



**Initial Memorandum To
Leadership Preparatory Academy
August 8, 2022**

The DeKalb County School District's Initial Memo provides the petitioner with feedback from the DCSD Charter Petition Review Committee. The Initial Memo includes identified strengths, clarifying questions, and requests for additional information or documentation.

Directions:

1. Review the Initial Memo.
2. Respond in writing to each item. Written responses should be submitted with the revised petition. Below is an example.

Feedback: Describe the process for collecting data on stakeholder satisfaction. It is unclear as written.

Petitioner's Response: *Process revised in petition. See pages 2-3. Copy of survey included. See exhibit #32.*

3. Revise the original petition and save the revised document in Microsoft Word. All changes made to the original petition should be made using the "track changes" feature in MS Word. **No additional changes to the petition will be accepted unless requested by the DeKalb Board of Education.**



How to Submit the Final Revised Petition and Response to the Initial Memo

By August 19, 2022 (12:00 PM), deliver to the School Innovation/Governance Department via DropBox at charterschools@dekalbschoolsga.org the revised petition (including exhibits) and the Response to the Initial Memo. Use electronic folders for sections, exhibits, and appendices.

Your Application Package must include the following:

1. Microsoft Word version of your Application Cover Page (page 14)
2. REDLINED Microsoft Word version of your Application and Exhibits
3. PDF version of your Complete Application Packet in the following order: Cover Sheet, Application, signed Assurances Form(s), Affidavit, and Exhibits
4. PDF version of your Locally-Approved Charter School Partners Roles and Responsibilities Chart
5. Excel version of your completed Budget Templates
6. Microsoft Word version of the Response to the Initial Memo

Faxed or emailed copies will not be accepted. Only complete applications that comply with these guidelines will be evaluated.



SUMMARY

On July 26, 2022, Leadership Preparatory Academy submitted a DCSD charter renewal application seeking the DeKalb Board of Education’s approval for a five-year contract term. In evaluating the petition, the Charter Petition Review Committee identified aspects of the petition, which would affect students attending the charter school.

Commendations from the Petition Review Committee:

- The Chief Academic Officer’s (CAO) “boots on the ground” approach and effective two-way communications have been a hallmark of Leadership Preparatory Academy’s (LPA) engagement with internal and external stakeholders.
- The CAO and Chief Executive Officer have secured grants to ensure that students’ needs are met.
- LPA’s financial performance is strong, and the Governing Board has created a substantial fund balance.

Process:

Items requiring a response are listed below. If applicable, questions correlate to the page number in the Microsoft Word version of the petition. Additional areas of concern may be raised by DeKalb Board of Education members during their review of the petition or by GADOE during its review process.

Community Support

Item	Committee’s Feedback	Petitioner’s Response
1	Describe the school’s community engagement strategy. Provide MOUs for existing strategic partnerships aligned to the school’s identified instructional priorities.	We understand that in the 21st century and moving into the 22nd century, the school’s community is global. Leadership Preparatory Academy’s vision is for our students to become active and engaged global citizens. Through our partnership with South DeKalb Charter School Alliance, several of our



		<p>students have visited Germany, Australia, and Costa Rica. To further expand our students, reach and exposure to the world, we have developed a partnership with the country of Mozambique. This partnership through WeYoBra essential daily requirements which fosters greater academic engagement for those students in that country. Additionally, our students will be participating in virtual cultural exchanges throughout the school year. In a recent visit to the Mozambique embassy, our Governance Board had the opportunity to exchange ideas with the Mozambique Ambassador, Carols De Santos during the National Charter School Conferenced. An outgrowth of this engagement produced a supplemental opportunity through the 5Strong organization for a collaborative project with Fort Valley State University. The Governance Board will be revising its strategic plan to broaden its academic preparedness for students in grades K-8 to lay the foundation for students to view higher education as an automatic next step in their educational journey.</p>
2	<p>Per the Governing Board, the current facility can accommodate 550 students. The petition includes 576 students as the projected enrollment by the end of the next charter term. Clarify the current facility's capacity. Provide the school's facility plan. – Governing Board Interview</p>	<p>THE FACILITY PLAN UPDATE add as exhibit LPA's current facility can accommodate 550 students. Over the next charter term, our facility plan includes the relocation of Leadership Preparatory Academy (LPA) to a facility to which can or will accommodate our continued growth. Such facility will also be better suited for the unique educational experience that we are providing to the world's potential leaders. The facility plan reflects the most current research on environmental spaces that are best suited for the varied modalities of learners. Understandably, because the fast-paced development of in teaching and learning techniques our facility plan is fluid and forward thinking. The LPA Facility Plan Update is attached as EXHIBIT 29.</p>

