments.

- **Teachers**
  - Continue to develop instructional skills around higher order thinking and problem solving.
I. Transformative and Innovative Vision
   A transformational school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Develops a transformational mission and vision for its students and their families.</td>
<td>i. Reaching the vision clearly places students on paths of greater opportunity in life.</td>
<td><strong>Required Documents:</strong>&lt;br&gt; • Charter Application: (Met as part of the charter application approval process.)&lt;br&gt; • Approved Charter Amendments&lt;br&gt;<strong>Other Evidence</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Student, parent and staff interviews and survey data&lt;br&gt;• Classroom observations</td>
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<td>b. Students, parents and staff understand and are invested in the mission and vision.</td>
<td>a) Students, parents and staff can articulate the mission and vision.&lt;br&gt;b) In their classrooms, teachers and students are mission driven as indicated by their enthusiasm, active and consistent participation and task completion.</td>
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Element I: Vision
Areas of strength
- The vast majority of teachers, staff and administration clearly share the same mission and vision for the school
- All stakeholder interviews indicated the existence of a strong sense of community and collaboration fueled by belief in the value of diversity.
- The SY 2019 staff and parent surveys strongly indicate that the school values and respects differences among students and their families.

Areas for Growth
- Enrollment in lower grades is trending away from the diverse student body that is an essential element of LPA’s vision and mission.
II. Responsible Governance
The Board of Directors of a transformational school:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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</table>
| a. Operates legitimately and in the best interest of its students and mission. | i. Considers implications of decisions on the mission of the school.  
ii. The Board annually self-evaluates using a standardized tool that assesses performance based on setting goals, developing policy, communication with the school and community and oversight of school leadership.  
iii. Ensures the board and school have all necessary insurance policies in place. | Documents  
- Board Self-Evaluation  
- Insurance Policies  
  - Directors and Officer Coverage  
  - General Liability  
  - Professional Liability  
  - Property  
  - Workmen Compensation  
  - Employee Dishonesty/Crime (minimum $500k) |
| b. Recruits and maintains a strong governing board with diverse backgrounds and skills sets | i. Includes individuals who are experienced in managing organizations and well versed in charter law  
ii. Maintains among its Directors a balance of skills and professional expertise (i.e. K–12 education, business, marketing, legal, accounting, fundraising, real estate etc.) necessary to fulfill all Board obligations.  
iii. Provides new board members a formal orientation on the purpose and educational vision of the school, the school’s performance objectives, and their roles and legal responsibilities  
iv. Seeks information and professional development opportunities related to charter operation, laws, and effective non-profit board work | Documents  
- Board Organizational Structure Chart  
- Board Director Profiles/Contact Information  
- Assurance of Board Criminal Background and FCSR (child abuse registry) Checks  
- Board Development Plans  
- Board Member Financial Disclosure Confirmation |
| c. Conducts its business in compliance with all state statutes and regulations | i. Meetings are regularly scheduled and appropriately conducted.  
ii. Governance records and documentation are appropriately created and maintained.  
iii. School business is conducted in a transparent manner subject to the provisions and sections 610.010 to 610.030, open meetings law; free of conflict of interest, and models best practices regarding governance roles and responsibilities. | Documents  
- Board Meeting Agenda  
- Board Meeting Calendar  
- Board Meeting Document Packets  
- Board Meeting Minutes - Approved |

Other Evidence  
- Observation of board meetings  
- UMSL Sponsor communication with board president and/or directors  
- Director interviews
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<td><strong>d.</strong> Ensures that policies are complete, regularly reviewed, updated as needed, and followed in a fair and consistent manner</td>
<td>i. <strong>Ensures that policies are complete, regularly reviewed, updated as needed, and followed in a fair and consistent manner</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>i. Develops, adopts, and follows a comprehensive set of bylaws which at a minimum include conflicts of interest policies, meeting protocols and procedures, and formal delineations of roles and authorities within the charter school</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
|   | ii. Regularly reviews board policies, updating as necessary. | Documents
- **Board Policy Manual and Bylaws**; |
|   | iii. Organizes and makes available to the public the school policies utilizing multiple forms of communication | Other Evidence
- Observation of board meetings
- Board meeting agendas and minutes
- Evidence in board minutes that check registry has been reviewed and approved by the board. |
| **e.** Employs a clear strategic approach to meeting the school’s vision | i. **With the school leaders, develops strategic plans that ensure fidelity to the school’s vision by addressing critical issues; including school performance, financial management, human resource management, facilities, and quality improvement** |   |
|   | ii. Monitors progress towards goals identified in the strategic plans | Documents
- **Strategic Plan (same as for School Leader)** |
|   |   | Other Evidence
- Observation of board meetings
- Board meeting approved minutes |
| **f.** Selects, supports, and annually evaluates the school leader | i. **Selects a highly qualified school leader and defines the role the leader plays in the overall operation of the charter school** |   |
|   | ii. **Supports the administrator’s decision making** | Documents
- **Board Evaluation of School Leader (blank template)** |
|   | iii. **Establishes clear expectations of and assesses the performance of the school leader using a consistent evaluation instrument reflecting the mission and vision of the school, the performance goals set forth in the performance contract, the day-to-day management of the school and progress made on yearly school goals.** | Other Evidence
- Chair and Director interviews
- Board meeting observations |
| **g.** Monitors the school’s education program, operational procedures, and fiscal health in cooperation with the sponsor. | i. **Directs the school leader to provide an annual self-evaluation to the sponsor and regular reports of student performance, academic progress, and the school’s fiscal health to the sponsor and to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.** |   |
|   | ii. **Monitors student academic performance, curriculum and instruction, and operational procedures and fiscal management.** | Documents
- **School Annual Self-Evaluation (same as for School Leader)** |
|   |   | Other Evidence
- Chair and Director interviews
- Board meeting observations
- Board meeting approved minutes |
| **h.** Fulfills its fiduciary responsibility for public funds by ensuring the school operates in a fiscally sound and appropriate manner. | i. **Reviews and approves annual budgets, budget amendments, and monthly financial statements.** |   |
|   | ii. **Reviews and approves monthly check register.** | Documents
-   |
|   | iii. **Provides oversight of school leader’s handling of cash accounts and credit card accounts.** | Other Evidence
- Chair and Director interviews
- Board meeting observations |
iv. Provides oversight of school leader’s handling of attendance reporting.

v. Ensures the board, school leader and staff are adequately covered by ins

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<th>Element II: Board Governance</th>
<th>Recommendation: Board Policy Review</th>
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<tr>
<td>Our office strongly recommends that each of our boards regularly review board policies to ensure that they are current with Missouri statutes.</td>
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### Areas of Strength

- **(a) Operates in best interests of students and mission**
  - Board meetings and individual member interviews strongly indicate that the board understands and believes in the school's mission. The mission drives their decision making.

