
Lift For Life Academy

2024-25 Annual Review

Prepared by

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April 2025**

Annual Review Process

SEMO fulfills its oversight responsibilities by conducting an ongoing standards-based annual review process throughout the school year. It begins by examining a significant amount of information about the school, some of which was provided by the school to the liaison, including sponsor-required documents, assessment data, and financial audits that provide evidence of academic and organizational health. The Charter School Liaison carefully reviews this information, including DESE-generated reports, such as the annual MSIP-6 data and the Annual Performance Review (APR).

While such documentation provides essential information on how a school performs, the SEMO Charter Liaison understands that “seeing is believing.” The Liaison has incorporated informal monthly site visits into its charter school annual review process and in-depth, full-day site visits held in the spring. The SEMO Charter Liaison reviews all board meeting agendas, minutes, and document packets and attends all board and committee meetings. SEMO maintains close communication with various DESE offices to monitor school compliance with state and federal guidelines and collaborates with schools to address any issues that may arise.

Upon the release of MSIP-6 and APR data, SEMO finalizes the school’s Annual Review Report, which identifies areas of strength and growth. The report is presented to school leadership and the Board, which is required to review it.

Interviews, Document Reviews, and Site Visits

The site visits, interviews, and document reviews provide a mechanism for SEMO to verify and corroborate information collected throughout the year by assessing the culture and climate of a school and gathering additional evidence on school performance from various perspectives. This year, interviews and classroom observations were conducted virtually and in person. The SEMO Charter Liaison’s onsite and virtual visits include:

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|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ○ School Leader Interviews | ○ Board Member Interviews | ○ Financial Review |
| ○ Teacher Interviews | ○ Support Staff Interviews | ○ Review of Student Support Systems |
| ○ Staff Interviews | ○ Classroom Observations | ○ Review of LEA Operations and HR |
| ○ Parent/Guardian Interviews | ○ Document Submissions | ○ Student Interviews |
| | ○ School Day Observations | |

Findings from site visits are incorporated into the Annual Review Report.

Required Document Submission

To ensure schools meet and maintain all their state, federal, and local compliance and reporting responsibilities, the SEMO Charter Liaison has developed a required Document Submission Checklist in the Charter Handbook. While many documents require annual submissions, others are submitted quarterly (enrollment numbers) or monthly (financial reports, board meeting minutes, agendas, and board packets).

Evaluation Standards Elements of School Evaluation:

- I. Transformative and Innovative Vision
- II. Substantive Student Achievement
- III. Transformational Curriculum/Technology
- IV Empowering Culture of Achievement/Athletics/Activities
- V. Strong School Leaders and Operations
- VI. Transformational Teachers
- VII. Comprehensive Student Support System
- VIII. Responsible Governance
- IX. Sound Financial Operations
- X. Engaged Parents and Community

Summary

Please note that the comments in this report reflect the analysis as of April 2025.

Areas of Strength

Here are the top strengths Lift For Life Academy can leverage to improve and continuously move toward the Academy's vision:

Vision

- Progress toward the Academy's vision is occurring through enhanced data-driven decision-making and continued curriculum implementation.
- Committed employees are "purpose driven."
- The physical campus continues to expand, with the addition of the Finance and HR offices, Elementary Phase 3, and athletic fields.

Academic Achievement

- The Academy experienced a significant increase in its DESE Annual Progress Report (APR) Score, especially in growth.
- Evidence shows that professional development is relevant, job-embedded, collaborative, and focused on student outcomes.
- The Academy has increased its focus on data-driven instruction, personalized learning, and common formative assessments.
- The Fellows Program has been a strength in attracting instructional talent.
- An ACT Prep class was introduced to students this year.

Curriculum/Technology

- Demonstrated progress is being made in the development of curriculum in the core subject areas
- ELA and Mathematics instructional materials have led to increased instructional rigor.
- Dedicated instructional coaching continues to have a positive impact on curriculum implementation.
- The one-to-one Chromebook program in grades 5-12 continues to create greater opportunities for students and teachers.

