
Lift For Life Academy

2025-26 Annual Review

Prepared by

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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 the school provided 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, as well as 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 a school's culture and climate 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:

SEMO Charter Onsite Liasons

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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

- 1. Transformative and Innovative Vision**
- 2. Substantive Student Achievement**
- 3. Transformational Curriculum**
- 4. Empowering Culture of Achievement**
- 5. Strong School Leaders and Operations**
- 6. Transformational Teachers**
- 7. Comprehensive Student Support System**
- 8. Responsible Governance**
- 9. Sound Financial Operations**
- 10. Engaged Parents and Community**

Summary

Please note that the comments in this report reflect the analysis as of April 2026.

Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO), as the charter school sponsor, finds that Lift For Life Academy demonstrates satisfactory performance and remains in good standing under the terms of its charter contract. The Academy exhibits notable strengths in fostering a safe, supportive, and student-centered environment; delivering personalized academic and social-emotional supports; and maintaining a strong commitment to its mission. These strengths are reinforced by dedicated staff, meaningful relationships, and systems designed to meet individual student needs.

Academic outcomes generally align with Missouri's Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) Annual Performance Report (APR) indicators—including academic achievement, growth, attendance, and success-ready student measures; however, performance in key areas (particularly literacy achievement, overall proficiency, attendance, and success-ready outcomes) remains inconsistent and warrants continued focus. Opportunities also exist to strengthen family communication and engagement, ensure greater instructional consistency across grade levels, and further align systems to drive measurable academic gains. Sustained attention to these priorities will be essential to translate the Academy's strong culture and supports into consistent, improved student outcomes.

Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO) recognizes and commends the commitment of Lift For Life Academy's Board of Directors, leadership team, and staff to the Academy's mission and to serving its students and families. Since Lift For Life Academy (LFLA) opened in 2000 as the first charter school in the City of St. Louis, SEMO is honored to serve as its sponsor. The Academy has established a strong tradition of expanding opportunities for its students. In its role as sponsor, SEMO remains committed to providing rigorous oversight and monitoring to ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state requirements, adherence to the terms of the charter contract, and continued progress toward established performance expectations.



Areas of Strength

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

1. Transformative and Innovative Vision: Areas of Strengths

- LFLA's vision is not confined to internal stakeholders—faculty, staff, families, community members, and alumni are actively embracing and advancing it, creating a powerful, collective commitment to student success.
- The Academy's mission is clearly understood and gaining traction across stakeholder groups, reinforcing a unified direction and strengthening purpose-driven decision-making.
- A consistently described culture of trust, safety, and family orientation among parents, staff, and students provides the relational capital necessary to implement and sustain innovative practices.
- The integration of the Board's strategic plan into the CSIP and committee dashboards demonstrates a systems-level approach, ensuring that vision, strategy, and execution are aligned and mutually reinforcing.
- The consistent implementation of the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE) across all classrooms reflects a commitment to using data-informed systems to strengthen teaching and learning—key to scaling innovation.

2. Substantive Student Achievement: Areas of Strength

- LFLA's stable APR performance and notable gains in science reflect measurable academic progress and a foundation for continued improvement.
- LFLA is outperforming many regional peers in reading growth and proficiency gains—particularly among Black students—highlighting effective literacy strategies and equity-focused impact.
- The increasing use of assessment data, supported by dedicated instructional leadership, is strengthening targeted instruction and accelerating student learning.

- Improved curriculum alignment, instructional coaching, and accountability systems are creating more consistent, rigorous learning experiences across classrooms.
- Strong graduation rates, improved attendance, high expectations, and expanded college/career pathways (e.g., SOAR, phlebotomy) are supporting holistic student achievement and postsecondary readiness.

3. Transformational Curriculum: Areas of Strength

- LFLA now has a comprehensive curriculum across all content areas, aligned to Missouri Learning Standards, providing a strong and consistent instructional foundation
- Curriculum and instructional practices are intentionally aligned with the Academy's vision and mission, ensuring coherence and purpose in what students are taught.
- The implementation of core ELA and Math materials, supported by ongoing instructional coaching, is improving curriculum delivery and classroom effectiveness.
- The curriculum is being actively adjusted to support struggling learners, reinforced by the addition of interventionists in key content areas.
- SOAR experiences, internships, arts programming, and diverse course offerings are enhancing curriculum relevance and preparing students for postsecondary success.

4. Empowering Culture of Achievement: Areas of Strength

- There is clear alignment among students, parents, staff, leadership, and the Board that LFLA fosters a safe, supportive, and family-oriented environment focused on student success.
- Students consistently identify trusted adults, strong teacher-student relationships, and comprehensive support services as central to their success and sense of belonging.
- A culture of achievement is reinforced through high expectations, academic accountability (e.g., Homework Tracker), and visible student engagement across classrooms and activities.
- There is clear alignment among students, parents, staff, leadership, and the Board that LFLA fosters a safe, supportive, and family-oriented environment focused on student success.

- Students benefit from diverse academic, extracurricular, and career pathways—including highly successful athletics and activities—that build confidence, pride, and motivation.
- Strong systems for safety, discipline, facilities, resources, and external partnerships (e.g., healthcare services) create the conditions necessary for sustained student achievement.

5. Strong School Leaders and Operations: Areas of Strength

Strong School Leaders: Areas of Strength

- LFLA leaders actively engage students, parents, staff, and the Board in advancing the Academy's mission and vision, creating strong alignment and shared ownership.
- Leadership is widely viewed as accessible, supportive, and responsive, contributing to a positive culture and strong organizational trust.
- The implementation of NEE, program evaluation tools, and collaborative instructional practices reflects a commitment to data-informed decision-making and ongoing improvement.
- School leaders work closely with the Board and its committees, ensuring alignment between leadership actions, governance priorities, and organizational needs.
- Leadership ensures compliance with all state and federal requirements while prioritizing student safety and well-being through enhanced systems and resources.

Operations: Areas of Strength

- LFLA has well-functioning systems in technology, transportation, safety, facilities, and daily operations that provide a reliable and consistent foundation for teaching and learning.
- Improved hiring practices, competitive compensation, professional development, and growing HR systems are enhancing staff quality, retention, and overall organizational capacity.
- Ongoing facility expansion, strategic planning (facilities, safety, technology), and continuous refinement of policies and procedures demonstrate a forward-thinking, improvement-oriented operational approach.

6. Transformational Teachers: Areas of Strength

- Teachers strongly believe in LFLA's vision and take ownership of student academic and personal growth, reflecting a deeply committed and purpose-driven faculty.
- Teachers are solution-oriented, increasingly collaborative, and demonstrating growing buy-in to using student data and shared practices to improve outcomes.
- The implementation of the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE), including real-time feedback, student surveys, and targeted indicators, is strengthening reflective practice and instructional quality.
- Ongoing, differentiated professional development—combined with impactful instructional coaching—is building teacher capacity and improving classroom practices.
- Teachers utilize diverse instructional strategies, extend learning beyond the classroom, and actively support struggling students through intervention and additional time.

7. Comprehensive Student Support System: Areas of Strength

- LFLA consistently provides individualized, hands-on support that addresses students' academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs.
- The Academy effectively uses academic, behavioral, and attendance data—combined with CARE teams and collaborative leadership structures—to design targeted interventions for all students.
- A strong expectation that staff know students personally, coupled with quick responses to behavioral and social needs, ensures students feel supported, safe, and connected.
- Robust services—including counseling, social work, SPED supports, behavioral interventions, and homeless services—address a wide range of student needs.
- A growing college and career counseling program, along with IEP-aligned transition planning, is expanding student awareness and preparation for life beyond high school.

8. Responsible Board Governance: Areas of Strength

- The adoption of succession planning and the development of an Annual Board Agenda ensure leadership continuity, strategic alignment, and disciplined oversight.
- A well-rounded Board with diverse professional expertise and strong community ties enhances decision-making and expands support for the Academy.
- The Board regularly reviews student achievement, financials, and operations—supported by dashboards and committee work—ensuring data-driven oversight.

- Board members work well together, maintain a collaborative approach, and function as an active, engaged governing body committed to the Academy's success.
- Adherence to Sunshine Law requirements, contractual obligations, and proper insurance coverage reflects strong governance, integrity, and accountability.

9. Sound Financial Operations: Areas of Strength

- LFLA demonstrates overall financial soundness, responsible fiscal management, and long-term stability supported by strong enrollment and donor backing.
- The Academy consistently meets all required financial performance measures, maintains clean audits, and adheres to state regulations and reporting requirements.
- A disciplined approach to maintaining a healthy fund balance and presenting timely, Board-approved budgets reflects strong financial planning and sustainability.
- Active Board and Finance Committee oversight, along with adherence to adopted fiscal policies, ensures transparency and accountability in financial operations.
- A highly competent finance team, improving internal processes, and intentional alignment of financial resources to student achievement priorities strengthen organizational effectiveness.

10. Engaged Parents and Community: Areas of Strength

- LFLA fosters a welcoming, family-oriented environment grounded in trust, diversity, and a shared commitment to student success.
- Parents demonstrate strong satisfaction with the Academy, often recommending the school and remaining deeply connected to the LFLA community.
- The Academy maintains clear and improving communication with families through multiple platforms, including academic updates, ensuring parents remain informed and engaged.
- Open Board practices, compliance with transparency laws, and inclusive committee structures promote meaningful community participation and trust.
- Through events, outreach efforts, alumni involvement, and diverse communication channels, LFLA actively engages and celebrates its broader community

Areas for Growth

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

1. Transformative and Innovative Vision: Areas for Growth

- The Academy should streamline and prioritize key initiatives to ensure sustained implementation, depth of impact, and alignment with its vision.
- LFLA should more explicitly define desired student outcomes—such as competency-based learning, IRC attainment, and technical skill development—and align systems to measure and support them.
- Implementing a research-based principal evaluation model aligned with NEE will strengthen leadership effectiveness and coherence across instructional systems.
- The Academy should ensure that core elements of its vision—such as personalized learning and competency-based instruction—are consistently embedded in classroom practice.
- To fully realize its vision, LFLA should adopt and implement a structured, research-based character education framework.