- **(b) Recruits and maintains - Diverse backgrounds and skill sets:**
  - Members bring diverse areas of expertise to the board: real estate, law, development in educational settings, education, public relations, business, healthcare.

- **(c) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations:**
  - To the best of UMSL’s knowledge, LPA’s board is compliant with state and federal statutes and regulations.
  - All board members have cleared Criminal Background checks and FCSR registration.
  - The board is compliant with Missouri’s Sunshine Law.

- **(e) Strategic approach:**
  - The governing board has a 2018-21 plan in place and school leaders review progress on goals and action steps during board meetings and at the end of each school year.

- **(f) School leader relations and evaluation:**
  - Board – school leader relations are very strong.

### Areas for Growth

- **(d) Policies:**
  - Given that it has been two years since the completion of the most recent policy manual, consider conducting a formal review of all policies to revise and update as appropriate and necessary.

- **(f) School leader relations and evaluation:**
  - ED evaluation remains an area for improvement.
    - The ED indicated that the Board President alone evaluates her performance.
• (g) Monitoring responsibility:
  o The board monitors ED performance, student achievement and financials.
  o Board interviews indicate that the board is aware of the key challenges and issues school leadership faces and provides appropriate support.
• (h) Fulfills its fiduciary responsibility
  o The LPA board fulfills its fiduciary responsibility.
  o Refer also to Element X when UMSL’s Charter School Office submits Part 2 of the annual review to the board.
• (i) Responsibilities to UMSL
  o LPA fulfills its responsibilities to UMSL, as defined in the contract between the two institutions.

Community Relations
• Board members have maintained good connections to the LPA community. Some members’ children attend the school.

Board Development and Training
• The board development plan is thorough and sets up goals that, if met, will increase member knowledge and skills in board governance and strengthen board ties to the school community.

Board Development and Training
• Board interviews indicate that some members are totally unaware of the evaluation process.
• The board should clearly articulate LPA’s protocol for evaluating the Executive Director.
• The protocol should involve more than one board member and include solicitation of feedback from school staff.

• No formal training on school governance is in place for new board members.
• Board interviews indicate that offerings on school governance in general and school finance in particular would be valuable.
### III. Strong School Leadership and Operations

A transformational school leader:

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<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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</table>
| a) Invests students, parents and staff in the mission and vision of the school. | i. Communicates the mission and vision on a frequent basis to students, parents and staff.  
ii. Monitors students, parents and staff to gauge their understanding of the mission and vision and the extent to which they’re striving to reach it. | Required Documents:  
- Other Evidence  
  - School leader interview  
  - Student, staff and parent surveys and interviews  
  - School publications such as newsletters and announcements |
| b) Employs a clear strategic approach to meeting the goals of improving student academic achievement | i. With the Board of Directors, develops strategic plans that ensure fidelity to the school’s vision by addressing critical issues; including school performance, financial management, human resource management, facilities, and quality improvement  
ii. Articulates and monitors the goals identified in the strategic plans.  
iii. Holds him/herself accountable for specific outcomes outlined in the charter and detailed in the school’s performance contract with the sponsor  
iv. Engages in ongoing relevant professional development  
v. Utilizes an effective data communication instrument providing consistent, timely data regarding the school’s progress toward meeting agreed upon performance expectations (academic, operational, and financial)  
vi. Implements the academic program in alignment with the school’s charter and Missouri Common Core Standards  
vii. Collects, assimilates, and disseminates student achievement data to inform a continuous cycle of school improvement | Required Documents:  
- School Annual Calendar  
- Strategic plan  
- School Leader Mentoring Plan  
- School Leader Professional Development Plan  
- Student Assessment Plan  
- Other Evidence  
  - School leader interview  
  - School leadership team interviews  
  - Teacher interviews  
  - Student data analysis plans |
| c) Implements recruitment and enrollment strategies and practices that respect diversity and are consistent with the school’s charter, mission, and vision, as well as federal and state regulations | i. Implements student recruitment strategies that focus on the targeted population stated in its charter and that are inclusive of a diverse range of learners  
ii. Utilizes a public lottery process for open enrollment  
iii. Ensures no practices are implemented which may limit the opportunity for students with special needs to enroll  
iv. Ensures that student enrollment and attendance numbers are in line with the charter agreement, and provide evidence that the school is a viable school of choice for the community. | Required Documents:  
- Enrollment Application  
- Marketing/Recruitment Materials  
- Other Evidence  
  - School leader interview  
  - Observation of lotteries  
  - Enrollment and attendance data  
  - Core data |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>d)</th>
<th>Develops and sustains a school culture conducive to student learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Maintains a clean and safe environment that supports the educational mission of the school.</td>
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<td>ii.</td>
<td>Maintains open, consistent, clear communication among students, staff, parents, and administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td>Maintains a school culture conducive to learning and continuous improvement</td>
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<td>iv.</td>
<td>Communicates effectively to all stakeholder groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Same evidence sources as described in Element IV above.</td>
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<td>Required Documents:</td>
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<tr>
<th>Other Evidence</th>
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<tr>
<td>Onsite observations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent surveys and interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student surveys and interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff surveys and interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student support staff interviews (Counselors, nurses, social workers, School Psychologists)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discipline, suspension and/or expulsion data</td>
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<td>Parent complaint/grievance records</td>
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<th>e)</th>
<th>Employs qualified staff, provides professional development opportunities to improve their performance.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Conducts personnel procedures and practices in a manner that promotes instructional effectiveness and continuous school improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td>Conducts personnel procedures and practices in a manner that promotes the recruitment and retention of an effective instructional staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td>Provides professional development opportunities for all staff members that are aligned to the school’s vision and advances their effectiveness in their roles.</td>
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<td>Required Documents:</td>
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<tr>
<th>Other Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Organization Chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee School Handbook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assurance of Faculty/Staff Background Checks (FCSR and fingerprinting)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff Professional Development Plan and Calendar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Mentoring and Coaching Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Evaluation Plan (including blank evaluation forms)</td>
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<th>f)</th>
<th>Understands and complies with the laws, policies, and state and federal requirements that govern charter schools</th>
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<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Participates regularly in professional development opportunities, which provide insight into the trends, issues, and potential changes in the environment in which charter schools operate</td>
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<td>ii.</td>
<td>Allocates resources based primarily on their impact on student achievement, learning, and well-being</td>
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<td>iii.</td>
<td>Implements business policies and procedures that promote school sustainability, operational integrity, and a focus on student achievement and learning results</td>
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<td>iv.</td>
<td>Establishes programs and policies that enable all students to be served effectively</td>
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<td>v.</td>
<td>Ensures timely submission of required data and reporting</td>
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<td>Required Documents:</td>
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<tr>
<th>Health and Safety</th>
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<tr>
<td>Health Permits (food service)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire Safety Permit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Inspection/Certificate of Occupancy</td>
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<td>Elevator Inspection Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<th>Special Education</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPED Compliance Plans (IDEA &amp; 504)</td>
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<th>Title I</th>
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<tr>
<td>Title I Parent Meetings (sign in sheets)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HQ Parent Notification Letters</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
vi. Ensures that school is in compliance with state and federal laws, policies and requirements and provisions in its contract with UMSL in these areas:
   a. Health and safety
   b. Student records:
      i. Thorough and comprehensive
      ii. Secure and confidential
      iii. Appropriate employee access to the data system
   c. Special Education
   d. Title I
   e. Free and reduced lunch
   f. Homeless and ELL students
   g. Fiscal management
   h. State testing
   i. Other operations