- Implementing resources like *GoGuardian* has enabled educators to maintain the students' focus on academic instruction.

Culture of Achievement/Athletics/Activities

- The Academy provides numerous opportunities for students to discover their passions and interests.
- There is an emerging “cool to be smart” culture among students.
- Students have a clearer vision of post-secondary choices through expanded opportunities and college visits.
- Strong athletic and activities programs provide opportunities for students to engage in interests outside the school day and experience the success derived from teamwork.

Leadership/Operations

- Leadership remains unified in addressing the learning gap and meeting students' individual needs.
- The leadership is creative.
- The Advancement Team is very good and effective. Ability to raise funds and build a loyal donor base.
- The continuity of executive leadership ensures that Academy expectations are met.
- Growing mid-level leadership capacity among employees
- Academy operations have enhanced performance, developed effective systems, and improved operational efficiencies.
- Efforts to retain good employees, including improved compensation.

Transformational Teachers

- Teachers have embraced new curricular materials and seek expansion to additional content areas.
- Teacher quality and commitment continue to increase.

- Teachers are willing to pursue and embrace off-campus training such as the SIPPS (word decoding) and LETRS (literacy) programs.

Student-Support Systems

- Lift For Life Academy promotes a strong family atmosphere.
- Staff address students' emotional and academic needs daily.
- Social workers, behavior interventionists, and counselors are on staff.
- The students' basic health needs are met.
- Students have increased opportunities to explore post-secondary interests.
- The addition of contracted security services has caused students to feel safer.

Governance

- LFL's board continues to provide strong leadership and support for a growing academy.
- The board comprises accomplished and experienced professionals.
- The Board works well together and has a collaborative relationship.

Finances

- Finances are stable and well-managed.
- Internal budgeting processes and communication continue to improve.
- Finance meets all internal and external deadlines.

Parents/Community

- The Alumni Board remains fully operational and active in the LFL community.
- Parents report good communication with their children's teachers and administrators via phone, text, mail, email, and the "Dojo" app.
- Communication regarding student learning gaps with parents/guardians continues to improve.
- New parent and school outreach initiatives are underway at the elementary school

Areas for Growth

Here are areas of improvement that can help the Academy achieve its vision.

Vision

- Ensure all Lift For Life stakeholders are aware of and committed to the Academy vision.

Academic Achievement

- Enhance academic achievement by consistently prioritizing high-quality classroom instruction and curriculum fidelity.
- Develop individual School Improvement Plans to assist principals and educators in focusing their efforts on improving student outcomes and overall school performance.
- Enhance academic achievement by implementing a formative teacher evaluation program that provides ongoing, constructive feedback throughout the school year and evaluator scoring calibration certification
- Continue to create, display, and publish academic scorecards to increase accountability and transparency.
- Increase the number of high school students taking College and Career Readiness Assessments.
- Implement strategies to improve student attendance.

Curriculum/Technology

- Develop an IT Advisory Committee to gather feedback from faculty and staff on IT-related issues and topics.
- Expand curriculum materials to the high school level and elective courses.
- Provide mentor teachers for elective teachers who can assist with curriculum development.

Culture of Achievement, Athletics, and Activities

- Define and implement consistent student and staff expectations by building.
- Continue to expand recognition of student achievement, emphasizing academic achievement.
- Expand activity offerings and increase student participation.

Leadership/Operations

- Provide professional development specifically for building-level principals and assistant principals.
- Define high-quality teaching and learning by implementing a formative teacher evaluation program.
- Focus leadership on improving staff quality and job execution.
- Ensure that SEMO's "Performance Contract for Lift For Life Academy" is shared annually with the Board of Directors, preferably when Academy APR scores are shared.

Transformational Teachers

- Continue implementing the teacher mentoring program.
- Review and update the existing teacher evaluation system by implementing a formative teacher evaluation program.