2. Substantive Student Achievement: Areas for Growth

- LFLA needs to significantly improve CCR performance by expanding ACT participation, implementing structured test preparation, and increasing access to assessments (ACT, Accuplacer, ASVAB, WorkKeys).
- The Academy should increase student participation in dual credit/enrollment and systematically expand Industry-Recognized Credentials (IRCs), and particularly consider high-impact pathways such as trades, IT, and culinary.
- A coordinated, school-wide attendance strategy—including real-time monitoring, rapid response, and incentives—should be established to meet APR and contract expectations.

- LFLA should adopt and implement a unified, evidence-based Tier 1 reading program, strengthen Tier 2/3 interventions, and ensure alignment of ELA curriculum with Missouri Learning Standards.
- The Academy should address variability in curriculum implementation and instructional quality through stronger coaching systems (e.g., Cognitive Coaching), improved hiring practices, and consistent use of research-based programs.

3. Transformational Curriculum: Areas for Growth

- LFLA should prioritize consistent implementation of curriculum across all classrooms, supported by stronger integration among faculty and clear expectations for fidelity.
- The Academy should adopt and provide research-based instructional materials—particularly in Geometry, Algebra II, Biology, and secondary ELA—to ensure rigor and alignment.
- Increased opportunities for vertical collaboration will strengthen coherence across grade levels and ensure a more seamless K–12 instructional experience.
- LFLA should continue advancing competency-based instruction, develop a clear K–12 Project-Based Learning plan, and expand opportunities such as ACT WorkKeys certification to enhance real-world readiness.
- Targeted professional development, especially for new and non-traditional teachers, should focus on content standards, lesson design, and engagement strategies to improve instructional effectiveness.

4. Empowering Culture of Achievement: Areas for Growth

- LFLA should define and implement nonnegotiable expectations, routines, and PBIS-aligned systems to ensure consistency in culture, behavior, and academic focus across all buildings.
- The Academy should address high school (and middle school) concerns by improving instructional consistency, planning, communication, supervision, and staffing to create a more stable and effective learning environment.
- A strategic focus on reducing OSS incidents—particularly at the secondary level—along with addressing issues such as vaping, will help maximize instructional time and improve student outcomes.

- LFLA should expand meaningful parent/guardian involvement in supporting student learning, reinforcing expectations, and partnering in academic improvement efforts.
- The Academy should shift toward cultivating intrinsic motivation while maintaining a healthy balance between academics, athletics, and expanded extracurricular opportunities.

5. Strong School Leaders and Operations: Areas for Growth

Strong School Leaders: Areas for Growth

- Leadership should refine priorities—particularly around literacy and student outcomes—and ensure clear accountability through aligned planning, monitoring, and reporting systems.
- Improving communication and operational consistency, while intentionally involving students, families, and staff in decision-making, will build trust and organizational coherence.
- Adopting a research-based principal evaluation model (e.g., NEE) and developing clear staff growth and promotion pathways will strengthen leadership capacity and effectiveness.
- The Academy should fully implement and monitor aligned CSIP and building-level plans, using APR data and performance contracts to guide continuous improvement.
- Ensuring Board policies are current, compliant, and aligned with best practices will strengthen governance, oversight, and long-term organizational stability.

Operations: Areas for Growth

- LFLA should address staffing gaps, improve hiring practices (including team-based hiring), strengthen onboarding and training, and implement succession planning to ensure a stable, high-quality workforce.
- The Academy should enhance campus upkeep, food quality, transportation reliability, and supervision (especially during transitions and off-campus movement) to create a safe, consistent, and positive student experience.

- Investing in system integration, cybersecurity, academic integrity tools, and staff technology training—while improving inventory management and operational processes—will increase efficiency, accountability, and long-term sustainability.

6. Transformational Teachers: Areas for Growth

- LFLA should continue increasing the number of highly qualified, certified teachers to ensure strong, consistent instruction across all classrooms.
- The Academy should clarify core academic priorities and protect instructional time to ensure a sustained focus on rigorous, effective classroom teaching.
- Consistent classroom observations, aligned to NEE indicators, along with training leaders in instructional (cognitive) coaching, will strengthen teacher performance and growth.
- Stronger mentoring, onboarding, and differentiated professional development, especially through scalable models, will accelerate teacher effectiveness and retention.
- Improving teacher use of interventions and ensuring consistent communication with parents/guardians will strengthen both student outcomes and family engagement.

7. Comprehensive Student Support System: Areas for Growth

- LFLA should increase access to health and mental health support, including school nurses, counselors, and therapists, to better address growing student social-emotional needs.
- The Academy should adopt or refine structured SEL, advisory, and character education programs—paired with restorative practices—to promote positive behavior and student well-being.
- CARE teams, social workers, and support staff should receive consistent training, clear role definition, and dedicated collaboration time to ensure systems are implemented effectively.
- Adding roles such as academic counselors, enhancing SPED supports, and improving systems for attendance, grades, and communication will provide more comprehensive support for students.
- Providing parents with resources and training in SEL, trauma, and mental health will strengthen the home-school partnership and improve student outcomes.

8. Responsible Board Governance: Areas for Growth

- Encouraging board members to participate in multiple committees will broaden understanding, strengthen alignment, and enhance overall governance effectiveness.
- The Board should expand its use of program evaluations—particularly for staff evaluation systems—and engage in deeper analysis of key initiatives and performance data.
- Regular board workshops focused on critical topics (e.g., assessment results, CSIP/SIP alignment, A–F accountability system) will build capacity for informed decision-making.
- Increasing diversity and intentionally recruiting Board-directed committee members with specific expertise, especially in education, literacy, and curriculum, will strengthen governance and decision quality.
- Developing a Board Development Plan and incorporating parent/guardian voices into committees will enhance board effectiveness, accountability, and community connection.

9. Sound Financial Operations: Areas for Growth

- LFLA should ensure that the Annual Needs Assessment directly drives budget decisions, with clear alignment to instructional priorities that improve APR outcomes (attendance, literacy, and Success-Ready Students).
- Improving budget transparency and communication with staff, leadership, and the Board will build trust, reduce uncertainty, and strengthen organizational coherence.
- The Academy should reduce unbudgeted expenses, increase documentation (e.g., quotes), and continue developing debt policies and cash management procedures to ensure strong fiscal discipline.
- Ongoing training for staff and leaders on budget management, along with involving the finance department in key decisions, will improve financial understanding and decision-making.
- More intentional, data-driven discussions should link financial investments to measurable student outcomes, reinforcing a results-oriented approach to resource allocation.

10. Engaged Parents and Community: Areas for Growth

- LFLA should establish clear, consistent communication expectations—particularly at the middle school level—to ensure families receive timely, accurate, and actionable information.

- The Academy should create and implement building-level and Academy-wide parent engagement plans that provide structure, consistency, and sustained opportunities for involvement.
- LFLA should increase parent/guardian engagement in academic progress, including greater use of tools like PowerSchool and clearer communication around student performance and needs.
- Conducting regular parent focus groups and feedback loops will help the Academy better understand family needs and tailor engagement strategies accordingly.
- Strengthening partnerships with external organizations and increasing family participation will expand opportunities and supports for students.

Ten Elements of School Evaluation

1) Transformative and Innovative Vision

Areas of Strength

- A. In addition to many faculty and staff members bringing the Academy's vision to life, numerous St. Louis City/County residents, community organizations, and alumni are now 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," continues to gain traction.
- C. Parents consistently describe LFLA as a safe, family-oriented, and supportive school community that prioritizes strong relationships, student growth, and clear communication. Families value the school's commitment to student success—academically, socially, and emotionally—as well as its intentional focus on equity, diversity, and African American advancement.
- D. Teachers view LFLA as a mission-driven, family-oriented school with strong relationships, supportive leadership, and a commitment to both student and staff success.

- E. Students appreciate a safe, family-oriented school that challenges them academically while providing strong extracurricular and real-world opportunities.
- F. Classroom observations are now completed using the Network for Educator Effectiveness teacher evaluation tool in all buildings and classrooms.
- G. The Board's strategic plan is integrated into the CSIP and committee dashboards.

Areas for Growth: Transformative and Innovative Vision

- A. The Academy continues to operate with some outdated structures (principal evaluation process) and struggles with implementing too many initiatives without sustained focus (numerous literacy initiatives).
- B. Define academy outcomes, i.e., personalized learning through competency-based instruction. For example, the goal of developing “Success-Ready Students” can be pursued by further promoting DESE-approved industry-recognized credentials (IRC), stackable credentials, and technical skill attainment (TSA) assessments that best meet the needs of LFLA students.
- C. Consider implementing a research-based principal evaluation model. The NEE model is aligned with the previously adopted NEE teacher evaluation model.
- D. As the vision emphasizes “character” development, the Academy may want to consider implementing a character education initiative, such as Character.org.

2) Substantive Student Academic Achievement

Areas of Strength

- A. LFLA's 2025 “recalculated” APR score remained on par with the gains made in 2024 (78), with a 76.5. Improvements were noted in science. For example, the Academic Achievement **Status** in science increased to 1.5 points out of 2 (75%) in 2025, up from 1 point out of 2 (50%) in 2024. Likewise, Academic Achievement Growth improved, with science increasing to 3 points out of 4 (75%) in 2025, up from 2 points out of 4 (50%) in 2024.