Homeless and ELL Students
- ELL Intervention Plan
- ELL Pupil Count/Percentages
- Homeless Student Policy

Fiscal Management
(Refer to Element IX: Sound Financial Operations below)

State Testing
- Quality Assurance – Grade Level Assessment Assurance Document
- State Exam Security Policy
- State Exam Testing Calendar

Other Operations
- Student/Parent Handbook
- Media Policy

Other Evidence
- School leader interview
- Document/MOSIS submission history with UMSL and DESE
- Interviews with consultants: Shannon Spradling and Thurma DeLoach
- FERPA compliance procedures
- Student record keeping system

Element III: School Leadership and Operations

Areas of Strength

Executive Director
- (a) Investment of others:
  o Interviewees expressed the belief that the Executive Director fully embodies the vision of LPA.
  o The SY2019 staff, parent and student surveys strongly indicate that the ED is available and prepared to hear concerns or suggestions.

- (b) Strategic approach towards student achievement:
  o The ED refers to the 2018-21 strategic plan as one of her guideposts.
  o Continuous improvement is a cornerstone of LPA’s approach to strategic planning:
    ▪ Staff interviews indicate they value LPA’s ability to implement changes and improvements immediately.
    ▪ LPA’s response to closure due to the coronavirus indicates that leadership has structures in place to

Areas for Growth

Executive Director
- (b) Strategic approach towards student achievement:
  o In her interview, the ED stated that she delegates more operational functions to others compared with previous years, but she still does too much paperwork.
    ▪ An additional administrative assistant would increase her capacity to forge more community partnerships and increase branding and marketing efforts.
develop and implement solid plans to address unanticipated challenges. These plans build in flexibility that enables quick adjustments when initial ideas meet hard reality.

- The ED continues to manage LPA’s finances with the long-term future of the LEA in mind. The board cites this as one of her great strengths.

- (c) Recruitment and enrollment strategies:
  - Student enrollment is strong with waiting lists for most grade levels.

- (d) Culture building:
  - The ED plays an important role in shaping LPA’s culture of high expectations for academic achievement and social-emotional growth.

- (e) Employment:
  - Staff and school leaders indicate a strong desire to increase staff diversity.

- (f) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations:
  - With the exceptions noted in the right-hand column, the school is compliant with state and federal statutes.
  - All LPA staff have cleared Criminal Background checks and FCSR registration.
  - LPA limits access to MOSIS and Core Data to appropriate staff as needed by their roles.
  - LPA publishes its Annual Performance Report on its website.

- (c) Recruitment and enrollment strategies:
  - Regarding diversity:
    - Ensuring racial balance in Kindergarten and Grade 1 enrollment continues to be a significant challenge.

- (e) Employment:
  - Continue to explore and implement recruitment strategies that increase the number of low income and African American applicants.
    - An interview comment embodies this concern: “The staff does not mirror the student body, especially regarding African-American males.”

- (f) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations:
  - LPA’s Enrollment Application and Parent Handbook do not comply with the most recent virtual learning statute (RSMo: Section 161.670). “Availability of the program shall be made clear in the parent handbook, registration documents, and featured on the home page of the school district or charter school's website.” This statement of availability cannot be found in these three locations.
  - LPA does not create or publish an Annual Report Card as mandated by RSMo. Section 160.522. This document is distinct from the school’s Annual Performance Report and involves communication of data and information about the school that goes well beyond student performance on the state assessments. Refer to the statute for guidance.
  - LPA does not display an American Flag in front of the building and students recite the Pledge of Allegiance once a week; not every day. (RSMo. Section 170.311)
### Principal

- **(a) Investment of others:**
  - The SY2019 staff, parent and student surveys strongly indicate that the Principal is available and prepared to hear concerns or suggestions.
  - Teacher interviews indicate that:
    - School leadership strongly supports their work.
    - They have a voice in decisions that impact their work.
  - “Intent to return” data and staff interviews indicate the principal met the challenge of onboarding fifteen new staff members along with seven other staff transitioning to new roles this year.

- **(b) Strategic approach towards student achievement:**
  - Comment (b) in the ED section above related to continuous improvement and LPA’s response to the coronavirus-caused school closure also apply to the principal.
  - The SY2019 staff surveys strongly indicate that the principal supports the development of teachers towards improving academic outcomes.
  - Teacher interviews indicate that the leadership team and coaches focus strongly on improving teaching and learning and helping them design classroom lessons that are effective and efficient.
  - The SY2019 MAP outcomes were ranked among the highest in the region in terms of growth from the previous year.

- **(d) Culture building:**
  - Teacher interviews indicate that they appreciate the level of collaboration and support among themselves and between leadership and staff; specifically noting that leadership takes a collaborative approach to problem-solving.

### Discipline

- Student interviews indicate that discipline is handled fairly and consistently.
- Before school closure in March, SY2020 suspensions were on a declining track compared to SY2019 totals.

### Communication

- Staff interviews and teacher and parent surveys indicate that communication is one of LPA’s significant strengths.

### Principal

- **(b) Strategic approach towards student achievement:**
  - In her interview, the principal indicated two growth areas:
    - Strengthening her skills in developing her instructional coaches’ capacity.
    - Expanding data-driven work to include assessment of social emotional development and inquiry learning.