Student Support System

- Ensure care teams are fully trained, and the Care-Team process is executed with fidelity.
- Develop a comprehensive student support plan. Preferably, it should be an evidence-based, tiered framework designed to support students' behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and mental health.

Board Governance

- Develop a board leadership succession plan.
- SEMO requires a Board Self-Evaluation.
- Continue to ensure fiscal management of the Academy through budget oversight.
- Create opportunities for cross-pollination during board-directed committee meetings (board members attend other meetings that are not assigned to them).
- Promote more diversity among the board members.

Finance

- Include the finance department in all significant budgetary decisions.
- Assure that the annual Needs Assessment dictates the priorities in the approved budget.

Parents/Community

- Develop and implement a K-12 parent and guardian engagement plan.
- Celebrate and publicly recognize the contributions of parents and guardians.

Ten Elements of School Evaluation

I. Transformative and Innovative Vision

Areas of Strength

- A. Many faculty and staff members bring the Academy's vision to life, establishing "a challenging learning community where students, staff, and families collaborate to ensure that every student excels in academics and character, preparing them for lifelong success."
- B. The Academy's mission, "to create a challenging learning community where all students are empowered to maximize their full potential as students and citizens," is gaining traction.
- C. Parents report, "The school brings out the best of its students."
- D. The Board's strategic plan is integrated into the CSIP and committee dashboards.

Areas for Growth

- A. The vision and mission are so deeply ingrained in the school's life that students, parents/guardians, and staff can effectively explain them.
- B. Define academy outcomes, i.e., personalized learning through competency-based instruction.
- C. Continue to increase awareness of vision and innovative practices.
- D. As the vision emphasizes "character" development, the Academy may want to consider implementing a character education initiative, such as Character.org.

II. Substantive Student Academic Achievement

Areas of Strength

- A. LFLA's 2024 APR score improved by 13 points from the previous school year, with the most significant improvement in growth.

- B. All buildings have increased data-driven instruction.
- C. Building leadership communicates student academic levels to parents/guardians.
- D. LFLA uses multiple assessment forms, including growth measures assessment (NWEA), to inform instructional decision-making.
- E. Academy administrators and teachers analyze assessment data to gauge students' progress toward meeting school performance goals and make instructional adjustments, as needed, to improve student achievement.
- F. Data-driven, targeted intervention is being implemented at all levels.
- G. LFLA complies with the performance contract jointly established with SEMO.
- H. Students have demonstrated increased growth toward the performance contract.
- I. Dedicated content specialists/instructional coaches have made a positive impact on the classroom level.
- J. Instructional coaching in special education and elective courses have significantly impacted classroom management and content knowledge.
- K. Classrooms have increased instructional technology, such as Chromebooks and display panels, to facilitate digital content and enhance student engagement and learning.
- L. Curriculum alignment, along with rigorous instructional materials, has made a significant impact.
- M. Classroom observations and interviews indicate that teachers enjoy teaching and students enjoy learning.
- N. Most staff, parent, and student interviews point to high expectations for students.
- O. The Academy is a caring community where staff have positive and appropriate relationships with students and families.
- P. LFLA HS maintains a high "Target" graduation rate and adheres to its performance contract.

- Q. Personalized career options have improved post-secondary decision-making for students.
- R. SOAR continues to gain traction.

Areas for Growth

- A. While teacher turnover appears to be decreasing, when it occurs, it contributes to learning loss, lost leadership time, and increased discipline referrals. Fully implement the teacher hiring process focusing on increasing the number of “highly qualified” teachers.
- B. Continue to work toward personalized learning/competency-based instruction.
- C. Train all coaches and principals in Cognitive Coaching to develop a comprehensive coaching framework that increases teacher performance.
- D. Continue to ensure ALL teachers benefit from coaching.
- E. Provide high school juniors with the opportunity to take the ACT Prep class.
- F. Expand the use of College and Career Readiness assessments for high school students, including Accuplacer, ASVAB, and ACT WorkKeys.
- G. Consider implementing a comprehensive reading intervention program for students reading two or more years below grade level.