- B. In relation to Missouri MAP third-grade reading proficiency rates, in 2025, LFLA students had the greatest average three-year proficiency change among all public and charter school districts in both St Louis County and City for both “All Students” and “Black Students.”
- C. LFLA reading students demonstrated academic progress in relation to students from other St. Louis City and County school districts based on 2025 scores. For example, in the category “All Grades, Black Students, Reading” (sorted by Proficiency Change 2-Yr. Avg.), LFLA placed fourth out of 34 school districts and fourth out of 36 school districts for “All Grades, Direct Certification, Reading.”
- D. Likewise, while LFLA mathematics students demonstrated average academic success in relation to students from other St. Louis City and County school districts, based on 2025 scores, in the category “All Grades, All Students, Mathematics with Growth” (sorted by Growth Status and Proficiency Change 2-Yr. Avg.), LFLA placed 11 out of 36 school districts. However, with respect to “proficiency change,” in the category “All Grades, Black Students, Mathematics,” LFLA students ranked sixth out of 36 school districts and third out of 34 in the category “All Grades, Direct Certification Mathematics.”
- E. All schools have increased data-driven instruction, especially with the addition of the Director of Core/Tech & Instructional Data position. Faculty are better utilizing data from NWEA diagnostic assessments and other evaluations to inform instructional practices. Data-driven, targeted intervention is being implemented.
- F. Building leadership communicates students' academic levels to parents/guardians. Parents report that their students benefit from a solid curriculum and diverse opportunities, including college readiness, trades, athletics, and enrichment experiences.
- G. District Administrators, principals, and professional support staff report that the increased use of data, curriculum alignment, accountability systems, and instructional time is strengthening student achievement
- H. Dedicated content specialists/instructional coaches continue to make a positive impact on the classroom level. Instructional coaching in special education and elective courses has positively impacted classroom management and content knowledge.

- I. Instructional coaching in special education and elective courses has positively impacted classroom management and content knowledge.
- J. Classrooms have increased instructional technology, such as Chromebooks and display panels, to facilitate digital content and enhance student engagement and learning.
- K. Curriculum alignment, along with rigorous instructional materials and better-aligned assessments, continues to impact student achievement positively.
- L. Most staff, parent, and student interviews point to high expectations for students.
- M. LFLA HS maintains a high “Target” graduation rate.
- N. Student attendance days increased to 168 days during the current 2025-26 school year.
- O. SOAR continues to gain traction. Personalized career options continue to improve students' post-secondary decision-making. For example, the new phlebotomy program is creating greater opportunities for interested students.

Areas for Growth: Substantive Student Academic Achievement

- A. For the last four years, LFLA has earned zero (0) out of 10 APR points in the College and Career Readiness (CCR) section within the *Success-Ready Students* performance indicator. CCR focuses on equipping students with the academic knowledge, technical skills, and behavioral traits necessary for success in postsecondary education and the workforce.
 - For the past two years, the SEMO/LFLA Performance Contract has not been met in the College Readiness indicator: “25% or more of graduating seniors will have received advanced college credit before graduation.”
- B. To address the College and Career Readiness (CCR) performance indicator, LFLA should increase ACT student participation and offer a semester course for juniors and seniors to prepare and practice for the ACT. Also, track individual students to ensure that nearly every student takes the ACT, Accuplacer, and/or the ASVAB assessment. LFLA should also investigate offering ACT WorkKeys instruction and assessment to identified students.
- C. During the same four years, LFLA consistently earned five (5) out of 10 APR points in the Advanced Credit section within the same *Success-Ready Students* domain performance

indicator. "Advanced Credit" refers to a metric within the *Success-Ready Students* section that measures student participation and success in rigorous, college-level, or career-advancing coursework.

- D. To address the Advanced Credit performance indicator, LFLA should work to expand *dual enrollment and dual credit* course offerings and encourage each HS student to enroll in at least one of the courses during their HS experience. For explanation, *dual credit* specifically awards both high school and college credit simultaneously. In contrast, *dual enrollment* covers any college course taken by a high schooler, which may or may not count toward high school graduation.
- E. LFLA can also continue working to increase Industry-Recognized Credentials (IRCs), similar to the new phlebotomy program, that verify that a student has demonstrated career-specific skills and competencies aligned to workforce needs.
- F. LFLA has a strong foundation for Industry-Recognized Credentials through its SOAR pathways; however, formalizing and expanding credential attainment—particularly in trades, IT, and culinary—would strengthen alignment with Missouri DESE expectations and improve “Success-Ready Students” outcomes.
- Strongest current alignment:
 - ✓ Health Sciences (PCA)
 - ✓ Work-based learning tied to credentials
 - Highest-impact expansion opportunities:
 - ✓ OSHA-10 + NCCER (Trades)
 - ✓ ServSafe (Culinary)
 - ✓ CompTIA (IT/Cybersecurity)
- G. During the same four years, LFLA has consistently earned zero (0) out of 4 APR points in the attendance section within the *Success-Ready Students* performance indicator under the Continuous Improvement domain.
- For the past two years, the SEMO/LFLA Performance Contract has not been met in the attendance indicator: “LFLA will maintain a district average daily attendance rate at 90% or above.”

- H. To address the APR attendance indicator, each school should plan to create a daily attendance-tracking team composed of an administrator, a counselor/social worker, and possibly others, to ensure parents are contacted within 24 hours of a student's absence. An accountability system, such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), can provide incentives for students with outstanding attendance and those who demonstrate improved attendance. For chronically absent students, every absence would receive a response from a faculty/staff member on the same day to determine the cause and provide appropriate assistance. Also, special attention should be given to students just below key attendance thresholds (85-90%) to ensure they meet their attendance goals.
- I. Per the 2025 APR Supporting Report, the growth of LFLA students in English Language Arts declined from being "on target" in 2024, earning 100% of possible points, to "target," earning 75% of possible points.
- For the past two years, the SEMO/LFLA Performance Contract has not been met in English Language Arts, in the following indicator: "LFLA outperforms the home district's MPI for ALL assessed students."
 - For the past two years, the SEMO/LFLA Performance Contract has not been met in English Language Arts, in the Early Literacy Learning (K-3) indicator: "LFLA will achieve 80% of K-3 students demonstrating one year's worth of growth, as measured by the early-grade-level NWEA benchmark test."
- J. To address literacy instruction at LFLA, a sound, research-based, Tier One (universal) reading program should be adopted and implemented with fidelity at the elementary level, rather than multiple programs. Reading intervention programs, for Tier Two and Tier Three students, such as READ 180 and System 44, can improve students' reading comprehension and fluency in grades 3-12. A reading specialist and/or an instructional coordinator should be assigned to monitor literacy instruction and growth across the academy. Attention needs to be given to ensure that the academy's ELA curriculum aligns with the Missouri Learning Standards for both reading and writing at each grade level.

- K. While progress has already occurred in terms of “DESE data submission clean-up” with the addition of the Director of Core/Tech & Instructional Data position, quarterly internal audits of MOSIS submissions, CCR coding, and attendance coding errors should be implemented.
- L. District administrators, principals, and professional support staff cite inconsistent curriculum implementation and the need for stronger research-based programs as limiting academic progress.
- M. Teachers express concerns about student reading proficiency, its impact on other subjects, and the need for more fully developed curricula.
- N. While teacher turnover is 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.
- O. Continue to work toward personalized learning/competency-based instruction.
- P. Train all coaches and principals in Cognitive Coaching to develop a comprehensive coaching framework that increases teacher performance.
- Q. Continue to ensure ALL teachers benefit from coaching.

3) Transformational Curriculum

Areas of Strength

- A. There is now a curriculum for all teachers, with the mathematics curriculum arguably serving as the Academy’s exemplar.
- B. LFLA structures the curriculum scope and sequence in alignment with the Missouri Learning Standards.
- C. Curriculum and instruction are aligned with the academy’s vision and mission.
- D. Implements curriculum and instruction that clearly identifies and builds essential and enduring knowledge.

- E. Core instructional materials for English Language Arts and Mathematics continue to be implemented.
- 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. The Academy's program of studies provides students with 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. Visual and performing arts classes continue to increase in scope and academy-wide visibility.
- K. Drama has made a significant contribution to curriculum offerings and school culture.
- L. Interventionists have been hired in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Areas for Growth: Transformational Curriculum

- A. Continue to promote curriculum integration among the faculty. All teachers need to implement the curriculum with fidelity consistently.
- B. Research-based resources are needed for Geometry, Algebra 2, and Biology.
- C. Teachers continue to report a need for increased vertical curricular meetings and planning.
- D. Provide English Language Arts teachers at the secondary level with supporting instructional materials.
- 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.
- H. Consider offering classes for high school juniors and seniors that will allow them to earn the *ACT WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate* (NCRC). The three WorkKey

assessments designed to measure workplace skills that enable students to earn the NCRC certificate are Applied Math, Graphic Literacy, and Workplace Documents.

- I. Fully articulate a K-12 plan for Project-Based Learning.
- J. Continue training new teachers in content and lesson design to increase student engagement and reduce disciplinary issues.
- K. Ensure all teachers are knowledgeable about content standards.
- L. Offer professional development to address the needs of non-traditional teacher hires.

4) Empowering Culture of Achievement

Areas of Strength

- A. There is considerable consensus among the members of the school community regarding the Academy's culture:

- ✓ Summary of student interview responses regarding the culture of LFLA:

LFLA students appreciate a safe, caring, and family-oriented school that offers strong academic challenge, supportive relationships, and diverse extracurricular and real-world opportunities within a continually improving environment.

- ✓ Summary of parent interview responses regarding the culture of LFLA:

Parents consistently describe LFLA as a safe, family-oriented, and supportive school community that prioritizes strong relationships, student growth, and clear communication. Families value the school's commitment to student success—academically, socially, and emotionally—as well as its intentional focus on equity, diversity, and African American advancement.

- ✓ Summary of teacher/specialists' interview responses regarding the culture of LFLA:

Teachers view LFLA as a mission-driven, family-oriented school with strong relationships, supportive leadership, and a commitment to both student and staff success.

- ✓ Summary of district administration, principals, and professional support staff interview responses regarding the culture of LFLA:

District leadership views LFLA as a well-managed, mission-driven organization with a strong culture, improving academic systems, and effective operations, supported by stable leadership and growing staff capacity.

- ✓ Summary of board member interview responses regarding the culture of LFLA:

District Board members highlight LFLA as a financially stable, well-governed, and mission-driven organization with strong leadership, improving academics, and a positive, student-centered culture.