### Discipline

- Teacher interviews indicate that some elementary teachers would like to see greater alignment between behavior expectations for elementary and middle school students.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Operations/HR/Facilities</th>
<th>Operations/HR/Facilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• LPA students participate in fire, earthquake, tornado and active shooter/intruder response drills.</td>
<td>• Student interviews indicated that they like the food but want more daily menu options with even healthier options like fresh vegetables.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The students generally like the food that is served.</td>
<td>• Even with the physical expansion the school could use more space for storage.</td>
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<td>• There are no concerns with purchasing or management of cash.</td>
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<td>• There are no concerns with teacher certification.</td>
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<td>• The classrooms are clean and well kept.</td>
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<td>• The physical space does not present any concerns with heating, cooling or any general services.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Teacher Evaluation, Mentoring, Professional Development (PD)</th>
<th>Teacher Evaluation, Mentoring and Professional Development</th>
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<tr>
<td>• LPA’s teacher evaluation system embodies a continuous growth approach and includes feedback from non-managerial stakeholders.</td>
<td>• Middle school teachers would like to have more subject-area and middle-school focused PD.</td>
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<td>• Teacher interviews indicate that they really appreciate the processes around teacher evaluation and feedback.</td>
<td>• Specialists find value in analyzing student data, but point out that it is not directly tied to what they do.</td>
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<td>• LPA’s mentoring system provides strong support to mentees that is well documented and provides for administrative oversight.</td>
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<td>• New teacher summer orientation and all staff summer institute is thorough and well designed.</td>
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<td>• The 2018-19 survey indicated teacher concern regarding the Data Team meetings as an effective way to collaborate on student academic growth… but this year… teacher interviews indicate strong satisfaction with both instructional coaches and PLC’s (Professional Learning Communities). Combined, they:</td>
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<td>o Foster collaboration among teachers and between teachers and school leaders through a singular focus on improving teaching and learning.</td>
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<td>o Strengthen curriculum alignment and rigor.</td>
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<td>o Increase teacher understanding of where their students are and where they need support.</td>
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<td>• Teachers cite LPA’s PD program as a key factor in strengthening academic rigor.</td>
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<td>• Teachers note and appreciate that they have a voice in determining their personal areas for improvement.</td>
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<td>• Teachers appreciate the opportunity to find and attend PD based on their individual needs or interests.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Required Documents</th>
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<tr>
<td>• LPA submits all required documents in a timely manner.</td>
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</table>
### IV. Transformational Curriculum

**A transformational school:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Curriculum and instruction are aligned to the mission, vision and</td>
<td>i. Curriculum scope and sequence provide opportunities for students to reach the school’s mission and vision.</td>
<td>Required Documents:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educational philosophy of the school.</td>
<td>ii. Instructional practices provide opportunities for students to reach the school’s mission and vision.</td>
<td>• Schoolwide Curriculum Scope and Sequence</td>
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<td>iii. Curriculum and instruction are aligned to the educational philosophy of the school as described in the charter.</td>
<td>Other Evidence</td>
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<td>• Classroom observations – including SPED and Title 1 programs\</td>
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<td>• Student and staff interviews\</td>
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<td>• Sample unit and lesson plans\</td>
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<td>• Student work\</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Other Evidence</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Same as above\</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• MSIP-5 student achievement, attendance and retention data</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Provides a challenging, engaging, coherent, transformational curriculum</td>
<td>i. Implements curriculum that clearly identifies and builds essential and enduring knowledge.</td>
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<td>that meets the academic needs of all students</td>
<td>ii. Structures a curriculum scope and sequence aligned to Missouri’s Common Core Standards.</td>
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<td>iii. Ensures that the curriculum invests and prepares students to extend their learning and be successful beyond the classroom and beyond their school career (life-long learning, career readiness, college readiness, active citizenship).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>iv. Uses a variety of instructional techniques to enhance content acquisition and meet the needs of a diverse student population.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>v. Develops and implements clearly defined strategies to meet the needs of a diverse student population.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>vi. Utilizes high quality instructional materials, including technology, to support the curriculum.</td>
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</table>

**Element IV: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

**Areas of Strength**
- **Documented Curriculum**
  - LPA continues to make significant progress developing its documented curriculum. At this point, Long Term Plans are in place for each grade level. The LTPs included standards, objectives, aligned content, and pacing recommendations. A teacher new to the building has the guidance necessary to prepare for the year ahead.

**Areas for Growth**
- **Documented Curriculum**
  - Missing from the LTPs are model unit assessments aligned to standards and objectives. Consider adding these to support new or inexperienced teachers.
Student assessment plan incorporates a wide range of instruments (Fountas and Pinnell, NWEA, Singapore Math, teacher made/compiled and MAP).

(a) Curriculum alignment to vision and philosophy:
   - With each year, between-grade alignment grows stronger. PLCs were a key factor here.
   - The curriculum provides teachers with ample opportunity to leverage their own knowledge and skills to make it their own.
   - Student interviews indicate that they appreciate the opportunity to learn different things in different ways.
   - The SY2019 staff, parent and student surveys indicate that students have opportunities to work on long-term projects they design.

(b) Challenging, engaging and coherent:
   - Student interviews indicate that what makes LPA better than other schools is strong academics:
     - "Teachers here challenge to advance your thinking to problem solve. And if you don’t understand, they stop and help."
     - "They encourage us to have a growth mindset."
   - Teacher interviews and the SY2019 staff, parent and student surveys strongly indicate that the curriculum is rigorous and students are challenged.

Assessment
   - Teachers regularly meet in PLCs led by instructional coaches where they look at outcomes from NWEA and unit pretests and posttests to monitor student growth.

(a) Curriculum alignment to vision and philosophy:
   - Continue to focus on ways to increase opportunities for students to engage in “deeper learning” and problem solving:
     - Classroom observations did not reveal any inquiry-based lessons or project-based learning.
     - Teacher interviews indicate that some teachers would like to see more thematic-based learning that blends disciplines instead of separate, designated time for math, reading, science, etc.

(b) Challenging, engaging and coherent:
   - In her interview, the ED stated that LPA “has made a lot of growth in raising teacher expectations for students, but we’re still not there yet.”
   - Primary grade teachers express concern about Be A Reader, indicating that it lacks rigor.
   - Teacher interviews indicate that some teachers would like to strengthen the writing curriculum.
   - The social studies curriculum still has many gaps that teachers must fill on their own.
   - Specialists indicate that they must create their own curriculum, though they consider this as an opportunity. LPA should ensure that their work is codified and incorporated into schoolwide scope and sequence documents to support newly hired specialists in the future.
   - Teachers note that the 5th Grade math curriculum materials are not well-aligned with both K-4 and 6-8 materials.
   - Middle school student interviewees indicate they’d like:
     - More variety and choice in electives
     - More opportunities to work on projects.
## V. Empowering Culture of Achievement

### A transformational school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| a. Supports students in a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment that invests them in achievement, builds character, increases responsibility, fosters inclusion and inspires joy. | i. Creates a school environment conducive to learning and growth.  
ii. Maintains a safe school environment free of violence and the threat of violence.  
iii. Implements processes to promote student health and wellness.  
iv. Ensures that students feel supported and respected by teachers and staff.  
v. Communicates and consistently implements a comprehensive student discipline policy that complies with the Missouri Safe School Act and the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. | Required Documents: |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Evidence</th>
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</table>

- Onsite observations
- Parent surveys and interviews
- Student surveys and interviews
- Staff surveys interviews
- Student support staff interviews (Counselors, nurses, social workers, School Psychologists)
- Parent complaint/grievance records
- Discipline, suspension and/or expulsion data

### Element V: Culture of Achievement

#### Areas of Strength

- Student, teacher and school leader interviews indicate a strong focus on academic achievement in tandem with meeting social-emotional needs of all children.
- The school operates as a caring community where everyone supports one another. Many teachers know students by name schoolwide.
- Classroom observations and student interviews reveal joy in the learning and teaching that happens at LPA.
- Teacher and student interviews strongly indicate that they’re happy to teach and learn at LPA.
- Teacher interviews and the SY2019 staff and parent surveys strongly indicate the children feel safe at the school and neighborhood.
- Student interviews indicate that they appreciate their teachers because they build strong relationships and provide help when needed.
- The students note that there is not much bullying at the school and most of the kids are really kind to each other. (It should be noted however that in the SY2019 student survey, 9% of students indicated that they do not feel safe at school.)
- The SY2019 staff, parent and student surveys strongly indicate that expectations for behavior are clear and that teachers expect great work and behavior from all students.