III. Transformational Curriculum/Technology

Areas of Strength

- A. LFLA structures the curriculum scope and sequence in alignment with the Missouri Learning Standards.
- B. Curriculum and instruction are aligned with the academy’s vision and mission.
- C. Implements curriculum and instruction that clearly identifies and builds essential and enduring knowledge.

- D. Core instructional materials for English Language Arts and Mathematics continue to be implemented.
- E. Instructional practices like “Teach Like a Champion” allow students to achieve the academy’s vision and mission.
- F. Content and instructional coaching continue to impact curriculum implementation positively.
- G. The curriculum continues to be modified to meet the academic needs of struggling students.
- H. Students are given opportunities to learn about post-secondary options and receive support in their areas of interest.
- I. SOAR experiences and internships have expanded, providing students with real-world learning experiences.
- J. The academy has a recently board-approved K-12 Assessment Plan and a Professional Development Plan.
- K. Teachers receive regular, building-level professional development, which is well received, and teacher leaders are now offering a variety of sessions.
- L. The technology department supports the implementation of digital content.
- M. Improvements continue to be made in digital security.
- N. Technologically, everything works well.
- O. Hotspots are offered to students who need them.
- P. The migration of the computer systems and applications to CLEVER has been positive.
- Q. Visual and performing arts classes continue to increase in scope and academy-wide visibility.
- R. Drama has made a significant contribution to curriculum offerings and school culture.
- S. Interventionists have been hired in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Areas for Growth

- A. Continue to promote curriculum integration among the faculty.
- B. There exists a need for curriculum development in some elective classes.
- C. Teachers report a continuing need for increased vertical curricular meetings and planning.

- D. Adopt curricula for all teachers and provide them with supporting instructional materials, including math (Geometry and Algebra 2), English language arts at the secondary level, and curriculum and resources for elective teachers.
- E. Consider involving parents or guardians in the evaluation and selection of the curriculum.
- F. Evaluate the impact of existing academic and social-emotional interventions on students.
- G. Continue participation in the Missouri Student Success Network to expand competency-based instruction and apply for an assessment waiver.
- H. Consider offering classes for high school juniors and seniors that will allow them to earn the *ACT WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate* (NCRC). Designed to measure workplace skills, the three WorkKey assessments that enable students to earn the NCRC certificate are Applied Math, Graphic Literary, and Workplace Documents.
- I. Apply a consistent policy to address student technology damage, loss, and fine collection.
- J. Conduct an annual audit of student Chromebooks using the current digital inventory system.
- K. Continue to expand Power School use through staff training.
- L. Review existing technological processes and evaluate the need to integrate them into student information systems.
- M. Include technology considerations when planning expansion and/or renovations.
- N. The Academy has expanded its digital use and facilities. Consider expanding the tech staff to support this growth.
- O. Fully articulate a K-12 plan for Project-Based Learning.
- P. Continue training new teachers in content and lesson design to increase student engagement and reduce disciplinary issues.
- Q. Ensure all teachers are knowledgeable about content standards.
- R. Offer professional development to address the needs of non-traditional teacher hires.

IV. Empowering Culture of Achievement/Athletics/Activities

Areas of Strength

- A. There is considerable consensus among the members of the school community regarding the Academy's culture:
- a Summary of **student interview responses** regarding the culture of LFLA:
 - i "Lift For Life Academy fosters a safe, respectful, and supportive community where strong teacher-student relationships, engaging academics, student voice, and a family-like atmosphere create a positive and enriching school culture."
 - b Summary of **parent interview responses** regarding the culture of LFLA:
 - i "Lift For Life Academy is a close-knit, community-driven school with strong academics, supportive relationships, and responsive leadership that fosters high student engagement in a vibrant, student-centered environment."
 - c Summary of **teacher interview responses** regarding the culture of LFLA:
 - i "Lift For Life Academy is a caring, mission-driven environment with strong relationships, student engagement, and academic growth."
 - d Summary of **administrators and support staff interview responses** regarding the culture of LFLA:
 - i "LFLA's strengths lie in its dedicated and passionate staff, strong leadership, positive school culture, academic progress, robust elective offerings, and solid financial and technological infrastructure—all of which contribute to a supportive, mission-driven environment where students can thrive."
 - e Summary of **board member interview responses** regarding the culture of LFLA:
 - i "LFLA's strengths include a strong family atmosphere, passionate and visionary leadership, a student-centered and purpose-driven culture, stable finances, and ongoing growth in academics, facilities, and alumni engagement, all supported by a dedicated board and effective development efforts."
- B. Building leaders are focused on improving student achievement.
- C. Most faculty and staff report feeling safe in the school.
- D. Student support teams at all levels have made a positive impact.