- B. The LFLA administrative team is working to ensure that the culture in each classroom is empowering as the students pursue academic achievement, as evidenced by the selection of the following classroom observation “look for” as part of the teacher evaluation process:
 - Indicator 5.3b: The teacher establishes secure teacher-student relationships.
- C. LFLA is creating a culture of achievement within its athletics and activities programs, as evidenced by its four times in the last five years’ State Champion Girls basketball team, State Champion Runner-up Football team, successful chess team, and numerous other successful teams, clubs, and organizations.
- D. Students benefit from diverse academic, extracurricular, and career pathways.
- E. Students benefit from diverse opportunities, strong role models, and a culture of pride and engagement.
- F. Teachers report they have access to needed instructional resources, clean facilities, and strong security systems.
- G. Parents report that the academy ensures a safe, orderly setting with clear expectations, strong discipline, and a focus on preventing bullying.
- H. The faculty and staff are talented, committed, and increasingly stable, supported by improved professional development.
- I. Building leaders are focused on improving student achievement.
- J. Student support teams at all levels have made a positive impact.

- E. Most 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 demonstrating academic growth.
- I. 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.
- J. All students interviewed can identify a positive adult with whom they can talk within the school.
- K. Efforts have been made to balance academic achievement with extracurricular participation with the implementation of the Homework Tracker. Students must prioritize homework completion to have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities.
- L. All students can participate in various activities, including coding, drama, and the chess club.
- M. The Academy complies with the Missouri Safe Schools Act and the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Act.

Areas for Growth: Empowering Culture of Achievement

- A. Parents report that strengthening school culture through consistent expectations and life-skills instruction can further support student growth and readiness.
- B. High school students report a need for greater consistency in instruction, stronger planning and communication, and improved staffing and supervision to enhance the school environment.
- C. Last year, during the 2024-25 school year, only the elementary school met its “Out-of-School Suspension” goals regarding the number of OSS incidents and total days of OSS assigned. Neither middle school nor high school met the established goals for the number of OSS incidents

and the total number of OSS days assigned. Significant instructional time is lost when students are assigned to OSS, negatively affecting their achievement.

- D. Parents interviewed are concerned that the rise in student vaping is a significant concern due to its impact on student health and behavior.
- E. Define and implement consistent student and staff expectations, rituals, and routines across all buildings. A PBIS program can promote this.
- F. Expand parent or guardian involvement in improving student academic performance.
- G. Assess the influence of extrinsic motivators on students' academic performance. Begin pursuing intrinsic motivation.
- H. 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.
- I. Balance academic-focused activities with athletics.
- J. Continue to evaluate and expand activity offerings, such as debate, robotics, science fair, and National History Day.

5) Strong School Leadership and Operations

Areas of Strength: Strong School Leadership

- A. LFLA school leaders include students, parents, faculty/staff, and Board of Directors in the mission and vision of the school:
 - ✓ **Students** appreciate a safe, family-oriented school that challenges them academically while providing strong extracurricular and real-world opportunities.

- ✓ LFLA is highly valued by **parents** as a safe, nurturing, and communicative school that delivers meaningful academic opportunities while fostering strong relationships and student confidence.
 - ✓ **Teachers** highlight LFLA as a supportive, mission-driven school with strong relationships, committed staff, and abundant opportunities for student success.
 - ✓ The **Board of Directors** views LFLA as a well-led, financially strong, and mission-driven school with a positive culture, effective governance, and growing academic and student success systems.
- B. Interviews from the school community highlight LFLA as a stable, well-led, and improving organization with a strong culture, effective systems, and expanding opportunities for both students and staff.
- C. The faculty and staff appreciate the administrative team's leadership, visibility, and accessibility.
- D. School leaders have implemented the Network for Educator Effectiveness for teacher evaluation.
- E. School leaders continue to collaborate with instructional staff to implement new instructional materials fully.
- F. Leadership facilitates and participates in professional development.
- G. Most staff are satisfied with working conditions.
- H. School leaders work with Board-directed Committee Chairs (Academic, Operations, and Finance) to address the needs of LFLA.
- I. Most staff interviews indicate they value LFL's ability to implement improvements and quickly make changes. "Flexibility: small enough to make immediate changes."
- J. Staff, parents, and students indicate that Leadership is responsive.
- K. The Academy is compliant with state and federal statutes.

- L. The Academy implements recruitment and enrollment strategies and practices that are appropriate and consistent with the school's charter.
- M. Teacher interviews indicate that school leadership supports their work.
- N. The Academy continues to enhance the safety of the school community by implementing advanced technology and deploying additional safety and security personnel.
- O. The Academy complies with Health and Safety, Special Education, Title I, Homeless, ELL, and state testing requirements.
- P. School leaders adopted a new program evaluation template this year to more efficiently provide school board members with clear, evidence-based insights into program effectiveness so they can make informed decisions about priorities, resource allocation, and continuous improvement.

Areas of Growth: Strong School Leadership

- A. Board members emphasize the need for stronger literacy outcomes, clearer strategic focus, improved governance and accountability, and greater stakeholder inclusion to advance the academy's success.
- B. Parents identify opportunities for improvement in communication, operational consistency, student experience, and support services to better meet student and family needs.
- C. Teachers identify a need for stronger academic systems, better staff support and alignment, and improved resources and family engagement to enhance student outcomes and school effectiveness.
- D. To be fully aligned with the educator's evaluation process, LFLA school leaders should highly consider adopting the Network for Educator Effectiveness formative evaluation program for principals.

- E. Commit to revising the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) annually to reflect updates and new initiatives. The elements of the CSIP must be shared with the Board of Education during a meeting each academic quarter during the school year.
- F. Continuing the work begun this school year, implement Individual School Improvement Plans aligned to the CSIP and the SEMO Performance Contract and informed by annual APR results, which the principals monitor.
- G. Involve those who are impacted by leadership decisions in the decision-making process.
- H. Ensure that Federal and State required policies are adopted and/or revised by the Board of Education as recommended by the Missouri Charter Public School Association.
- I. Consider developing clear staff promotion pathways within the academy.

Areas of Strengths: Operations: HR/Facilities/Food Service/Transportation/Technology

- A. A summary of comments from District administration, principals, and professional support staff indicates strong systems in technology, transportation, safety, facilities, and daily operations support a stable learning environment.
- B. District administration, principals, and professional support staff interviews indicate improved retention, competitive compensation, professional development options, and a growing HR system, which strengthen staff capacity.
- C. The Operations Committee led significant work this year on the Board of Education's succession plan and, to a lesser degree, on administrative team succession planning.
- D. The academy's physical space continues to expand, as evidenced by this year's ribbon cutting of the Ferring Science & Innovation Wing at the elementary school and the continued work on securing the emerging athletic fields.
- E. The Human Resources department continues implementing hiring processes to improve employee quality and retention.

- F. Improved salaries, expanded incentives, and benefits have been introduced to recruit and retain high-quality staff.
- G. The Facilities Plan, Emergency Plan, and Technology Plan have all been presented to the Operations Committee for annual revision.
- H. Increased academy-wide communication continues to improve culture.
- I. Transportation has provided quality services despite staffing challenges.
- J. Foodservice continues to provide nutritious meals for staff and students.
- K. Custodial and maintenance are fully staffed with defined supervisors.
- L. Facilities are generally well-maintained.
- M. The Academy website continues to be refined and updated.
- N. Policies and procedures continue to improve in all operational areas.
- O. The Technology Department is effective at LFLA as evidenced by:
 - ✓ supports the implementation of digital content
 - ✓ the effectiveness of day-to-day operations is “pretty high.” Most days, faculty, staff, and students can come to school, and IT works
 - ✓ the installation of additional access points improved the administration of State testing and NWEA diagnostic assessments.
 - ✓ LFLA’s continued partnership with FantasTechs (technology service) continues to be a strength
 - ✓ Improvements continue to be made in digital security.

Areas for Growth: Operations: HR/Facilities/Food Service/Transportation/Technology

- A. A summary of the Board of Directors’ comments indicates that continued improvements are needed with respect to:
 - ✓ to the appearance of the campus and facility upkeep

- ✓ addressing gaps in staffing (e.g., clerical support, counseling, nursing), and the need for more strategic staffing and succession planning affects effectiveness.
 - ✓ facilities upkeep, safety logistics, food service, and student responsibility impact the daily school environment.
- B. A summary of District administrators, principals, and professional support staff's comments also indicates that opportunities exist to invest in tools for academic integrity, system integration, and cybersecurity training, which would improve efficiency and accountability.
- C. A summary of parental comments indicates perceived weaknesses regarding:
- ✓ transportation inconsistencies and event logistics (e.g., building access and entry points) create frustration for families
 - ✓ the quality and appeal of school meals are inconsistent, leading some students to skip meals.
 - ✓ student safety, particularly when students leave campus during the school day.
- D. Students see opportunities to improve food quality, cleanliness, and facility conditions to enhance their overall school experience.
- E. Teachers and specialists see opportunities to improve:
- ✓ Teacher turnover, feelings of isolation, and limited staffing capacity affect instructional quality and collaboration
 - ✓ Limitations in space, need for improved facilities (e.g., playground), and opportunities to strengthen parent engagement impact the school environment
 - ✓ Transitions between buildings present safety risks and require consistent supervision to ensure student well-being
 - ✓ Strengthening hiring practices would improve school-wide consistency
 - ✓ New teachers need stronger onboarding support
- F. Provide a technology skills assessment for all new hires during onboarding to identify gaps that can be addressed early.

- G. Fully implement the “team” hiring process in which district administration, professional support staff, and principals are involved to reduce turnover and increase staff quality.
- H. Provide annual staff training on employee performance evaluation for both classified and certified employees.
- I. Ensure that all staff positions have the appropriate training and support relevant to their roles.
- J. Continue to expand storage capacity to enhance inventory management and increase the ability to store equipment.
- K. Ensure that proper quality tools (e.g., snow shovels) and personal protective equipment (e.g., back braces) are provided for classified staff members.
- L. Include technology considerations when planning expansion and/or renovations.