School Governance

Item	Committee's Feedback	Petitioner's Response
3	<p>What was the rationale for the 2019 change to the Governing Board's bylaws that requires a break in service for the Chairperson after two consecutive one-year terms? (p. 70)</p>	<p>LPA amended its bylaws in 2019 as part of its comprehensive strategic to ensure adequate leadership succession for both the governing board and school leadership. To provide additional leadership opportunities to board</p>



		<p>members and provide experience prior to succession, the governing board amended its bylaws to require a break in services for certain board officers. This practice is suggested by the Georgia Charter Schools Association as it allows greater engagement for board members and preserves institutional knowledge and practices.</p>
		<p>LPA's philosophy is rooted in the belief that leadership is developed at all levels – from students through faculty, parents, Governance Board members and community. As such, the governing board, through its annual training continues to focus on developing their leadership skills that are demonstrated in both as a whole Board and as leaders engaged in individual committees. The governing board brings their various professional acumens to their volunteer positions on the board, which results in a board that continues to be well rounded and embodies our concept of servant leadership. The revision of the bylaws was a natural byproduct of this understanding and to address the need for each board member to serve in a capacity that allows them to lead with purpose as they fulfill the vision and mission of the school through improved academic outcomes for its students. This change allows the import of fresh perspectives, talents and skills, all necessary to lead an organization. By requiring a break in service for board members following two terms, LPA not only provides additional leadership opportunities to board members but also ensures adequate experience for leader succession. This practice is suggested by the Georgia Charter Schools Association as it allows greater engagement for board members and preserves institutional knowledge and practices.</p> <p>Moreover, the governing board believes that to maximize its strength and to develop each member, the widest opportunity to serve in the highest position on the board should be afforded to all members. The break in service ensures wider participation at the leadership level of the board.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>How does the Governing Board orient new members to its mission, vision, beliefs, and bylaws? What evidence does the Governing Board use to evaluate whether the school is achieving its mission, vision, and goals? (p. 89)</p>	<p>The LPA governing board implements the Standards for Effective Governance of Charter Schools adopted by the State Board of Education and uses its whole board team training as well as mini-training sessions with individual board members to ensure new board members are oriented to the LPA mission, vision, belief and bylaws. The LPA governing board continually</p>



		<p>reviews its progress in achieving its mission, vision, and goals through the implementation of its strategic plan and monitoring of the school's performance on its academic, financial, and operational goals of the school's charter contract during its monthly meetings. In addition, new board members are mentored by veteran board member. Board members are encouraged to participate in school activities including Awards Day, Career Day, etc. Board members scheduled announced visits to classrooms and often dine with students during Lunch and Learn. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the number of in person classroom visitations however, when the opportunity was available for board members to participate in in person activities that were present. At the 21-22, 8th Grade Moving On Ceremony, the Board Chair, Dr. Donrich Young served as the guest speaker. The Governance Board reviews the data presented by the Chief Academic Officer to evaluate the academic performance of the school. Additionally, the board reviews the annual report prior to submission to determine if the school is meeting its targets as outlined in the charter contract.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Briefly describe LPA's Teaching and Learning Framework. Identify the Board members with expertise in the school's Teaching and Learning Framework and Leadership Curriculum. How are these Board members engaged in driving academic and organizational improvement? (p. 19)</p>	<p>LPA's Teaching and Learning Framework was developed to ensure that the end product leads to students being prepared on their pathway for postsecondary or career.</p> <p>Plan – Sound planning is the first step to creating an effective classroom. Teachers collaborate by grade level and/or content areas to develop plans utilizing the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Additionally, teachers review the Leadership Strand focus to integrate where applicable. Students will be empowered to use prior knowledge to construct new learning and will engage in experiential learning that is authentic, holistic, and challenging.</p> <p>Assess – Classroom assessment is one of the teacher's most essential educational tools. The purpose of classroom assessment is to support students' learning. Using assessment results, teachers will know at the outset where their students are in terms of their learning and will continually check on their progress through monitoring and strengthening student feedback. These assessments included formalized assessments i.e MAP, iReady, Beacon,</p>