- E. Many teachers are focused on improving student achievement through high-quality instruction.
- F. Increased focus on individual student learning gaps has shown positive traction.
- G. Classroom, hallway, and campus-wide observations indicate a high sense of student engagement and empowerment.
- H. Most students are making academic growth.
- I. Security officers are a positive presence in the Academy.
- J. Increased safety measures have improved the staff's sense of well-being.
- K. The Academy partners with local organizations to provide students with healthcare services, including dental and vision clinics. This results in improvements in student achievement and attendance.
- L. All students interviewed can identify a positive adult with whom they can talk within the school.
- N. The Academy has complied with the Missouri Safe Schools Act and the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Act.
- O. There is increased recognition of student academics.
- P. Students report an increase in post-secondary prep activities.

Areas for Growth: Empowering Culture of Achievement

- A. Expand parent or guardian involvement in improving student academic performance.
- B. Assess the influence of extrinsic motivators on students' academic performance. Begin pursuing intrinsic motivation.
- C. Identify “nonnegotiable expectations” by building, i.e., implementing bell-to-bell instruction, maintaining teacher response time to parent communication, and fostering a positive teacher demeanor in the classroom.
- D. Define and implement consistent student and staff expectations, rituals, and routines across all buildings. A PBIS program can promote this.

Athletics/Activities: Areas of Strength

- A. The athletic program continues to increase student participation and school pride.
- B. Athletics continues to expand at all levels.
- C. Most students participate in extracurricular activities.
- D. All students can participate in various activities, including coding, drama, and chess club.

Athletics/Activities: Areas for Growth:

- A. Balance academic-focused activities with athletics.
- B. Ensure that participation in student athletic activities and standards is adhered to, i.e., attendance, completion of homework, etc.
- C. Continue to evaluate and expand activity offerings, such as debate, robotics, science fair, and National History Day.

V. Strong Leadership and Operations

Areas of Strength

- A. Interview responses from students, parents, teachers, support staff, and board members expressed confidence in the school leadership:
 - a “Visionary leadership” regarding the executive director.
 - b “The administration is causing teachers to be certified.”
 - c “Excellent leadership” regarding the executive director and deputy director
 - d “(The deputy director) is a godsend, the backbone of the school.”
 - e “(The deputy director) does an excellent job of communicating with parents and is very transparent and informative...”
 - f “Students love (the elementary principal) and enjoy her passion, energy, and leadership.”
 - g “Good administrative team, always supportive and helpful.”
 - h The leadership owns both successes and failures: “Key people live and die with failure.”
 - i “The executive director is all in.”
- B. Leadership is focused on meeting individual and academic performance targets.
- C. The faculty and staff appreciate the administrative team’s leadership, visibility, and accessibility.