#### Areas for Growth

- Some staff would like there to be a stronger relationship between the elementary school and middle school and recommend that having middle and elementary students regularly share learning opportunities/experiences.
| • The strict policy around assuring that all students are reading at level or nearly at level for grade promotion has garnered strong outcomes with a high percentage of K-3 students reading at “grade level.” (See also Element VII: Parents and Community below) |
|• The addition of a gym greatly expands the opportunities for large group gatherings and sports/indoor games. |
## VI. Transformational Teachers
A transformational teacher:

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<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Understands and believes in the vision and innovative identity of the school.</td>
<td>i. Develops an ambitious, measurable and inspiring course vision and goals aligned to the school’s vision and innovative identity. ii. Provides students with a clear picture of what reaching the vision and goals looks like.</td>
<td>Required Documents:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Takes responsibility for investing students in reaching their academic and personal growth goals.</td>
<td>i. Believes that all students can learn. ii. Holds high expectations for all students iii. Inspires and motivates students to reach the vision and goals. iv. Builds a strong culture of achievement where the classroom environment is conducive to learning and growing. v. Builds strong, trusting relationships with students and their families. vi. Is passionate about the content of the curriculum and conveys that passion to students.</td>
<td>Required Documents:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Develops and/or implements curriculum that is strongly aligned to student academic achievement and personal growth goals</td>
<td>i. Designs a course scope and sequence that is tightly aligned to the vision and goals. ii. Designs a course that engages students in both critical thinking and meaningful discourse around enduring understandings and essential questions. iii. Designs units and lessons that: o Are tightly aligned to course learning objectives and desired student outcomes. o Build on what students already know and do and provide the scaffolding they need to reach the level of success commensurate with the vision and goals. o Engage students with thought-provoking and ambiguous texts/materials that challenge their thinking and feelings. o Give students opportunities to conduct research to answer a question, explore and take a stand on an issue, or develop solutions to a problem. o Use writing to communicate their reflections and understandings. o Incorporate a variety of teaching methods that meet the needs of diverse student learning styles.</td>
<td>Required Documents:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| d. Employs best instructional practices to engage students in learning and raise academic achievement. | i. Keeps instruction student centered and inquiry oriented  
ii. Continually orients students to content  
iii. Continually orients students to each other  
iv. Continually checks for student understanding and makes appropriate adjustments as necessary |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required Documents:</td>
<td>Other Evidence</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| | • School leader/Curriculum leader interviews  
• Teacher interviews  
• Classroom observations |
| e. Tracks student progress towards academic and personal growth goals and makes adjustments as necessary. | i. Uses multiple forms of assessment, including growth-measures assessments, to inform instructional decision-making.  
ii. Evaluates students’ progress towards meeting course and school performance goals and modifies goals, as needed, to improve student achievement.  
iii. Tracks and disseminates growth data for students over time using both norm referenced measures and state assessments.  
iv. Builds student skills in tracking their own progress and motivates them to take charge of their own academic and personal growth.  
v. Pursues professional development opportunities to address areas for growth in their own teaching. |
| Required Documents: | Other Evidence |
| | • School leader/Curriculum leader interviews  
• Classroom observations  
• Teacher surveys  
• Course scope and sequence, unit and lesson plans  
• Assessment plans/performance tracking systems  
• Student performance data (including state, formative and internal benchmark assessments) |

### Element VI: Teachers

#### Areas of Strength

- **(a) Belief in the vision:**
  - Teachers share a common vision that drives a community of collaboration, teaching and instruction.
  - Teacher interviews indicate they enjoy working at LPA; citing its strong sense of community as a major factor.

- **(b) Student investment:**
  - Surveys, interviews and observations all indicate that teachers excel at building teacher/student relationships.

- **(c) Curriculum development and implementation:**
  - Teachers are embracing their PLC work to strengthen LPA’s curriculum.
  - Reading instruction centers around authentic reading using novel in literature circles and then guided reading for the younger grades.

- **(d) Instructional practice:**
  - Parent and student surveys strongly indicate that staff effectively help students having difficulties in school.
  - The SY2019 surveys all indicate that students have opportunities to work on long-term projects they design.

#### Areas for Growth

- **(d) Instructional practice:**
  - Citing inconsistencies in scheduling, some teachers would like to expand TA support for every teacher and grade level.
- Observations and teacher interviews reveal that:
  - Teachers employ a variety of instructional modes.
  - Teachers have cut back on pen and paper activities.
  - Classroom lessons hold the students' attention while providing appropriately rigorous challenge.
  - Teachers display suitable classroom management and are patient with children.
  - Homerooms have evidence of guided reading practices.
  - The students are generally aware of all routines and procedures.
  - Teachers monitor student progress and adjust for students who aren’t reaching objectives.
- (e) Student progress-tracking:
  - Classroom observations and the SY2019 student survey strongly indicate that:
    - Students set and track goals for learning with their teachers.
    - Students can explain what they’re learning and why.

- Observations reveal that:
  - A few classrooms tend to be worksheet heavy when it comes to instruction.
  - Some lessons could be more engaging and provide time for student-student discussion and partnership.
### VII. Engaged Parents and Community

A transformational school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Engages parents and community stakeholders in the vision and mission of the school</td>
<td>i. Develops and implements an effective communications plan consistently engaging the community in becoming educated regarding quality education and developing support for their charter school.</td>
<td>Documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Ensures the active engagement of administrators, board members, parents, and staff in communication and outreach planning and implementation.</td>
<td>Other Evidence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>iii. Communicates and engages all stakeholders in the mission and vision of the school.</td>
<td>• Parent interviews</td>
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<td>iv. Involves students, parents, and community members as part of the school’s support system.</td>
<td>• Parent and community communication/involvement plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>v. Fosters strong relationships between school staff and parents.</td>
<td>• Data on parent and community participation in school events</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Seeks input from relevant, critical, impacted stakeholders</td>
<td>i. Establishes regular opportunities and methods of communication among the stakeholders, administration, and the board.</td>
<td>• Parent-teacher contact data</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ii. Conducts its meetings regularly and in an open, organized, and effective manner.</td>
<td>• Newsletters and other communications</td>
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<td></td>
<td>iii. Operates within the requirements of the Missouri Sunshine Law ensuring board meeting agendas and meeting minutes are posted in a timely manner for broad public review and all state non-profit requirements are met.</td>
<td>• Parent survey data</td>
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#### Element VII: Parents and Community

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Strength</th>
<th>Areas for Growth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Parent and community engagement:</td>
<td>(a) Parent and community engagement:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Interviews across all stakeholders and LPA’s performance during the early stages of school closure due to the COVID-19 outbreak strongly indicate that parental support and engagement is a key strength.</td>
<td>o Teacher interviews indicate less engagement from lower income African-American parents.</td>
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<td>o The SY2019 teacher and parent surveys strongly indicate that parents partner with LPA to support their students’ education.</td>
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<td>o Staff and parents believe that Class Dojo is a useful tool to communicate with families.</td>
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<td>o The SY2019 parent survey indicates that in general, parents know how well students are doing in class.</td>
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</table>
- The strict policy around assuring that all students are reading at level or nearly at level for grade promotion leads to high parent participation; especially for students who struggle early on in the year. Families and teachers collaborate to ensure reading success.