		<p>etc.</p> <p>Evaluate – One of the keys to student success at LPA is the engagement of teachers in systematic reflection on their teaching since it plays such a critical role in the transformation of teaching and learning. Reflection help teachers better understand their practice and what works in the classroom, examine the effectiveness of a lesson, and use the evaluation to drive future instructional decisions. During data meetings, teachers utilized a variety of data points to evaluate student’s mastery on GSE.</p> <p>The Teaching and Learning Framework and LPA Leadership Curriculum are critical strategies for implementing LPA’s mission and vision as established by the governing board. The governing board is responsible for ensuring LPA meets the terms of its charter contract and fulfills its mission and vision through excellent academic, financial, and operational performance. To accomplish its mission, the LPA governing board selects, hires, supports, and evaluates the CEO and holds him or her responsible for the school’s performance. The CEO is responsible for monitoring and managing the day-to-day operations and implementation of the school model towards the fulfillment of the school mission.</p> <p>The governing board defines a strategic vision and course in alignment with the mission of the organization through the use of its strategic plan that guides the organization and decisions of the school administration. The governing board, in collaboration with the CEO, identifies its long-term goals to fulfill its charter contract and the academic, financial, and operational objectives. To support progress monitoring, the board also approves a student data and additional academic metrics data dashboard that can be used to monitor progress towards these goals at any given moment in time and during monthly meetings.</p> <p>The governing board approves the annual budget, conducts an annual audit, establishes fiscal policies, and approves monthly financial statements. This oversight and monitoring promotes LPA’s long-term financial viability and ensures that resources are allocated in a manner aligned to its mission and vision. The finance committee of the governing board is responsible for</p>
--	--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



		<p>working closely with the school administration to ensure strong fiscal planning and practices. The finance committee also provides financial counsel regarding major financial decisions made by the board, including board votes on any contracts when required by the school's procurement policies.</p> <p>The governing board is responsible for establishing and upholding governance, finance, and school policies, including, but not limited to, board policies, the staff handbook, and the student and family handbooks. These policies are reviewed and voted on each year for approval. The governing board is responsible for LPA's compliance with all legal requirements, and the governing board holds the CEO accountable for such compliance. This includes, but is not limited to, the implementation of all state and federal laws regarding ensuring access and availability of educational programs to all students, including those students with disabilities. Subject to the respective roles of the state and local educational agencies under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the LPA governing board is responsible for ensuring its administration sures the needs of students with exceptionalities are met. To ensure LPA staff are meeting these needs – and those of all students and subgroups – the governing board regularly reviews student performance data and compliance reports. When data trends and specific reports of noncompliance identify areas of improvement, the governing board provides clear and direct expectations to the CEO for remedy.</p> <p>As noted, the board is responsible for selecting, hiring, supporting, and evaluating the CEO using, at a minimum, the LKES. The CEO is responsible for selecting, hiring, supporting, and evaluating all other members of the staff. The CEO is responsible for monitoring and managing the day-to-day operations and implementation of the school model towards the fulfillment of the school mission. In other words, the governing board establishes the expectations by which the CEO will ensure staff fulfills the mission and vision of LPA. The CEO is responsible for ensuring staff implement the key aspects of the school's program are implemented within the governing board's expectations. Strong fidelity to LPA's Teaching and Learning Framework, the central role and practices of the LPA Accountability and Assessment team,</p>
--	--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



		<p>and its innovative practices identified in its charter contract, are expectations that the LPA governing board requires its CEO to expect from school staff. While the governing board has general oversight of school operations, the LPA governing board does not directly engage in the development of the Teaching and Learning Framework, engage with the Accountability and Assessment Team, or interfere with the staff and community development of school improvement processes. The governing board oversees those functions and the staff's ability to use resources effectively to meet performance standards and increase student achievement.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>What are the current standing committees of the Governing Board, and how often do they meet? What role(s) do(es) the committee(s) play in the school improvement process? Name the Chair(s) of each committee, if applicable.</p>	<p>The Governance Board recognizes the balance that is needed when committees are formed and the guard rails that are in place to ensure that the committees do not become mini boards. Our committees have evolved over the decade based on the needs of the school and the expertise the individual board members bring to the role. LPA is in a transitional phase in its board membership. Over the past cycle, the Governance Board has seen the departure of Dr. Wanda Gilliard, a highly respected educator, and Dr. Ray Hill, a current Supt, provided the Governance Board with the board with clarity around academic specific issues as the board built its capacity. The Governance board is currently seeking new board members and have recently added two board members who bring an educational perspective to those roles. Those new board members will join a current board member in the development of the School Performance Committee. The School Performance Committee will be comprised of school leadership, teachers and community members to monitor student performance using all sources of data (that protects the names of students and teachers) and to formulate the specific questions needed in order to improve academic outcomes for all students.</p> <p>Currently, the Finance Committee has been a standing committee at LPA. The committee meets at least twice a year and more frequently during the budgeting process. Our newest Governance Board Member and Treasurer serves as the Chair of that Committee.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>How do Governing Board members engage with the LPA</p>	<p>Given the central role of the AA& T to the LPA mission, the governing board</p>