6) Transformational Teachers

Areas of Strength

- A. Teacher interviews demonstrate that LFLA’s administrative team is responsive, caring, and committed to supporting teachers and maintaining a positive workplace.
- B. Interviews demonstrate that the faculty are committed, solution-oriented, and work collaboratively to support students.
- C. Based on classroom observations and interviews with school community members, most teachers strongly believe in LFLA's vision and identity.
- D. LFLA began its adoption and implemented the teacher evaluation system, Network for Educator Effectiveness, this school year. When observed, teachers receive immediate feedback based upon the principal’s observation and rating of the following indicators:
 - a. Indicator 1.2: The teacher cognitively engages students in the content.

- b. Indicator 5.3b: The teacher establishes secure teacher-student relationships.
 - c. Indicator 7.4: The teacher monitors the effect of instruction on individual and class learning
- E. Professional development was presented to the teachers on how the NEE indicators would be used during classroom instruction and how they would be scored as part of the classroom observation.
 - F. Teachers created and submitted professional development plans to school principals this year as part of the evaluation system, in which they researched various methods of how to integrate one of three indicators into their classroom instruction.
 - G. LFLA students were given surveys so they could share their perceptions of how effective their teachers were in implementing the NEE instructional indicators. Teachers received this feedback so they can modify their instruction accordingly.
 - H. There is evidence that most teachers take responsibility for helping their students reach their academic and personal growth goals.
 - I. Instructional practices like “Teach Like a Champion” empower educators to assist students in achieving the academy’s vision and mission.
 - J. Teachers receive regular, building-level professional development, which is well-received, and teacher leaders are now offering a variety of sessions.
 - K. There is a noticeable developing pattern of teachers responding to student achievement data by “buying in” to the analysis and collaborating with others.
 - L. Teachers have responded positively to the “menu options” offered during professional development. The professional development goal this year was to offer teachers “What you need and what you want.”
 - M. Teachers continue to actively implement purchased curricula or develop curricula aligned with the Missouri Learning Standards.
 - N. LFLA continued to work with educators in assisting them to acquire teacher certification.
 - O. LFLA was able to hire several highly qualified teachers who have multiple certifications.

- P. Instructional coaches have continued to have a significant and positive impact on instruction.
- Q. Based upon interviews, teachers largely appreciate and respond to feedback from instructional coaches.
- R. LFLA continues to promote a focus on underachieving students through tutoring, intervention, and additional instructional time.
- S. Teachers use a variety of instructional methods and assessments in their classrooms.
- T. Student and parent/guardian interviews state that teachers provide help to students beyond the instructional day.

Areas for Growth: Transformational Teachers

- A. Continue to increase the number and quality of certified teachers.
- B. Teachers' interview comments indicate that:
 - ✓ Clarifying and maintaining core academic priorities while protecting instructional time will strengthen student achievement
 - ✓ Strengthening routines, professional development (e.g., "train the trainer"), and student accountability systems would improve school-wide consistency
 - ✓ Providing new teachers need stronger mentoring and coaching, along with more effective, scalable professional development models
- C. Work to ensure that all classroom teachers receive regular classroom observations and feedback in which their lessons are evaluated using the three NEE indicators.
- D. Focus on high-quality classroom instruction, thus reducing the need for fellows and/or remediation.
- E. Increase teacher knowledge and use of interventions.
- F. Train all school leaders in an instructional coaching model, i.e., cognitive coaching.
- G. Increase consistency of teacher responsiveness to parents/guardians.
- H. Continue to ensure all teachers receive coaching.

7) Comprehensive Student Support System

Areas of Strength

- A. Parent interviews demonstrate that LFLA provides personalized, hands-on support that builds student confidence while encouraging academic and personal growth.
- B. LFLA offers counseling, social work, and behavioral intervention services.
- C. LFLA collects and utilizes academic, behavioral, and attendance data to plan targeted programs for students individually, by group, and collectively.
- D. 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.
- E. A College and Career counseling team has increased exposure to careers, colleges, and other post-secondary opportunities. Parent/guardian/student interviews indicate increased student interest in post-secondary options after exposure to career options and pathways.
- F. Teachers stated that commitment to the whole child is a huge motivator and why they enjoy teaching at LFLA.
- G. LFLA has implemented student CARE teams.
- H. Staff members are expected to form positive relationships and know each student individually. Survey results support that this is occurring. A NEE Teacher Evaluation classroom observation indicator specifically addresses this expectation.
- I. Grade-level and building-level leadership teams collaborate and support classroom teachers with a “whatever it takes” approach.
- J. Faculty and staff report a quick response to behavioral concerns. Survey respondents are pleased with the work of the security and administrative teams for their quick response to developing issues.
- K. 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. LFLA develops and implements policies and procedures to ensure that all children who qualify as homeless receive all necessary services and support to meet their specific needs.

Areas for Growth: Comprehensive Student Support System

- A. Students surveyed identified opportunities to improve health services to support student well-being.
- B. Both middle school and high school students perceive concerns related to student aggression and social-emotional issues, with limited access to support, highlighting a need to strengthen student services and provide stronger systems to promote well-being and positive behavior.
- C. Parents surveyed expressed a need for additional student support resources, particularly the presence of a full-time school nurse.
- D. Parents surveyed expressed concern that a potential threat exists regarding the increasing social-emotional needs among students, highlighting the importance of adding dedicated mental health support, such as an elementary-level therapist or counselor.
- E. Teachers surveyed suggested adding roles such as an academic counselor and strengthening systems for attendance, grades, and family communication would better support students.
- F. Teachers who were surveyed also recommended implementing structured SEL programs, advisory, and character education programs would support student growth and self-advocacy.
- G. Examine the effectiveness of current SEL programs to determine their impact.
- H. Ensure the student support staff understand how and when 504 plans should be implemented.
- I. 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.
- J. Provide time for social workers to meet, align services, etc.

- K. Ensure those evaluating social workers understand their roles and responsibilities.
- L. Ensure care teams are fully trained and that the process is executed with fidelity.
- M. Consider parent/guardian education in SEL, trauma, and mental health issues to better address the needs of students.
- N. Continue expanding staff training in restorative practices, confidentiality, sexual harassment, and appropriate boundaries.
- O. Consider providing SPED teachers with additional support, including more paraprofessionals and one-on-one support for students.

8) Responsible Board Governance

Areas of Strength

- A. This school year, the Board created and adopted a succession planning policy and procedure document to ensure leadership continuity, minimize disruption during transitions, and sustain progress toward the organization's strategic goals.
- B. This school year, the Board of Education is crafting an Annual Agenda to ensure strategic focus, timely oversight, and systematic evaluation of programs aligned to its priorities and goals occur monthly.
- C. The Board regularly considers the implications of its decisions with respect to the Academy's vision and mission.
- D. This year, the Board has recruited two new members. It maintains a strong governing body with diverse backgrounds, skills, and professional expertise necessary to fulfill its obligations. Members have backgrounds in business, finance, education, architecture, management, and information technology.
- E. This year, the Board completed a SEMO-required Board Self-Evaluation.
- F. The Board works well together and has a collaborative relationship.

- A. Board Committees have developed dashboard reporting systems.
- B. Board meetings are regularly scheduled and conducted promptly and appropriately.
- C. Board-directed committees regularly review and assess relevant school goals.
- D. The Board works to ensure compliance with the “Sunshine Law.”
- E. LFLA Board is a working board that continues to be appropriately involved in oversight.
- F. The Board monitors student achievement, financial records, and operations.
- G. The Board has all proper insurance policies in place.
- H. The governing board monitors the progress of the academy and schools at each board meeting.
- I. The Board fulfills its responsibilities to SEMO as defined by the contract.
- J. Board members have strong community ties and continue to support the Academy through these relationships.

Areas of Growth: Responsible Board Governance

- A. Board members should continue to attend other board-directed committee meetings besides their assigned ones periodically. This will promote a better understanding of the inner workings of the school system and community.
- B. The Board should request a program evaluation of the evaluation systems used to evaluate certified faculty and professional staff/classified staff.
- C. The Board should employ the use of periodic “Workshops” or “Study Sessions” to go more in-depth on topics like annual state assessment results, Comprehensive School Improvement Plans (CSIP) & aligned School Improvement Plans (SIPs). This new Missouri “A-F” Letter Grading system will begin in the Fall of 2026.
- D. Continue to work on increasing board diversity.

- E. As SEMO required documentation, the Board needs to develop a “Board Development Plan” based upon identified areas of growth as defined by the Board Self-Evaluation.
- F. Committees should consider the appropriate number of members for each committee and identify and recruit new members, if needed. Specifically, the Education Committee needs to seek out members with expertise in education, literacy development, curriculum, assessment, and related areas.
- G. Consider appointing parent or guardian members to board committees where appropriate. The board should also seek out an LFLA parent for an appointment with the school board.

9) Sound Financial Operations

Areas of Strength

- A. LFLA is financially sound.
- B. A summary of comments from District administrators, principals, and professional support staff indicates that LFLA possesses solid financial management, strong enrollment demand, donor support, and a position of long-term stability for continued success.
- C. LFLA fulfills its fiduciary responsibilities for public funds by ensuring the school operates fiscally responsibly.
- D. For the past two years, LFLA has met each of its SEMO Performance Contract Measures:
 - ✓ It complies with annual auditing and ASBR requirements and remedies any audit findings per 160.405.4 (4), RsMO.
 - ✓ It ensures that financial controls are in place for accountable school operations as outlined in State Code of Regulations 5 CSR 20-100.260 (5)
 - ✓ Meets the required minimum 3% fund balance per 160.417.2 (b), Rs.