- (b) Input from stakeholders:
  - The SY2019 parent survey revealed that overall, parents gave 90% positive feedback, an increase over the previous year by 10% points.

- (b) Input from stakeholders:
  - The parent survey should include a question concerning the accessibility and responsiveness of the board to parent concerns, similar to those pertaining to the ED and principal.
### VIII. Comprehensive Student Support System

The support staff of a transformational school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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</table>
| a. Develops and utilizes a comprehensive, developmental student support system that proactively assists all students to develop and apply skills for maximum academic, career, and personal/social growth during the school years. | i. Collects and uses academic, behavior and attendance data to:  
  o Plan appropriate programs for students both individually and collectively.  
  o Monitor student performance and provide appropriate interventions in cooperation with all stakeholders for student success.  
  ii. Assists all students with developing academic, career, and personal/social skills; helping them to utilize reasoning, understand connections and make complex choices.  
  iii. Uses a variety of activities, resources and strategies; including individual and group counseling, classroom presentations, academic advising, parent education and other responsive services. | Required Documents:  
  - SPED Compliance Plans (IDEA & 504)  
  - ELL Intervention Policy  
  - Title I Needs Assessment and Plan  
  Other Evidence  
  - Student support team interviews  
  - School leader interviews |
| b. Advocates for students and provides professional expertise to help school personnel, parents/guardians and community members to increase the effectiveness of student success. | i. Proactively facilitates communication and collaboration within and among the school, home and community to promote and build trust, understanding and partnerships with all segments of the school community.  
  ii. Seeks solutions and provide referrals to overcome barriers to effective involvement in education and success of students. | Required Documents:  
  - Student support team interviews  
  - School leader interviews  
  - Staff, student and parent surveys |
| c. Develops and implements policies and procedures to ensure that all children with disabilities are identified and evaluated; and if eligible, receive services that meet their specific needs. | i. Ensure that teachers have the expertise to identify students who may have special needs and communicates regularly with teachers to share concerns.  
  ii. Follows protocol related to parent concerns in a timely manner.  
  iii. Develops and implements a system (internal or external) to evaluate students.  
  iv. Develops and implements appropriate services that meet each student’s individual needs.  
  v. Is in compliance with all special education statutes and procedures. | Required Documents:  
  - DESE CAPs  
  - Staff, student and parent surveys |
| d. Develops and implements policies and procedures to ensure that all children who qualify as homeless receive all necessary | i. Develops and implements a plan that’s in compliance with state and federal guidelines that ensures homeless students have an equal opportunity to a public education. | Required Documents:  
  - Homeless Student Policy  
  Other Evidence  
  - Student support team interviews |
services and support to meet their specific needs.

e. Develops and implements policies and procedures to ensure that all children who qualify as ELL receive necessary services and support to meet their specific needs.

i. Develops and implements a plan that’s in compliance with state and federal guidelines that ensures ELL students receive necessary services and support to meet their specific needs.

Required Documents:
- ELL Intervention Plan

Other Evidence
- Student support team interviews
- School leader interviews
- DESE compliance reports
- Staff, student and parent surveys

**Element VIII: Student Support System**

**Dr. Thurma DeLoach’s Review**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Strength</th>
<th>Areas for Growth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>LPA is completing its 7th year as a public charter school, starting with grades KG-1 in 2013-14 and adding a grade a year. LPA’s first 8th grade class graduated this spring and a virtual graduation ceremony was conducted to recognize the achievement of these scholars. Many of the students recognized have attended LPA since it opened.</td>
<td>Keep doing what you are doing!</td>
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<tr>
<td>LPA leadership team is explicit about the vision and mission of the school. The expectation that staff build strong relationships with students and get to know students as individuals is communicated regularly. LPA has developed the systems and allocated resources that enable students to get the supports they need when they need them—without waiting for a special education or mental health diagnosis. Grade level and building level leadership teams are highly collaborative and support classroom teachers with a “whatever it takes” approach.</td>
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<td>The Executive Director (founder) and Director of Special Education have worked together from LPA’s inception. Head of School has served in this role since the 2014-15 school year. The stability of leadership and clarity of vision within this team has contributed greatly to the development of strong student support services. A number of staff members sited student support services as one of LPAs greatest strengths. Service needs and systems are reviewed annually and revised/improved as needed. Support services are in place for virtually all aspects of student needs including:</td>
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<td>o Special education referral, evaluation, services, and continuum of placements</td>
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<td>o Section 504 referral, identification, and accommodation plans</td>
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</table>
- ELL identification, assessment, and language immersion supports
- Dyslexia screening and reading support/intervention
- Math intervention and coaching support
- Mental health screening, referral, and embedded mental health services
- Grade-level Positive Student Support and Building-level Leadership teams for academic and social-emotional-behavioral supports and intervention. Building leadership team meets every other week and includes the special education director and literacy specialist

- LPA added a second Dean of Students for the 2019-20 school year. One dean is assigned to K-4 (elementary program) and the 2nd dean to grades 5-8 (middle school). Duties are similar to those of assistant principals; however, each dean is responsible for promoting school culture appropriate for the academic/social-emotional developmental levels of its students. Staff report that the addition of the 2nd dean has significantly improved responsiveness to students with special needs at both levels.

- Teachers commented on the positive, collaborative culture at LPA. They are happy to be teaching here; annual staff turnover is low.

- LPA leadership prepared in advance for the possibility of school closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Prior to spring break, staff made advance arrangements for student access to technology and instructional packets/materials at home.

### Dyslexia Screening & Intervention Supports
- Starting in August of 2019, all MO. public schools are required to annually screen students for potential reading challenges related to dyslexia. LPA conducted screening procedures in the first 30 days of school and in the winter. Screening timelines were met. Spring screening was not required due to school closure for Covid-19.

- The LPA team is to be commended for creating and implementing a screening process that meets DESE requirements and effectively uses screening data to provide useful information to teachers and parents. Classroom teachers reported that the process for sharing screening data and planning in-class and targeted intervention was well done and helpful.