	Accountability and Assessment Team? (p. 25)	holds senior school leadership accountable for the faithful implementation of the AA& T. The CAO works with the AA& T to review student performance data on a regular basis. This information is reported to the Governance Board at various meetings board meetings. The Governance Board asks questions to the CAO and may on, occasion, direct questions that would need to be flushed out by the AA& T and reported back to the board at an upcoming board member. The Governance Board recognizes that since the departure of two long term board members who were educators that a void exists in this area. The Governance Board has recruited two new board members who have a background in education that will serve to be valuable as the board continues to move the school forward.
8	Provide a copy of the Governing Board’s “written procedure for resolving conflicts between the charter school and the local board of education.” (p. 340)	LPA is committed to improving the education and well-being of its students and community through a collaborative, and positive relationship with all stakeholders, including the DeKalb County Board of Education. As a result, LPA often avoids conflict through open communication and working to achieve common goals. However, in the event conflicts arise the governing board adopted the stakeholder complaint and grievance policies attached as Exhibits 37.
9	What has been the role of the Governing Board in ensuring that the needs of students with exceptionalities are met?	The Governance Board is committed to the academic success of all students at LPA. The board is updated on any issues, concerns, and/or complaints that arises with any student. The Governance board holds the school leadership accountable for ensuring that all students at LPA are being provided with the interventions and services outlined by federal, state and local laws.
10	Clarify whether the LPA Governing Board includes LPA staff members.	The LPA governing board does not include staff members. Senior school leadership, such as the CAO/CLO or CEO, attend board meetings and trainings in an advisory capacity. LPA’s administrators are ex-officio members and as non-members, they do not vote.
11	When analyzing the needs of student subgroups, how does the Governing Board use current academic research to assess recommendations for teacher support required to address those needs?	The Governance Board attends the National Charter School Conference annually whereby they receive overviews of current issues and trends in the educational realm. While LPA has a well-rounded board comprised of highly accomplished professionals, it is not expected that the members would have the subject area expertise to provide research-based recommendations for teacher support to address the needs of student’s subgroups. However, the administrative team, in their presentations to the board, provides



		<p>background on the issue and/or purchase recommendation using the most relevant data and research available, to assist the board in make sound decisions to address the success of all students. It is then the responsibility of the governing board to exercise its discretion within its fiduciary duties to ensure the school takes the appropriate action to increase student achievement – for all students and subgroups.</p>
--	--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Academic Plan

Item	Committee’s Feedback	Petitioner’s Response
12	<p>A condition of the previous renewal was that LPA would submit and implement a plan to assess the impact of the leadership curriculum on student outcomes. Describe in detail the key findings of this assessment.</p>	<p>Strong academics is the cornerstone of the school—to equip our students for high performance in reading, writing, computing, higher order thinking, creating—as interrelated to leading. It is obvious that a strong character component and effective peer leadership/decision-making are imperatives for students and staff.</p> <p>The overarching educational goals to which our school will be held accountable include leadership concepts, character building and academic proficiency. While the concept and understandings of leading and leadership differ widely, we define leader, taken from the work of Howard Gardner, simply as “one who influences the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of others.” Leadership Preparatory Academy has continued to revise its curriculum to aligned it’s with the current performance standards. The ELA Georgia Standards of Excellence have been aligned to the Leadership Studies curriculum.</p> <p>The leadership concepts are assessed using the performance tasks that are embedded in Leadership Studies. Character building is measured by the school’s discipline data and the academic proficiency is measured through the Georgia Milestones Assessment. An examination of our performance over the past ten years reflects that students who matriculate at LPA outperform the District and the state in most academic areas. While there is no singular curriculum or teaching strategies that any school can point to as the sole reason for its success, the evidence that is reflected in our students’</p>



		<p>performance on GMAS demonstrate that what distinguishes LPA from other schools with the similar demographics is Leadership Studies curriculum.</p> <p>The school examined the researched based “Leader in Me” program since it bore some similarities to LPA’s unique Leadership Studies program. The Leader in Me program does not solely focus on measures alone instead, Leader in Me embodies a holistic approach to education, redefining how schools measure success. A review of the literature on this program didn’t highlight any direct correlation of the implementation of this single program to academic achievement although the researchers attributed several school’s student outcomes to the implementation of the program.</p> <p>An examination of our performance over the past ten years reflects that students who matriculate at LPA outperform the District and the state in most academic areas. We postulate that the only distinguishing factor in our student outcomes is the implementation of the Leadership Studies curriculum</p> <p>As the curriculum has evolved so, has the method in which the curriculum is taught from an integrated approach to a separate course offering. We have found that having a dedicated teacher to implement the curriculum provides and the teachers support the implementation in the Morning Meetings and integrated in the curriculum provide an additional layer of exposure to Leadership Studies. With the advent of Google classroom, we are now able to have portfolios that are directly connected to the student’s email address in order to create electronic portfolios that will build each year that they matriculate at LPA with a final compilation of a Captstone Project at the end of their 8th grade year. Additionally, LPA is developing the Leadership Preparatory Academy Skills Inventory which will serve as a progression checklist based on the objectives within. This tool will be essential as we continue to demonstrate the effectiveness of the curriculum by providing the students and the teachers with a measurable assessment of the effectiveness of the curriculum in real time. To further illuminate its effectiveness, we will utilize the LPA progression checklist to affirm the direct impact on student achievement.</p>
--	--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