- D. Leadership continues collaborating with instructional staff to implement new instructional materials fully.
- E. Leadership has integrated the strategic plan into the CSIP.
- F. Leadership and staff participate in mid-year evaluations.
- G. Leadership facilitates and participates in professional development.
- H. Most staff are satisfied with working conditions.
- I. Most school leaders have participated in professional development relevant to their current position.
- J. Leaders work with Board Committee Chairs to address Academy needs.
- K. Most staff interviews indicate they value LFL's ability to implement improvements and quickly make changes. "Flexibility: small enough to make immediate changes."
- L. Staff, parents, and students indicate that Leadership is responsive.
- M. Most staff support leadership and the direction of the Academy.
- N. Staff, parent, and student interviews indicate that leadership is willing to listen to concerns and suggestions.
- O. The Academy is compliant with state and federal statutes.
- P. Teacher interviews indicate that school leadership supports their work.
- Q. The Academy continues to enhance the safety of the school community by implementing advanced technology and deploying additional safety and security personnel.
- R. The Academy complies with Health and Safety, Special Education, Title I, Homeless, ELL, and state testing requirements.

Areas of Growth: Leadership

- A. Develop individual leadership professional development plans based on feedback from most recent evaluations.
- B. Consider adopting a formative evaluation program for principals. The Network for Educator Effectiveness is an example of one such program.
- C. Commit to revising the CSIP annually, if needed, to reflect updates and new initiatives.

- D. Implement Individual School Improvement Plans aligned to the CSIP and informed by annual APR results, which the principals monitor.
- E. Involve those who are impacted by leadership decisions in the decision-making process.
- F. Consider developing clear staff promotion pathways within the academy.
- G. Fully implement the HR hiring process to improve candidate quality and reduce staff turnover.
- H. SEMO requires the completion of an Annual School Self-Evaluation Report.

Operations/HR/Facilities/Food Service Areas: Strengths

- A. The academy's physical space continues to expand, as evidenced by the new Finance and HR offices, the elementary school's "Phase 3 Project," and the emerging athletic fields.
- B. Improved salaries, expanded incentives, and benefits have been introduced to recruit and retain high-quality staff.
- C. A Facilities Plan, Emergency Plan, and Technology Plan have all been developed and presented to the Operations Committee.
- D. The Human Resources department continues implementing hiring processes to improve employee quality and retention.
- E. Increased academy-wide communication continues to improve culture.
- F. Transportation has provided quality services despite staffing challenges.
- G. Foodservice continues to provide quality meals for staff and students.
- H. Custodial and maintenance are fully staffed with defined supervisors.
- I. LFL limits access to MOSIS and Core Data to appropriate staff.
- J. The Academy website continues to be refined and updated.
- K. Facilities are generally well maintained.
- L. Signage, paint, and other exterior work have helped to unify the Academy buildings.
- M. Policies and procedures continue to improve in all operational areas.

Areas of Growth: Operations/HR/Facilities/Food Service

- A. Implement a technology skills assessment for all new hires.
- B. Fully implement the team hiring process to reduce turnover and increase staff quality.
- C. Provide annual staff training on hiring and employee performance evaluation.
- D. Ensure that all staff positions have the appropriate training and support relevant to their roles.
- E. Continue to expand storage capacity to enhance inventory management and increase the ability to store equipment.
- F. Ensure that proper quality tools (e.g., snow shovels) and personal protective equipment (e.g., back braces) are provided for classified staff members.
- G. Continue to evaluate transportation needs and efficiencies.
- H. Middle school students report that their restrooms are often understocked with essential items such as soap, feminine hygiene products, paper towels, and toilet paper. They also report that the restrooms need air fresheners, and those spaces could be kept cleaner.

VI. Transformational Teachers

Areas of Strength

- A. Based on classroom observations and interviews with school community members, most teachers strongly believe in LFLA's vision and identity.
- B. There is evidence that most teachers take responsibility for helping their students reach their academic and personal growth goals.
- C. Teachers actively implement purchased curricula or develop curricula strongly aligned with the Missouri Learning Standards.
- D. Continued to cause educators to acquire teacher certification and hire highly qualified teachers.
- E. Instructional coaches have had a significant and positive impact on instruction.
- F. The Academy continues to promote a focus on underachieving students through tutoring, intervention, and additional instructional time.
- G. Faculty attends off-site professional development in addition to Academy offerings, such as LETRS (literacy) and SIPPS (word decoding) training.