- All instructional staff were trained on the dyslexia screening process and the characteristics and fundamental principles of dyslexia intervention as part of the July Professional Learning Institute.

### Dyslexia Screening and Intervention Support
- LPA’s winter screening included all KG students but only those students in grades 1-8 who had been identified for reading difficulty in the fall screening. Per Kim Stuckey, DESE Dyslexia Specialist, all students in KG through grades 3 are to be re-screened in the winter and spring semester. Students in grades 4-8 are to be re-screened only if they were previously identified as having reading difficulties.

- Based on this clarification, LPA should revise the screening calendar to include all students in KG-3 in the winter and spring screening cycle.

- Written parental notification of screening results should also be provided after each cycle of screening.

- **LETRS** (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) is identified by and supported by DESE as a current, research-based, high quality professional development course for practicing literacy teachers. It incorporates current research evidence on how children learn to read and the essential components of reading instruction for
Trained instructional assistants conducted most of the screening procedures with literacy specialist support.

Data was shared with grade level teachers immediately after screening through grade-level data teams. A scaled matrix with cut off scores indicating significant risk for reading difficulty in one or more areas was used to determine which students needed reading intervention. A Google doc spreadsheet of the screening results was prepared for each teacher. The spreadsheet was organized to highlight targeted areas of instructional need and clusters of students with similar needs. This process enabled teachers to initiate intervention quickly.

Screening data were used to create individualized intervention plans for those students most at risk.

- Intervention is provided primarily by the instructional assistant (KG-4) or the literacy specialist (middle school grades).
- SPIRE and other instructional strategies specific to dyslexia characteristics (e.g. phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency) are available for classroom and pull out intervention. Teachers are interested in access to additional targeted intervention resources/tools.
- Classroom teachers target specific areas for intensified small groups during reading block.
- Progress monitoring is on-going using a variety of assessments including NWEA, Fontas & Pinnell, running records and winter/spring screening. Progress monitoring data is used to determine when a student no longer requires targeted intervention.

Classroom teachers notified parents of screening results and plans to provide targeted intervention during fall parent conferences.

- LPA hires a fulltime literacy specialist/instructional coach who works with the most challenged readers and trains/coaches classroom teachers and instructional assistants.
- LPA’s Literacy Specialist and Director of Special Education were invited to share LPA’s dyslexia screening process at the Powerful Learning Conference. Screening tools, procedures, data review, and intervention resources are well thought out, comprehensive, and effective in identifying those students at risk for reading difficulty and providing targeted intervention both in and out of the general education classroom.

all children, especially those with reading difficulty. LETRS training is offered regularly through EdPlus at a reduced cost. LETRS training for classroom teachers was available this summer virtually through EdPlus and may be available in the fall of 2021.

- Consideration of training the literacy specialist, primary-grade teachers & primary special education teacher is recommended, when funding is available.
- Classroom teachers would like more professional learning about the screening process and how to dig deeper into the data for those students who continue to struggle—LETRS would be an effective training to support this interest.
### Student Positive Support Team—Tier 2 problem solving teams

- Elementary and Middle School Deans of Students facilitate Positive Support Teams (PST) for their assigned grade levels. This is a proactive responsibility based on an expectation that the Dean’s role goes beyond assigning disciplinary consequences for behavioral mistakes. Prevention and intervention based on data and collaborative teaming is the focus.
- Both Deans are new to this role this year. Although the prior Dean of Students had a PST process in place, the current Deans have revised and refreshed the existing process to be more data-driven and wholistic. This reviewer was able to observe a grade 1 and a grade 6 PST meeting prior to school closure for Covid-19. Noteworthy improvements include:
  - PST meetings are conducted every 2 weeks in the first semester and monthly in the second semester. All grade level teachers as well as most of the Student Support Services staff participate (i.e. Director of Special Education, Literacy and Math Specialists, School Counselor, Educational Support Counselor)
  - PST meetings are agenda-based and detailed notes are kept/available to participants via Google Docs.
  - Both academic and behavioral concerns are addressed through the PST—and problem solving is not limited to only those students with the most significant needs.
  - Teachers reported the process to be more streamlined than in prior years and that the follow through after the meeting is improved. This is likely because each Dean has fewer grades to support as compared to prior years—“not spread so thin”.
  - Referrals for special education evaluation may be initiated through the PST team process when intervention and progress monitoring data suggest that a disability may be a factor in the child’s response to the intervention support provided.
- Teachers who participated in this process this year expressed appreciation for the improved support and structure provided.
  - They believe the time is well-spent and that problem-solving/solutions are the focus—not simply describing the problems. are addressed.
  - Data is reviewed regularly and it shows that children are responding to the interventions and making gains as a result as this collaborative problem-solving process.
  - Teachers feel supported through the PST process.

### Student Positive Support Team—Tier 2 problem solving teams

- The current PST process is still being developed—barely 5 months along when school transitioned to a virtual platform. Continued practice will naturally improve the teams’ processes and the capability of participants. Although the teams appear to be functioning effectively, both Deans expressed their intention to continually evaluate PST operations and to improve systems around use of data, goal-focused problem solving, and progress monitoring.
  - Observation of problem-solving teams at sister charter schools could provide other models of the problem-solving process as well as documentation, intervention, and progress monitoring tools.
• LPA Deans continued to implement PST virtually when school was closed for spring quarter. Student participation in virtual lessons was monitored and referrals were accepted from classroom teachers when concerns emerged about an individual student’s participation, learning, or emotional needs. The Deans worked with Student Support Staff to provide targeted support for students referred by their teachers. Continuation of responsive and timely supports during highly irregular schooling speaks to the flexibility, creativity, and commitment of the LPA team to all of its students—and the recognition that student support needs can surface or change at any time.

Social-Emotional-Behavioral (SEB) Learning, Supports, Services

• Social-emotional learning (SEL) is identified as a priority in the LPA culture. The Executive Director, Head of School, Director of Student Support Services (SSS), Dean of Students and classroom teachers described a culture in which students are taught to believe in themselves, to push through hard things and to handle conflicts appropriately even without an adult nearby. “Joy” is a daily intention expressed for students.

• Teachers stated that commitment to the emotional wellness of children is a huge motivator and a reason they love teaching at LPA. Multiple staff described LPA’s social-emotional-behavioral supports and services to be exceptional.

• Staff are expected to form relationships and to know students as individuals.

• An extensive menu of Social-emotional learning and counseling supports are available at LPA:
  o Full time school counselor (licensed professional counselor--doctoral degree) provides classroom counseling lessons and small group counseling
  o Full time Educational Support Counselor (ESC--licensed clinical social worker) provides individual and small group counseling, social skill and friendship groups and family outreach/support.
  o In-class supports including sensory tools, alternative seating, noise reducing headphones, weighted lap pads, Zones of Regulation, Sensory and Motor breaks facilitated by IAs (trained by the Director of SSS).
  o Restorative practices including morning meetings, Community Circles, conflict/peer mediation.
  o Mindfulness and Yoga incorporated into the classroom.