<p>13</p>	<p>What is the evidence that “the LPA Leadership curriculum is an innovative program proven to develop local leaders?” Provide a deidentified student work sample that demonstrates mastery of skills developed through implementation of the Leadership Curriculum. (p. 12)</p>	<p>The key focus of successful leadership studies is the consistent blending of the theories and practices of leading. At LPA, students receive leadership knowledgebase and opportunities to practice these skills in the classroom, the home, and the community. The school’s intent is to help students translate the theoretical understanding of leadership (what does a leader need to know) to the practice of leading (what does a leader do in normal, daily living).</p> <p>In order to determine if our program is “proven to develop local leaders” we would have to contact trace every student that has attended LPA to ascertain what, if any, leadership position that they have obtained. If a student was in 8th grade in 2013 at LPA, they would now have obtained the age of 22 and would be eligible to hold public office and/or have a position in a company whereby they serve in a leadership capacity. However, the lack of statewide longitudinal data hinders our ability to identify postsecondary student outcomes.</p> <p>A deidentified student work sample is attached as Exhibit 34.</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>In the absence of GMAS results, what metrics were used to measure the impact of implementation of Project Lead the Way on students’ performance in science? (p. 20)</p>	<p>As a result of the pandemic, PLTW training did not occur. Teachers will be participating in training this school term in order to fulfill the grant requirements.</p>
<p>15</p>	<p>Page 23 of the petition states that the state participation rate on the 2020 GMAS was 61-79% while LPA’s participation rate was 8-22%. What was determined to be the root cause of this difference? (p. 23)</p>	<p>LPA’s GMAS participation rate in 2021 is indicative of the difficulty many charter schools faced in ensuring all students were able to attend school safely in-person for GMAS testing during the COVID-19 pandemic. The LPA community was severely impacted by continually-high prevalence rates in DeKalb County.</p> <p>The Georgia Department of Education provided guidance to school districts and charter schools, in line with federal guidance, that virtual students should not be required to come into the building solely for the purpose of taking Georgia Milestones, if they were uncomfortable doing so due to the pandemic. Although, parents were encouraged to allow their scholars to participate in testing many did not want their students participating in a high stakes test.</p>



<p>16</p>	<p>The petition states that there is a “strong collaborative culture between the CAO and the Board, who work together to make data-driven decisions.” Other than Georgia Milestones results, what other academic performance data does the Governing Board monitor to drive decision making? P. 36</p>	<p>The Governance Board receives periodic presentations on benchmark data i.e. as MAP and iReady. This data provides the board with the background necessary to guide their decisions in allocating additional funds, if needed, to support student achievement, improve teacher pedagogy and/or solicit other programs/resources for students.</p>
<p>17</p>	<p>On page 25, the petitioner states that “during the first and second charter terms, LPA demonstrated some of [the 11 key components that lead to a successful charter school] but not others.” Please clarify this statement. What components were demonstrated? What components were not demonstrated? (p. 28)</p>	<p>LPA’s track record of performance is indicative of the academic, operational, and financial successes of a high-quality charter school; however, we recognize the need for and importance of continually reviewing performance to drive greater achievement. As described in more detail below, LPA is proud of its achievements, but we will always strive to improve. Moreover, given the needs of student population and greater community, we will build upon that success to emphasize a greater student-focused and safe and healthy school environment.</p>
<p>18</p>	<p>Given that enrollment declined during the current charter term, please clarify the statement on page 28 of the petition that LPA is “at the capacity allowed in the charter contract.” (p. 28)</p>	<p>LPA intentionally reduced its school size and capacity at the start of its current charter term to ensure a clear and sustainable future for LPA. Prior to the decision to restrict growth, the trajectory of LPA’s student population growth would have strained school staff, space, and resources. Instead, the LPA governing board made the purposeful decision to reduce its student capacity and ensure program fidelity and effectiveness while also establishing systems to ensure school operations would continue beyond current leadership. LPA’s school size during this charter term allowed the governing board to ensure school leadership developed succession plans and institutional practices for future growth.</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>How do you ensure that interventions and data driven instructional practices identified during the MTSS process are implemented with fidelity?</p>	<p>The CAO utilizes the school’s MAP data tracker and monthly updates from the MTSS chairperson to ensure that the interventions that are listed are being implemented with fidelity. Additionally, periodic training from DCSD is conducted for the MTSS chairperson and the staff. LPA has a collaborative relationship with the MTSS department whereby we can contact them at any time for support and training to ensure that our scholars academic performance is improving.</p>
<p>20</p>	<p>Provide examples of the “additional academic support and interventions [that] will be needed to ensure that the negative impacts of unfinished learning are fully addressed.” (p. 25)</p>	<p>An instructional framework and focus anchored in learning acceleration will be implemented. Through learning acceleration, students will be exposed to grade level content while receiving targeted instruction on the specific skills</p>