- E. LFLA has established a 10% minimum fund balance reserve goal and keeps accessible and accurate fiscal records.
- F. LFLA has a successful Foundation that serves as the school's philanthropic arm. Donations to the foundation are used to provide additional resources, programs, and donor engagement. By late February 2026, the foundation had already raised nearly 87% of its Annual Campaign goal.
- G. The Academy presents a proposed budget to the Board for adoption by June 30 each year for the upcoming school year.
- H. The Annual Secretary of the Board Report (ASBR) and other required school reporting are conducted promptly and appropriately.
- I. The Finance department actively advocates for aligning LFLA financial resources with the school's purpose: student achievement and learning.
- J. LFLA determines employee compensation levels appropriate for positions and responsibilities and consistent with industry norms, as evidenced by the research presented by the HR Department's comparisons of local school systems' salaries and wages, and by the recent recommendation to the Board for employee salary increases.
- K. Internal budget communication and processes continue to improve.
- L. The budgeting process, training, and staff participation continue to grow and develop.
- M. The Finance department adheres to all fiscal policies and procedures. All MCPSA-recommended policies for the 2025-26 school year are Board-adopted and current.
- N. The Academy continues to have clean audits.
- O. The Board Finance Committee meets quarterly and actively oversees fiscal oversight.
- P. The LFLA Foundation continues to provide strong support for capital projects and other Academy needs.
- Q. The Finance Department is highly competent and responsive to the Academy's needs.

Areas for Growth: Sound Financial Operations

- A. Include the finance department in all significant budgetary decisions.
- B. Ensure the *Annual Needs Assessment* drives budget priorities, with clear alignment to instructional strategies that improve APR outcomes (attendance, literacy, and “Success-Ready Students” metrics).
- C. A summary of District administrators, principals, and professional support staff’s comments also indicates that a potential threat exists among some certified and classified employees regarding funding uncertainties, budget communication issues, and limited financial understanding, which could create broader organizational risks.
- D. More data-driven conversations should occur regarding how financial decisions affect student achievement.
- E. Provide organizations, respected for their financial expertise, the opportunity to present school finance “best practices” to the Board and/or administrative team.
- F. Continue to train all key faculty/staff in how to access, assess, and manage their budgets.
- G. Improve budget transparency with the board and leadership.
- H. Reduce unbudgeted projects and other expenses.
- I. Increase evidence of documented quotes.
- J. Continue developing the board's debt policy and a plan for debt reduction.
- K. Continue to develop and fully implement consistent cash management procedures for athletics and other student activities.

10) Engaged Parents and Community

Areas of Strength

- A. Parents report LFLA fosters a welcoming, family-oriented environment grounded in strong relationships, diversity, and a commitment to advancing African Americans.

- B. Parents also report that the school maintains consistent, transparent, and improving communication that keeps parents informed, engaged, and connected.
- C. Via interviews, parents express strong satisfaction and loyalty, often recommending LFLA and choosing to remain in the community because of the school.
- D. The Academy engages parents and community stakeholders in its vision and mission, as evidenced by its website, social media, newsletters, publications, sporting events, fine arts performances, and annual Fashion Show at the Ritz Carlton.
- E. The Academy conducts its monthly Board meetings regularly and in an open, organized, and effective manner.
- F. 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.
- G. Board directed subcommittees (Education, Operations, Finance) to meet regularly and invite members of the school community and the larger St. Louis community to serve as members.
- H. An Alumni Board is fully operational and active in the LFL community.
- I. There has been an increase in parent/guardian communication regarding student learning gaps by sharing NWEA diagnostic assessment information three times a year, as well as MAP performance information.
- J. Parents/Guardians report feeling safe sending students to school.
- K. Parent's interviews report good teacher communication via phone, text, email, and Dojo.

Areas for Growth: Engaged Parents and Community

- A. Parents identify opportunities for improvement in communication, operational consistency, student experience, and support services to meet student and family needs better.
- B. Parents also suggest that LFLA can enhance consistency and effectiveness of communication, particularly at the middle school level.

- C. Parents report that communication with families is sometimes unclear, untimely, or insufficient, particularly regarding events, transitions, and disciplinary matters.
- D. Teachers identify a need for stronger family engagement to enhance student outcomes and school effectiveness.
- E. LFLA district administration and principals indicate that increasing parent involvement and leveraging partnerships with external organizations can expand opportunities for students.
- F. Continue to increase parent/guardian knowledge and engagement with PowerSchool.
- G. Conduct building-level parent/guardian focus groups to determine how parents wish to increase engagement.
- H. Develop Academy and building-level parent/Guardian engagement plans. Parents report that some schools do not have parent organizations, and for those that do, meetings are seldom held after the First Quarter of the school year.

“The Academy of Exploration” Performance Contract 2024-2028 LIFT FOR LIFE ACADEMY



(Updated March, 2026)

The Performance Contract for Life For Life Academy is administered by Southeast Missouri State University. The measures included represent the minimum level of performance expected during the charter term. Overall performance on this contract, including targets aligned to statewide measures such as the Annual Performance Report (APR) and the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) along with the sponsor’s comprehensive program evaluation will drive considerations related to charter renewal, intervention, probation and revocation. The implementation of this performance contract coincides with the first year of the charter term (school year 2023-

2024). Objectives and measures associated with this performance contract may be modified in relation to changes in statewide assessment and accountability measures, including those associated with the pending adoption and implementation of Version 6 of the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP 6).

1. Academic Performance and Annual Performance Report (APR) Targets

Current Charter Term, 2024-2028						
Measure	Target	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Annual Performance Report (APR)	LFLA's performance on the APR is at or above the 70% benchmark for accreditation OR outperforms the home district.	Met	Met ¹			
Annual Performance Report (APR)	LFLA's APR performance will be in the top 25% of area school districts/charters that serve demographically similar k-12 student populations (combined Free and Reduced Lunch and racially black/African American Student Groups).	Met	Met ²			

Measure	Target	Subject	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Map Performance Index (MPI)*	LFLA outperforms the home districts MPI for ALL assessed students	Math	Met	Met			
Map Performance Index (MPI)*	LFLA outperforms the home districts MPI for ALL assessed students	Science	Not Met	Met			
Map Performance Index (MPI)*	LFLA outperforms the home districts MPI for ALL assessed students	ELA	Not Met	Not Met			
Map Performance Index (MPI)*	LFLA outperforms the home districts MPI for ALL assessed students	Soc. Studies	Met	Met			
Map Performance Index (MPI)	LFLA outperforms the home districts MPI for all assessed racially black/African American students	Math	Met	Met			
Map Performance Index (MPI)	LFLA outperforms the home districts MPI for all assessed racially black/African American students	Science	Met	Met			

¹ Performance metric identified as "Met" when using the DESE recalculated APR as opposed to the publicly released APR percentage that excluded Science and Social Studies performance data based on participation rate.

² See footnote 1.

Measure	Target	Subject	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Map Performance Index (MPI)	LFLA outperforms the home districts MPI for all assessed racially black/African American students	ELA	Met	Met			
Map Performance Index (MPI)	LFLA outperforms the home districts MPI for all assessed racially black/African American students	Soc. Studies	Met	Met			
Map Performance Index (MPI)*	LFLA outperforms the MPI of all assessed racially black/African American students statewide on the End-of-Course Exams	Algebra 1	Met	Met			
Map Performance Index (MPI)*	LFLA outperforms the MPI of all assessed racially black/African American students statewide on the End-of-Course Exams	Biology	Met	Met			
Map Performance Index (MPI)*	LFLA outperforms the MPI of all assessed racially black/African American students statewide on the End-of-Course Exams	English 2	Not Met	Met			
Map Performance Index (MPI)*	LFLA outperforms the MPI of all assessed racially black/African American students statewide on the End-of-Course Exams	Soc. Studies	Met	Met			

Measure	Target	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Post-Secondary Placement of Graduates	LEA will achieve an “Approaching,” “On-Track,” or “Target” status designation on the graduate follow-up section of the APR	Met	Met			
Northwest Evaluation Association (Grades 2-10)	50% of students will meet the Fall/Spring growth target in math and reading	Met Math	Meth Math			
Northwest Evaluation Association (Grades 2-10)	50% of students will meet the Fall/Spring growth target in math and reading	Met Reading	Meth Reading			
Early Literacy Learning (K-3)	LFLA will achieve 80% of K-3 students demonstrating 1 year’s worth of growth, as measured by the early-grade-level NWEA benchmark tests.	Not Met	Not Met	The NWEA is no longer an approved DESE Reading Assessment and will no longer be administered		
Early Literacy Learning	70% of LFLA K-3 students will achieve 1 year’s worth of growth on the Star Literacy Assessment	STAR Literacy Assessment was adopted in SY 2025-2026				
Graduation Rate	LFLA will achieve a four-week graduation rate at or above 85% annually (equates to “On Track” or “Target” status on APR).	Met	Met			
Attendance Rate	LFLA will maintain a district average of daily attendance rate at 90% or above.	Not Met	Not Met			
College Readiness	25% or more of graduating seniors will have received advanced college credit prior to graduation	Not Met	Not Met			

2. Financial Standards

Current Charter Term					
Performance Measures	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Comply with annual auditing and ASBR requirements, and remedy any audit findings per 160.405.4 (4), RsMO.	Met	Met			
Ensure financial controls are in place for accountable school operation as outlined in the State Code of Regulations 5 CSR 20-100.260(5).	Met	Met			
Meet the required minimum 3% fund balance per 160.417.2 (b), Rs	Met	Met			

3. Governance Standards

Current Charter Term					
Performance Measures	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
All board members will follow statutory requirements as outlined in the State Code Regulations 5 CSR 20-100.260 (3).	Met	Met			
Charter board and committee business is conducted per Missouri Sunshine Laws in sections 610.010-610.030, RsMO	Met	Met			

SWOT Responses: **Students**

Key Takeaways:

Elementary School:

Strengths:

One-Sentence Takeaway:

Students appreciate a **caring school environment with supportive teachers, strong friendships, and enjoyable activities that make school a positive experience.**

Weaknesses:

One-Sentence Takeaway:

Students see opportunities to improve **food quality, cleanliness, facility conditions, and recess time** to enhance their overall school experience.

Opportunities:

One-Sentence Takeaway:

Students identify opportunities to improve **behavior, relationships, fairness, resources, and daily experiences**, creating a more positive and engaging school environment.

Threats:

One-Sentence Takeaway:

Students perceive a need to address **verbal aggression and peer threats** to ensure a safer and more respectful school environment.

Middle School:

Strengths:

One-Sentence Takeaway:

Students appreciate a **supportive, family-oriented school with diverse opportunities and a continually improving** environment.