Social-Emotional-Behavioral (SEB) Learning, Supports, Services

• Several staff expressed the importance of engaging parents as partners in the social-emotional-behavioral development of students. A variety of parent workshops on age-appropriate themes are offered annually and are planned for the future.
  o Consideration could be given to live streaming/recording of parent workshops for those parents who are unable to participate in person at school—due to childcare or work schedules.
• The ESC and School counselor function as a collaborative mental health triage team—i.e. the school counselor focuses on classroom counseling and small targeted counseling groups. She uses the MO School Guidance Program as the framework. The ESC caseload is therapy-based for students who have more intense long-term social-emotional support needs. They keep each other informed of students needs so either person can step in to support any student when necessary.

• As school transitioned to virtual learning, the counselor and ESC developed weekly Wellness lessons and other mental health resources which are openly available to anyone on the LPA website.

• Staff report a strong collaboration in developing & implementing SEB support plans for challenging students and that student behaviors improve when plan are implemented, monitored and adjusted. Out of school suspension is rarely necessary. The consistency of leadership, messaging, modeling, and allocation of resources has made this possible. It is uncommon to see this level of commitment and development in a public school. LPA leadership and staff are to be commended for maintaining this focus over the past 7 years and for continuing to make this a priority for the school.

Special Education Services and Procedures
• The Director of Special Education has been in this role for 7 years at LPA. The program has grown and matured under her leadership. She is knowledgeable of special education compliance requirements and routinely monitors compliance documentation and timelines with her team. LPA went through DESE Self-Assessment in the 2018-19 SY and DESE found the school to be in compliance in all areas monitored. This reviewer was not able to review student files this spring because of school closure; however, no compliance concerns are anticipated.

• Two certified special education teachers are on staff. The elementary teacher provides services primarily through a pull-out resource model and the middle school teacher provides mostly in-class support with some pull out services. Both teachers are responsible for developing and monitoring IEPs for students assigned to their caseloads. IEP goals are based on MO Learning Standards and Grade-level expectations. Teachers collect classroom work and data on IEP goals to monitor student progress.

• Students are referred for special education evaluation by the Positive Student Support Team or by the School Leadership team. Staff are aware of the importance of immediate notice to the Special Education

Special Education Services and Procedures
• Current Special education caseloads are large and diverse—24 students on the K-4 caseload and 27 on the middle school caseload. Two students have significant disabilities that require an alternative functional curriculum and significant time in the special education setting. An additional ½ time teacher has been hired for the upcoming school year. Monitor staffing and caseloads to determine if this is sufficient to provide appropriate services across all grade levels.
  o Instructional minutes and group sizes should be regularly monitored to ensure that services can be scheduled and provided to meet the student’s need. Additional staffing may be needed to support push-in or co-teaching at the middle school level, especially.

• Planning for post-secondary transition as early as grade 8 can be a challenge—especially when students are going to different high schools.
  o DESE sponsors a Transition Institute each summer for secondary special educators. Consideration should be given to sending the middle school special education teacher and the special education director to this professional development institute.
Director when a parent suggests a possible evaluation referral. Staff believe that these systems appropriately identify those students who should be evaluated for special education eligibility.

- A special education management tool (SpedTrack), is used to document and monitor evaluations and IEPs. The team reports this is working effectively.
- Evaluation, occupational therapy and speech-language therapy are provided by contract with a private agency. The LPA special education team are satisfied with the services provided by the contracted agency. IEP-based Mental health/counseling are provided by the LPA counselor or Educational Support Counselor.
- LPA recently purchased several intervention programs including SPIRE and Leveled Literacy Intervention System (LLI—Fontas & Pinnel) for small group literacy intervention. The teachers report that students are making strong progress as a result of more focused and systematic instructional programming—specifically SPIRE data.
- Special and general education teacher collaboration is expected and made possible through scheduled common plan periods each week. Multiple staff members identified general/special education collaboration and responsiveness as a system’s strength.
- Middle school special education services are primarily provided through push-in and as needed small group pull out. General education teams reported this service delivery model to be highly effective in supporting students with IEPs as well as other non-IEP students with similar support needs.
  - The middle school special education teacher is tuned into the differences between elementary and middle school students and is a self-starter in figuring out how to make special education work at this level.
  - A highly collaborative culture exists within the middle school teacher teams. The special education teacher is considered an essential part of the middle school instructional teams.
- Administration recognizes the need and has planned for additional special education staffing for the upcoming school year—including adding a ½ time teacher and possibly hiring a full time LPA speech language pathologist who would also provide early intervening speech and language services prior to referral for special education.
- Procedures for Medicaid reimbursement are implemented for direct OT and SLP services. Medicaid reimbursement for mental health therapy is planned for the coming school year.
- LPA graduated its first 8th grade class—and provided transition planning for those students with IEPs headed to various high schools.

**Clarity on how to provide special education evaluation and IEP services in a virtual setting has not been forthcoming at a national, state, or local level. Should additional school closures be needed in the upcoming school year, these challenges will continue for all schools. The special education team should review IEP progress data immediately in the fall to determine the impact of virtual teaching on student progress. Strategies for offering some level of safe, in-person instruction or assessment may need to be identified going forward.**
Transition planning is a new area of support for older students and the middle school special education teacher contacted receiving high schools to research appropriate transition goals and activities to initiate 4-year transition planning—including scheduled visits to receiving high schools.

**General Compliance: Policies and Procedures for Student Support Services**
- The LPA Parent Handbook contains required parental notifications and relevant board policies. The handbook is posted on the LPA website and is readily available to parents and others in the LPA community
  - ESSA and Title 1 policies including: Parental Complaints, Parent Engagement, and School-Parent Compact, Homeless, ELL, and Migrant.
  - FERPA Policy
  - Dyslexia requirements and process
- Special Education Child Find and Local Compliance Plan for Special Education are posted on the LPA Website.
- LPA enrollment form includes prompts for parent identification of special needs
  - Home Language Survey for ELL
  - Migrant identification
  - Homeless Identification
  - Special Education, Section 504 and other medical or health related issues
  - Health Insurance information
- Annual required staff training included:
  - Suicide and Bullying Prevention/Intervention Policy and Procedures—8/01/2019
  - De-escalation and Physical Restraint Policy and Procedures—7/24/2019
  - Dyslexia Training (minimum of 2 hours annually)—8/12/2019 plus additional training during the school year at grade level team meetings.

**Other**
- Embedded school health (i.e. school nursing services) are not currently available to LPA students. LPA leadership considers strategies and partnerships for offering this support each year. Reliable funding has not yet been identified. Given the urgency of concerns related to prevention of Covid-19 when schools re-open, efforts to secure funding for school-based health services should be on-going.