		<p>and knowledge that they need in order to master the grade level content they are exposed to (i.e. grade level modules or units of study). As a result, students will receive just-in-time teaching of key prerequisite skills needed for overall grade level mastery.</p> <p>Moreover, LPA is exploring a variety of methods to increase learning opportunities for students as a means of providing additional academic support. For example, LPA trains teachers to utilize instructional technology effectively to create lesson plans and present standards utilizing resources, such as games, videos, and animation, that are accessible to the student beyond the school day. Additionally, LPA uses structured time before and after school to provide enrichment activities to students that reinforce GSE standards and LPA curriculum.</p>
<p>21</p>	<p>What are the current goals for school climate as measured by student and staff surveys? (p. 30)</p>	<p>These goals may include measures related to reports of student behavior, classroom experiences, or engagement in enrichment opportunities.</p>
<p>22</p>	<p>The Office of Civil Rights data in the petition is from 2017. Describe 2-3 prioritized findings based on your analysis of the most recent OCR data. (p. 52)</p>	<p>LPA firmly understands and appreciates the significance of administering its programs fairly and equitably, and we are steadfast in resolve to prohibit discrimination in all its programs, including the administration of student discipline. For this reason, LPA annually reviews school discipline data for patterns and trends, including comparisons with state and DCSD de-identified student data. Though the most recent data available from the Office of Civil Rights Data Collection is from 2017, de-identified data available from the GOSA report card (a portion of which is noted in Figures 12 and 13) do not indicate any evidence of disproportionality in school discipline. Moreover, LPA implements positive behavioral supports to mitigate the need and impact for student discipline. To promote a safe and healthy environment for students, LPA encourages teachers and staff to utilize restorative justice practices that account for both the individual needs of students in response to their societal circumstances. Our Code of Conduct emphasizes reinforcement of positive behavior and the diffusion of lower-level incidents in a collaborative manner. LPA understands that the administration of student discipline is an opportunity to teach students</p>



		important standards and expectations for community, others, and themselves.
--	--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------

Financial Plan

Item	Committee's Feedback	Petitioner's Response
23	The Governing Board described an agreement to purchase property from New Birth for a future school site. Provide more information on this agreement with the response to the initial memo. How does the earnest money provided to the church in multiple fiscal years factor into this agreement? – Governing Board Interview	The agreement is initially funded through facility grant awards. Periodically is funded based on those grant allowances on an annual basis. The state recognizes the need to support the facility development for charter schools by providing these funds for capital improvements, to acquire land and buildings, and to supplement lease payments.
24	The Board referenced conservative spending multiple times. The school has the resources in reserve that could support educator development or other strategies to move the needle on academic achievement. How is the Governing Board strategically allocating resources (including reserves) to accelerate academic achievement?	As part of the annual budgeting process, each department within the school is asked to determine what their needs are based on student performance. Additionally, parents are invited to participate in the budgeting process by providing suggestions on the best use of school funds to support student learning. These suggestions are gathered and reviewed by the Administrative Team. The Administrative Team is tasked with researching the suggestions to ensure that they are scientifically based and are aligned with the goals of the school. The final recommendations for each department are delivered to the Governance Board's Finance Committee for further review. Modifications to the budget occur twice year as the needs of the student population are evaluated and reassess to ensure we are providing students and teachers with the resources that are needed to ensure continued academic growth. Our ability to be conservative in the utilization of taxpayer dollars has resulted in the school having an adequate reserve to address the financial dynamics created by opportunities such as reimbursable grants. We rely the expertise of financial professionals to help guide the Governance Board through the maze of fiscal options and to select that are most in alignment with the short and long term needs of the school. Utilizing a zero-based budgeting process the Governance Board and the Administrative Team have built a budget that is based on the needs of students as oppose to the less defined and less targeted objectives of others.