Weaknesses:

One-Sentence Takeaway:

Students identify concerns about **fairness, scheduling, and food quality**, as well as a desire for **greater flexibility and consistency** in expectations.

Opportunities:

One-Sentence Takeaway:

Students identify opportunities to **broaden activity options and improve health services** to support student interests and better well-being.

Threats:

One-Sentence Takeaway:

Students perceive significant concerns related to **aggression, bullying, and limited access to support**, highlighting a need to **strengthen safety and student services.**

High School:

Strengths:

One-Sentence Takeaway:

Students appreciate a **safe, family-oriented school that challenges them academically while providing strong extracurricular and real-world opportunities.**

Weaknesses:

One-Sentence Takeaway:

Students identify a need for **greater consistency in instruction, stronger planning and communication, and improved staffing and supervision** to enhance the school environment.

Opportunities:

One-Sentence Takeaway:

Students identify opportunities to **expand academic preparation, extracurricular offerings, and global experiences while strengthening relationships with staff.**

Threats:

One-Sentence Takeaway:

Students identify concerns with **discipline practices, school culture, and limited access to support, highlighting the need for stronger systems to promote well-being and positive behavior.**

SWOT Responses: Parents

Overall Summary of Strengths:

Parents consistently describe LFLA as a safe, family-oriented, and supportive school community that prioritizes strong relationships, student growth, and clear communication. Families value the school's commitment to student success—academically, socially, and emotionally—as well as its intentional focus on equity, diversity, and African American advancement.

Six Key Themes:

1. **Strong Sense of Community & Culture:** LFLA fosters a welcoming, family-oriented environment grounded in strong relationships, diversity, and a commitment to advancing African Americans.
2. **Effective Communication with Families:** The school maintains consistent, transparent, and improving communication that keeps parents informed, engaged, and connected.
3. **Student Support & Development:** LFLA provides personalized, hands-on support that builds student confidence while encouraging academic and personal growth.
4. **Safe & Structured Environment:** The school ensures a safe, orderly setting with clear expectations, strong discipline, and a focus on preventing bullying.
5. **Academic & Program Opportunities:** Students benefit from a solid curriculum and diverse opportunities, including college readiness, trades, athletics, and enrichment experiences.
6. **High Parent Satisfaction & Loyalty:** Parents express strong satisfaction and loyalty, often recommending LFLA and choosing to remain in the community because of the school.

One-Sentence Takeaway:

Parents highly value LFLA as a safe, nurturing, and communicative school that delivers meaningful academic opportunities while fostering strong relationships and student confidence.

Overall Summary of Weaknesses:

While parents generally value the school, concerns center on inconsistent communication, operational inefficiencies, and gaps in student services and experiences, particularly during transitions, events, and at certain grade levels.

Six Key Themes:

1. **Inconsistent Communication & Event Coordination:** Communication with families is sometimes unclear, untimely, or insufficient, particularly regarding events, transitions, and disciplinary matters.
2. **Student Transition & Enrollment Challenges:** The enrollment and onboarding process for transfer students lacks clarity and ease, requiring better guidance and resources for families.
3. **Operational & Logistical Issues:** Transportation inconsistencies and event logistics (e.g., building access and entry points) create frustration for families.
4. **Student Experience Concerns:** Concerns about a chaotic middle school environment, perceived teacher favoritism, and limited enrichment opportunities impact the overall student experience.
5. **Food Service Quality:** The quality and appeal of school meals are inconsistent, leading some students to skip meals.
6. **Student Health & Support Services:** There is a need for additional student support resources, particularly the presence of a full-time school nurse.

One-Sentence Takeaway:

Parents identify opportunities for improvement in communication, operational consistency, student experience, and support services to better meet student and family needs.

Overall Summary of Opportunities:

Parents see opportunities for LFLA to strengthen family engagement, expand academic and extracurricular offerings, and enhance student support, thereby further enriching the overall student experience.

Six Key Themes:

1. **Increased Parent Involvement & Leadership:** LFLA has an opportunity to strengthen its parent-teacher organization and overall school community by increasing parent leadership and engagement.
2. **Improved Communication at Secondary Levels:** The school can enhance consistency and effectiveness of communication, particularly at the middle school level.
3. **Expanded Academic & Student Support Services:** There is an opportunity to expand tutoring and better support academic interventions, including recognizing and resourcing staff efforts.
4. **Enhanced Extracurricular & Elective Offerings:** Expanding electives and extracurriculars—such as consumer science, music, and athletics—would enrich student experiences.
5. **Enrichment & College/Career Readiness Opportunities:** Increasing field trips, scholarships, and real-world learning opportunities would better prepare students for future success.
6. **School Culture & Student Development:** Strengthening school culture through consistent expectations and life-skills instruction can further support student growth and readiness.

One-Sentence Takeaway:

Parents identify meaningful opportunities to enhance **engagement, communication, programming, and student support**, further elevating the LFLA experience.

Overall Summary of Threats:

Parents identify concerns related to student safety, health, and increasing social-emotional needs, both within the school and from external environmental factors.

Four Key Themes:

1. **Student Mental Health Needs:** Increasing social-emotional needs among students highlight the importance of adding dedicated mental health support, such as an elementary-level therapist.
2. **Student Safety Concerns:** Parents are concerned about student safety, particularly when students leave campus during the school day.
3. **Community & Environmental Influences:** External factors, such as nearby marijuana dispensaries, present potential negative influences on students.
4. **Student Health & Behavior Risks:** The rise in student vaping is a significant concern due to its impact on student health and behavior.

One-Sentence Takeaway:

Parents express concern about **student safety, mental health support, and external influences** that may negatively impact student well-being.

SWOT Responses: Teachers/Specialists

Overall Summary of Strengths

Teachers view LFLA as a mission-driven, family-oriented school with strong relationships, supportive leadership, and a commitment to both student and staff success.

- **Key Themes:**
 - **Strong School Culture & Relationships:** LFLA fosters a close-knit, family-oriented environment where students are well-known and valued
 - **Supportive Leadership & Work Environment:** Administration is responsive, caring, and committed to supporting teachers and maintaining a positive workplace
 - **Commitment to Student Success:** The school provides strong academic, social-emotional, and career-focused opportunities (e.g., SOAR program)
 - **Dedicated & Collaborative Staff:** Faculty and staff are committed, solution-oriented, and work collaboratively to support students
 - **Resources, Facilities & Safety:** Teachers have access to needed instructional resources, clean facilities, and strong security systems
 - **Student Opportunities & Positive Climate:** Students benefit from diverse opportunities, strong role models, and a culture of pride and engagement
- **One-Sentence Takeaway:**
 - Teachers highlight LFLA as a **supportive, mission-driven school with strong relationships, committed staff, and abundant opportunities for student success.**

Overall Summary of Weaknesses

Teachers identify challenges related to instructional consistency, system alignment, staffing support, and resources that impact student achievement and overall effectiveness.

- **Key Themes:**

- **Academic Achievement & Curriculum Gaps:** Concerns about student reading proficiency, its impact on other subjects, and the need for more fully developed, aligned curricula
- **Teacher Support & Professional Development:** New teachers need stronger onboarding, mentoring, and coaching, along with more effective, scalable professional development models
- **Staffing Stability & Capacity:** Teacher turnover, feelings of isolation, and limited staffing capacity affect instructional quality and collaboration
- **Organizational Alignment & Communication:** Greater consistency, communication, and coordination are needed across campuses, along with a more focused approach to initiatives
- **Student Support & Instructional Time:** Additional student support systems are needed, while also protecting instructional time from frequent disruptions
- **Facilities, Resources & Family Engagement:** Limitations in space, need for improved facilities (e.g., playground), and opportunities to strengthen parent engagement impact the school environment

- **One-Sentence Takeaway:**

- Teachers identify a need for **stronger academic systems, better staff support and alignment, and improved resources and family engagement** to enhance student outcomes and school effectiveness.

Overall Summary of Opportunities

Teachers see opportunities to strengthen academic focus, expand student programming, and enhance systems for support, culture, and staff development to improve overall effectiveness.

- **Key Themes:**

- **Focused Academic Priorities & Instructional Time:** Clarifying and maintaining core academic priorities while protecting instructional time will strengthen student achievement
- **Expanded Student Support & Counseling Systems:** Adding roles such as an academic counselor and strengthening systems for attendance, grades, and family communication would better support students
- **Social-Emotional Learning & Character Development:** Implementing structured SEL, advisory, and character education programs would support student growth and self-advocacy
- **College & Career Readiness Programming:** Expanding college readiness initiatives and academic clubs would better prepare students for postsecondary success
- **Enhanced Enrichment & Academic Programs:** Increasing opportunities in fine arts, STEM (e.g., coding), and extracurriculars would broaden student engagement
- **Staff Development, Hiring & School Systems:** Strengthening hiring practices, routines, professional development (e.g., “train the trainer”), and student accountability systems would improve school-wide consistency

- **One-Sentence Takeaway:**
 - Teachers identify opportunities to **sharpen academic focus, expand student supports and programs, and strengthen staff development and school systems** to enhance student outcomes.

Overall Summary of Threats

Teachers identify threats related to student safety, mental health and behavioral needs, system consistency, and external factors affecting students, all of which can impact learning and school effectiveness.

- **Key Themes:**
 - **Student Safety & Supervision:** Transitions between buildings present safety risks and require consistent supervision to ensure student well-being
 - **Mental Health & Social-Emotional Needs:** Increasing student mental health challenges highlight the need for more social workers and support services
 - **Special Education & Student Support Capacity:** Gaps in special education services and the need for additional self-contained classrooms pose challenges to meeting diverse student needs
 - **Behavioral Challenges & Learning Environment:** Severe student behaviors can disrupt instruction, indicating a need for stronger interventions or alternative placements
 - **Consistency of Academic & School Systems:** Initiatives like the Academic Tracker require consistent implementation across staff to be effective
 - **External & Family-Related Factors:** Issues such as negative parental influence, substance use, and homelessness significantly impact student readiness and success
- **One-Sentence Takeaway:**
 - Teachers identify threats related to **student safety, mental health and behavior, system consistency, and external challenges**, all of which can hinder student learning and overall school effectiveness.