- H. Teachers use a variety of instructional methods and assessments in their classrooms.
- I. Student and parent/guardian interviews state that teachers provide help to students beyond the instructional day.
- J. Most teachers go above and beyond standard teaching expectations.
- K. Teachers enjoy classroom autonomy.
- L. Teachers appreciate and respond to feedback from instructional coaches.
- M. There is a regular onboarding process for all staff.

Areas for Growth

- A. Continue to increase the number and quality of certified teachers.
- B. Focus on high-quality classroom instruction, thus reducing the need for fellows and/or remediation.
- C. Increase teacher knowledge and use of interventions.
- D. Continue to ensure new teachers complete LETRS training.
- E. Train all school leaders in an instructional coaching model, i.e., cognitive coaching.
- F. Increase consistency of teacher responsiveness to parents/guardians.
- G. Update the teacher evaluation system to a new, digital formative teacher evaluation system that provides ongoing, constructive feedback throughout the school year and ensures administrative inter-rater reliability.
- H. Ensure all content and elective areas have a written curriculum and instructional materials.
- I. Continue to ensure all teachers receive coaching.

VII. Comprehensive Student Support System

Areas of Strength

- A. The Academy offers counseling, social work, and behavioral intervention services.

- B. The Academy collects and utilizes academic, behavioral, and attendance data to plan targeted programs for students individually, by group, and collectively.
- C. Educators monitor student performance and provide targeted interventions in collaboration with parents to support student success. This may sometimes take the form of an IEP or moving a gifted student to a higher grade level in a specific subject area.
- D. A College and Career counseling team has increased exposure to careers, colleges, and other post-secondary opportunities
- E. Teachers stated that commitment to the whole child is a huge motivator and why they enjoy teaching at LFLA.
- F. LFLA has implemented student CARE teams.
- G. Staff members are expected to form positive relationships and know each student individually. Survey results support that this is occurring.
- H. Grade-level and building-level leadership teams collaborate and support classroom teachers with a “whatever it takes” approach.
- I. Staff report a quick response to behavioral concerns.
- J. SPED teachers routinely develop and implement appropriate accommodations to meet the needs of individual students.
- O. Secondary students with IEPs are connected to post-high school options.
- P. Each school provides social work-led groups, including grief support.
- Q. Parent/guardian/student interviews indicate increased student interest in post-secondary options after exposure to career options and pathways.

Areas for Growth

- A. Examine the effectiveness of current SEL programs to determine their impact.
- B. Ensure the student support staff understand how and when 504 plans should be implemented.
- C. Provide periodic training for the student support staff to ensure that all children who qualify as homeless receive all necessary services and support to meet their specific needs.
- D. Provide time for social workers to meet, align services, etc.

- E. Ensure those evaluating social workers understand their roles and responsibilities.
- F. Ensure care teams are fully trained and that the process is executed with fidelity.
- G. Consider parent/guardian education in SEL, trauma, and mental health issues to better address the needs of students.
- H. Continue expanding staff training in restorative practices, confidentiality, sexual harassment, and appropriate boundaries.
- I. Consider providing SPED teachers with additional support, including more paraprofessionals and one-on-one support for students.
- J. The high school students interviewed stated that there needs to be a greater emphasis on mental health awareness. They recommended that the school provide students with an app to help them report mental health concerns.

VIII. Responsible Governance

Areas of Strength

- A. The Board regularly considers the implications of its decisions about the Academy's vision and mission.
- B. The board attempts to recruit new members and maintain a strong governing board with diverse backgrounds and skill sets, as evidenced by its partnership with BoardBridge,
- C. The Board maintains a balance of skills and professional expertise among its directors necessary to fulfill its obligations. Members have backgrounds in business, finance, K-12 education, architecture, management, and information technology.
- D. The Board has developed a strategic plan.
- E. The Board works well together and has a collaborative relationship.
- F. Board Committees have developed dashboard reporting systems.
- G. Board meetings are regularly scheduled and conducted promptly and appropriately.
- H. The board has developed a policy review and adoption process and publishes all policies on the Diligent platform. This year, the board has approved the Assessment Plan, the Professional Development Plan, and other related plans.
- I. Board-directed committees regularly review and assess relevant school goals.