		<p>The Governance Board's philosophy of conservative but objective based fiscal policy permeates from the Board through the Administrative Team to the faculty and staff. This cohesive level of expectations and conservative performance allows for the reallocation of funds from other line items as a result of realized savings in other areas.</p> <p>The governing board measures the performance of LPA's model and its investment in its academic results through student performance on state and school assessments. The absence of valid and reliable academic data, particularly over time, hinders LPA's ability to measure the return specific investments in the school's academic program.</p>
25	What is LPA's contingency plan if the school does not meet its enrollment targets?	LPA has a robust student retention and recruitment plan that is ongoing and active throughout the school year. In the event, the school does not meet its enrollment targets then the budget is revised to reflect the population that is being served with the least amount of impact. A part of our fiscal philosophy which originates at the Governance Board and its executed at all levels of the school by the Administrative Team is essential in creating the requisite by in for fiscal conservancy. As a result, LPA has been able to build the reserve necessary to address fiscal challenges that may be on the horizon. and to prepare for the funding necessary to acquire a school facility which is aligned with its vision and mission for the students of DeKalb County.
26	Does the school have a capital fundraising campaign or plan? If so, please describe the goals of this campaign/plan.	LPA does not have a capital fundraising campaign.
27	Provide more information on the bond the school is exploring. What is the anticipated maturity date of this bond?	In our efforts to explore options which maybe most compatible with LPA we reviewed a number of financial options and opportunities, including bond financing; however, the LPA governing board has not reached proposed terms with any of the financing options. As LPA continues its diligence, it will faithfully adhere to its fiduciary duties as we prepare to build a world class facility for our students. LPA understands the requirements necessary to secure a bond which includes coordinated efforts between the school, the district and the DeKalb County commissioners.
	Please be sure Exhibit 18 has been provided to your insurance agent/insurer as much of what we require is missing from the	LPA requested revised COIs from its insurance companies. We received on COI thus far that is included as Exhibit 30.



28	insurance certificate ("COI") dated July 13, 2022. The agent/insurer needs to carefully read pages 7, 8 and 9.	
29	The school's coverages that are shown expire August 1, 2022, please provide an updated COI showing the renewed coverages for August 1, 2022 through August 1, 2023. As an aside, there is no contact shown on the COI which would be helpful.	LPA requested revised COIs from its insurance companies. We received on COI thus far that is included as Exhibit 30.
30	The COI shows no evidence of Workers Compensation coverage for the school employees. Assuming there is a policy, provide evidence of it along with an endorsement thereto that waives subrogation against the District.	LPA requested revised COIs from its insurance companies. We received on COI thus far that is included as Exhibit 30.
31	Please provide evidence of Educators Legal Liability that protects the Board and in addition, DCSD requires coverage for Employment Practices Liability. We require a \$2,000,000 limit. Item 5, bottom page 7.	LPA requested revised COIs from its insurance companies. We received on COI thus far that is included as Exhibit 30.
32	Provided the school owns or leases property, we require evidence of a property insurance policy to cover assets such as buildings, business property, computers, etc. Item 6, top page 8.	LPA requested revised COIs from its insurance companies. We received on COI thus far that is included as Exhibit 30.
33	There is no evidence of Crime insurance coverages. The District requires a policy with a limit of \$1,000,000 that covers employee theft, forgery, computer fraud and other related risks. Item 7, top page 8.	LPA requested revised COIs from its insurance companies. We received on COI thus far that is included as Exhibit 30.
34	Pages 8 and 9 have other important requirements. A COI confers no rights to the District as the certificate holder; accordingly, the language on these pages clarifies that DCSD must secure copies of insurer issued endorsements for certain provisions such as a 45 day notice of cancellation should the charter school's coverage be cancelled or non renewed, additional insured status under the liability policies along with confirmation that the school's policy are "primary and non-contributory".	LPA requested revised COIs from its insurance companies. We received on COI thus far that is included as Exhibit 30.



--	--	--

Organizational Plan

Item	Committee's Feedback	Petitioner's Response
35	<p>Given the relatively small school size, how did the Governing Board determine the need for a CEO? How is the effectiveness of this position measured? Who is the current CEO? Who is the CFO? (p. 13)</p>	<p>LPA's organizational structure is designed to promote LPA's autonomy while ensuring cross-functionality and succession planning. As a locally-approved charter school, LPA operates under the broad oversight of the DSCD and GaDOE but uses flexibility from specific operational practices to respond to the needs of its community. While this flexibility allows LPA to be responsive to its students, it also requires additional resources that would otherwise be provided through a district's central office. Accordingly, the LPA governing board implements a Chief Executive Officer, Chief Academic Officer, and Chief Financial Officer structure to ensure the school administration addresses all academic, financial, and operational needs to exceed legal, contractual, and performance expectations. The CAO serves as the lead for the school's academic and learning support operations for all students. The school does not currently have a CFO on staff as the CEO and CAO jointly administer the school's business operations under board oversight. Mr. Hall meets the legal and contractual requirements for a charter school CFO.</p> <p>The recent organizational chart divided the duties of the CEO and the CAO to ensure that the CAO was solely focused on student academic performance. As the school's population changed, the Governance Board, reassessed all positions in the school and began to delve into the specific tasks assigned to each role. Currently, the CEO position is vacant as the school is examining</p>