SWOT Responses: **District Admin, Principals, & Professional Support Staff**

Overall Summary of Strengths

District leadership views LFLA as a well-managed, mission-driven organization with a strong culture, improving academic systems, and effective operations, supported by stable leadership and growing staff capacity.

- **Key Themes:**

- **Strong Culture & Positive Work Environment:** LFLA fosters a family-oriented culture where staff feel supported, collaborative, and committed to the school's mission
 - **Effective Leadership & Organizational Alignment:** Clear vision, strong leadership collaboration, and an open-door approach contribute to cohesive and responsive decision-making
 - **Improving Academic Systems & Instructional Focus:** Increased use of data, curriculum alignment, accountability systems, and instructional time are strengthening student achievement
 - **Robust Student Opportunities & Outcomes:** Students benefit from diverse academic, extracurricular, and career pathways, with growing success in attendance, literacy, and leadership
 - **Operational Effectiveness & Infrastructure:** Strong systems in technology, transportation, safety, facilities, and daily operations support a stable learning environment
 - **Staffing Strength, Stability & Development:** Improved retention, competitive compensation, professional development options, and a growing HR system strengthen staff capacity
 - **Financial Strength & Organizational Sustainability:** Solid financial management, strong enrollment demand, donor support, and a long-term stability position for LFLA for continued success
- **One-Sentence Takeaway:**
 - District leadership highlights LFLA as a **stable, well-led, and improving organization with a strong culture, effective systems, and expanding opportunities for both students and staff.**

Overall Summary of Weaknesses

District leadership identifies challenges related to organizational systems, staffing and resources, academic consistency, and communication, which impact overall efficiency and student outcomes.

- **Key Themes:**
 - **Organizational Systems & Strategic Focus:** The school continues to operate with some outdated structures and struggles with implementing too many initiatives without sustained focus
 - **Staffing Structure & Capacity:** Gaps in staffing (e.g., clerical support, counseling) and the need for more strategic staffing and succession planning affect effectiveness
 - **Academic Consistency & Curriculum Implementation:** Inconsistent curriculum implementation and the need for stronger, research-based programs limit academic progress
 - **Student Performance & Accountability:** Concerns about attendance, assessment integrity, and overall student achievement highlight areas for improvement
 - **Communication, Coordination & Systems Thinking:** Inconsistent communication, lack of system-wide alignment, and limited documentation hinder organizational coherence
 - **Facilities, Operations & Student Management:** Challenges with facilities upkeep, safety logistics, food service, and student responsibility impact the daily school environment
- **One-Sentence Takeaway:**
 - District leadership identifies a need for **stronger systems, clearer communication, improved staffing and curriculum consistency, and enhanced operational effectiveness** to support continued growth and success.

Overall Summary of Opportunities

District leadership sees opportunities to strengthen staffing, expand student programs, enhance systems and technology, and deepen partnerships and data-driven practices to improve student outcomes and organizational effectiveness.

- **Key Themes:**

- **Enhanced Staffing & Instructional Capacity:** Adding key roles (e.g., office support, instructional leadership) and reducing class sizes would strengthen teaching and learning
- **Expanded Academic & Student Support Programs:** Opportunities exist to grow reading interventions, college access programs (e.g., Upward Bound), and career pathways like SOAR
- **Family & Community Engagement:** Increasing parent involvement and leveraging partnerships with external organizations can expand opportunities for students
- **Technology & Systems Integration:** Investing in tools for academic integrity, system integration, and cybersecurity training would improve efficiency and accountability
- **Data-Driven Decision Making & Financial Alignment:** Strengthening the connection between financial decisions and student achievement through data use and training would enhance outcomes
- **Program Growth & Facility Expansion:** Expanding athletics, SOAR programming, and leveraging new leadership roles (e.g., ELA coordinator, advancement officer) present growth opportunities

- **One-Sentence Takeaway:**

- District leadership identifies opportunities to **enhance staffing, expand programs, strengthen systems, and leverage partnerships and data to improve student success and organizational performance**

Overall Summary of Threats

District leadership identifies threats related to student safety, academic performance, staffing stability, and external and systemic risks, all of which could impact the school's sustainability and effectiveness.

- **Key Themes:**

- **Student Safety & Security Risks:** Concerns about campus safety, including weapons, vaping, and off-campus privileges, highlighting the need for stronger security measures
- **Mental Health & Student Well-Being:** Increasing student trauma and behavioral needs require additional support systems and resources
- **Academic Performance & Accountability:** Ongoing concerns about reading achievement, attendance, APR scores, and data accuracy pose risks to school performance
- **Staffing Quality & Retention:** Challenges in retaining high-quality staff and addressing underperformance threaten instructional effectiveness
- **Leadership Transition & Organizational Stability:** Upcoming retirements and transitions in senior leadership and board membership may impact continuity and direction
- **Operational, Financial & External Risks:** Cybersecurity threats, funding uncertainties, budget communication issues, and limited financial understanding create broader organizational risks

- **One-Sentence Takeaway:**

- District leadership identifies threats related to **safety, student needs, academic outcomes, staffing, leadership transitions, and external pressures**, all of which require proactive planning to sustain success.

SWOT Responses: **Board Directors**

Overall Summary of Strengths

District Board members highlight LFLA as a financially stable, well-governed, and mission-driven organization with strong leadership, improving academics, and a positive, student-centered culture.

- **Key Themes:**

- **Strong Governance & Board Effectiveness:** A talented, diverse, and collaborative Board provides strong oversight, strategic thinking, and shared commitment to the school's vision
- **Effective Leadership & Vision:** The CEO, Assistant CEO, and leadership team are highly dedicated, student-focused, and aligned around a clear mission
- **Financial Strength & Stewardship:** The academy is financially sound with strong fiscal management and responsible oversight
- **Positive School Culture & Reputation:** LFLA maintains a safe, family-oriented environment with strong community trust and respect
- **High-Quality Staff & Professional Growth:** The faculty and staff are talented, committed, and increasingly stable, supported by improved professional development
- **Improving Academic Systems & Student Opportunities:** Growth in curriculum development, data use, and student opportunities (academic, social-emotional, and career-focused) is strengthening outcomes

- **One-Sentence Takeaway:**

District leadership views LFLA as a **well-led, financially strong, and mission-driven school with a positive culture, effective governance, and growing academic and student success systems.**

Overall Summary of Weaknesses

Board members identify concerns related to academic performance—particularly literacy, governance effectiveness, accountability systems, and organizational focus, which impact long-term sustainability and student outcomes.

- **Key Themes:**

- **Student Achievement & Literacy Performance:** Persistent concerns about low literacy proficiency and the need for consistent, effective instructional approaches across the academy
- **Strategic Focus & Program Coherence:** Too many initiatives and literacy programs create a lack of focus, highlighting the need for clearer priorities and sustained implementation

- **Governance Effectiveness & Board Engagement:** The Board would benefit from deeper discussions, stronger participation, and a greater focus on improving student outcomes—not just reviewing data
 - **Accountability, Transparency & Data Accuracy:** Systems for accountability, decision-making transparency, and accurate data reporting need to be strengthened
 - **Facilities, Culture & Policy Consistency:** Improvements are needed in campus appearance, facility upkeep, and consistent enforcement of school policies (e.g., uniforms)
 - **Stakeholder Voice & Inclusivity:** Greater inclusion of student, parent, and classified staff perspectives, along with improved Board diversity, would strengthen decision-making
- **One-Sentence Takeaway:**
 - Board members emphasize the need for **stronger literacy outcomes, clearer strategic focus, improved governance and accountability, and greater stakeholder inclusion** to advance the academy's success.

Overall Summary of Opportunities

Board members see opportunities to strengthen governance, increase stakeholder engagement, expand student programming, and maintain a stronger focus on academic achievement and systems implementation.

- **Key Themes: Enhanced Board Composition & Governance:** Opportunities exist to strengthen the Board through greater diversity, parent representation, new leadership, and improved training
 - **Stronger Systems & Accountability Practices:** Implementing consistent systems with fidelity, including evaluation processes and cross-committee collaboration, can improve effectiveness
 - **Increased Parent, Alumni & Community Engagement:** Expanding involvement from parents, alums, and the broader community can enrich student opportunities and strengthen support
 - **Expanded Student Programs & Experiences:** Adding programs such as debate, trial teams, and enhanced summer school options can broaden student development
 - **Balanced Academic Focus & Achievement:** Ensuring strong core instruction while expanding programs like SOAR will help address achievement gaps and improve outcomes
 - **Improved Communication & Collaboration:** Greater communication among Board committees, staff, and stakeholders, along with increased feedback from students and families, will strengthen decision-making
- **One-Sentence Takeaway:**
 - Board members identify opportunities to **enhance governance, expand engagement and programming, and strengthen systems and academic focus** to elevate the academy's performance and impact.

Overall Summary of Threats

Board members identify threats related to financial uncertainty, leadership transitions, academic performance pressures, and increasing external competition, all of which could impact the academy's long-term stability and success.

- **Key Themes:**

- **Financial Uncertainty & Sustainability:** Concerns about state and federal funding, rising debt costs, and reliance on external funding sources pose financial risks
 - **Leadership Transition & Continuity:** Upcoming changes in key leadership roles (CEO, senior team, Board) may impact stability and organizational effectiveness
 - **Academic Performance & Accountability Pressures:** The need to improve test scores, graduation rates, and prepare for a more rigorous state accountability system presents ongoing challenges
 - **Staffing & Retention Risks:** Teacher burnout and competition from higher-paying opportunities threaten staff retention and quality
 - **Student Needs & At-Risk Population Challenges:** Addressing the complex needs of at-risk students remains a significant and ongoing concern
 - **External Competition & Market Pressures:** Increasing competition from other charter schools may impact student enrollment and overall positioning
- **One-Sentence Takeaway:**
 - Board members highlight threats related to **financial stability, leadership transitions, academic performance, staffing retention, student needs, and external competition**, all requiring strategic attention to sustain success.