- J. The Board works to ensure compliance with the Sunshine Law.
- K. LFLA Board is a working board that continues to be appropriately involved in oversight.
- L. The Board monitors student achievement, financial records, and operations.
- M. The Board monitors the Executive Director's performance every six months.
- N. Board policies are up to date.
- O. The Board has all proper insurance policies in place.
- P. The governing board monitors the progress of the academy and schools at each board meeting.
- Q. The Board fulfills its responsibilities to SEMO as defined by contract.
- R. Board members have strong community ties and continue to support the Academy through these relationships.

Areas of Growth

- A. Develop a board leadership succession plan.
- B. Board members periodically attend other board-directed committee meetings besides their assigned ones. This can promote a better understanding of the inner workings of the school system and community.
- C. Continue to work on increasing board diversity.
- D. Committees should consider the number of members and identify and recruit new members.
- E. Consider appointing parent or guardian members to board committees where appropriate.

IX. Sound Financial Operations

Areas of Strength

- A. The Academy fulfills its fiduciary responsibilities for public funds by ensuring the school operates fiscally responsibly.
- B. The Academy has established a 10% minimum fund balance reserve goal and keeps accessible and accurate fiscal records.

- C. The Academy presents a proposed budget to the Board for adoption by June 30 each year for the upcoming school year.
- D. The Annual Secretary of the Board Report (ASBR) and other required school reporting are conducted promptly and appropriately.
- E. The Finance department ensures that financial resources are aligned with the school's purpose: student achievement and learning.
- F. The Academy determines employee compensation levels appropriate for the positions and responsibilities and consistent with industry norms, as evidenced by the recent recommendation for employee salary increases.
- G. Internal budget communication and processes continue to improve.
- H. The budgeting process, training, and staff participation continue to grow and develop.
- I. The Finance department adheres to all fiscal policies and procedures.
- J. The Academy continues to have clean audits.
- K. The Board Finance Committee meets quarterly and actively oversees fiscal oversight.
- L. The LFLA Foundation continues to provide strong support for capital projects and other Academy needs.
- M. The Finance department is responsive to the Academy's needs.

Areas for Growth

- A. Include the finance department in all significant budgetary decisions.
- B. Assure that the annual Needs Assessment dictates the priorities in the approved budget.
- C. Continue to train all key staff in accessing, assessing, and managing their budgets.
- D. Improve budget transparency with the board and leadership.
- E. Reduce unbudgeted projects and other expenses.
- F. Increase evidence of documented quotes.
- G. Continue developing the board's debt policy and a plan for debt reduction.
- H. Continue to develop and fully implement consistent cash management procedures for athletics and other student activities.

X. Engaged Parents and Community

Areas of Strength

- A. The Academy engages parents and community stakeholders in its vision and mission, as evidenced by its website, social media, newsletters, and periodic publications.
- B. The Academy conducts its meetings regularly and in an open, organized, and effective manner.
- C. The Academy operates according to the Missouri Sunshine Law requirements, ensuring that board meeting agendas and meeting minutes are posted promptly for broad review and that all state non-profit requirements are met.
- D. An Alumni Board is fully operational and active in the LFL community.
- E. There has been an increase in parent/guardian communication regarding student learning gaps.
- F. Parents/Guardians report feeling safe sending students to school.
- G. New parent engagement activities have been added this year at the elementary and middle schools.
- H. Parent's interviews report good teacher communication via phone, text, email, and Dojo.

Areas for Growth

- A. Continue to increase parent/guardian knowledge and engagement with PowerSchool.
- B. Conduct building-level parent/guardian focus groups to determine how parents wish to increase engagement.
- C. Each school should continue sending a weekly newsletter to all/parents and guardians.
- D. Develop Academy and building-level parent/Guardian engagement plans.