		<p>the tasks and functions of each position. The Governance Board recognizes that there is a myriad of administrative tasks that the Administrative Team is responsible for which includes various reports to DCSD and the Department of Education. The Governance Board is focused on ensuring that the CAO's position is primarily focused on student and teacher performance. This is an essential element in the philosophy surround charter school development. The Governance Board recognizes that the size of the student population does not reduce the administrative responsibilities and demands of the school. As the Board is reviewing its succession plan with the current Administrative Team, each position and its functionality is being reevaluated.</p>
36	Describe any waivers of Georgia Law or State Board of Education Rules used to achieve organizational effectiveness.	LPA's use of strategic waivers of Georgia law and rule is described in Exhibit 35.
37	What percentage of LPA teachers are certified? What structured supports are in place specifically for non-certified teachers? (p. 45)	92% of the teachers at LPA are certified. The three teachers who are not certified are currently in the GA Tapp Program, Additionally, all new teachers to LPA are assigned a mentor teacher who they meet with on a regularly basis. The LPA New Teacher Mentoring Program is led by the Academic Coach and meets monthly to review a range wide of topics to support the teacher. The CAO meets monthly with teachers in further development of their teacher pedagogy. The CAO has trained extensively in the area of literacy and brings that expertise to the schoolhouse.
38	What strategies are the school implementing to recruit highly qualified teachers? Provide evidence that the staffing and recruitment plan provides sufficient academic, non-academic, and mission-critical staff to cover all the courses and programs described in the Academic Plan.	LPA utilizes many of the traditional approaches associated with teacher recruitment including posting positions on the DCSD's website, attending regional job fairs, posting on the Georgia Charter School Association's website and advertising in local newspapers. LPA's recruitment efforts are ongoing throughout the school year. Our current teaching staff serves as our greatest ambassadors. LPA does not currently have any open core content teaching vacancies even though there is a national and regional shortage of teachers. Further, we have been able to recruit highly qualified retirees to support the academic programs at LPA.
39	If the counselor is assigned teaching responsibilities during the school day, how does LPA ensure that the services and supports of a school counselor are accessible to students?	LPA is committed to addressing the social and emotional needs of students which is why the Governance Board approved the selection of a Counselor for Lower School and Upper School although our enrollment was less than



		<p>300 students. Traditional school counselors are regulated to administrative tasks and are not actively engaged with students. As a result of the intentional assignment of counselors providing lessons from Leadership Studies, developing students' college/career pathways through Naviance and character education building, they were better able to identify students who are in need of additional support. Our teachers use the MTSS process, Child Find, surveys, observations, parent feedback, etc. to ensure that as much as we can, that the students' academic and emotional needs are being addressed. As an organization we continue to evaluate how best we are utilizing the talent that we have at LPA to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our students. The culture of our school is always leads with the question, - What more can we do to accelerate achievement for our students." Jim Collins reminds us that great organizations make sure that they have the right people in key seats. As we are in the process of reorganizing our school the titles and job descriptions will reflect the needs of the school that may not align with what traditional schools may look like. This includes the traditional role of the Counselor.</p>
<p>40</p>	<p>How is leadership embedded in teaching and learning outside of the elective course offering? What is the evidence that the Leadership Curriculum supports students' academic growth?</p>	<p>As a result of feedback from observations from DCSD, LPA has become more intentional in bringing the Leadership Studies curriculum to life. We now have created a course for our scholars in grades 6,7 and 8th. Scholars in grades K-5, will have the Leadership Studies strands integrated in their ELA lessons as a result of the alignment of the curriculum. Performance tasks will be displayed on the Leadership Galleries on the website and in the school's hallway. Additionally, we are engaging parents in the Leadership Studies curriculum by introducing the concepts during Parent University sessions and in our weekly Pawprints. To ensure that we are building the capacity for teachers, time has been allocated during the six scheduled professional learning days throughout the year to continue building on the understanding of the leadership studies curriculum along with the performance tasks.</p> <p>The evidence of success is reflected in the academic progress of students through GMAS.</p>
<p>41</p>	<p>How does the school support teachers in building capacity to implement the leadership curriculum?</p>	<p>The CAO will lead the implementation of the Leadership Studies curriculum by providing instruction and inviting lecturers to deepen the knowledge of</p>



		<p>certain leadership strands. Further, each summer, teachers will participate in a Leadership Institute to develop their leadership traits. The summer of 22, 8 teachers participated in Project iLEAD. The participants choose three leadership strands that support school effectiveness to implement leadership practices during the upcoming school year. The teachers have already developed those tasks are currently implementing them now.</p>
--	--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------