

MPS New Operator/Start-Up Charter Application - November 2019

New Charter Application #000490

LIFE Academy - Leaders Influencing Freedom and Excellence

Submitted To:

Office of Curriculum and Instruction
Montgomery Public Schools
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Submitted By:

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GENERAL

A. School Information

Open Date: August 6, 2021
Proposed Name: LIFE Academy - Leaders Influencing Freedom and Excellence
School Type: Elementary / Middle
Grade Levels: [K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8]
School District: Montgomery
Neighborhood / Community: St. Jude
Organization Type: Non-profit Corporation
Sponsoring Entity: Non-profit Organization
Address: 2048 W Fairview Ave Montgomery, Alabama 36108
Phone:
Fax:
Web Site: www.LIFEAcademyAL.com
Calendar Type: Standard - 180 instructional days
Educational Service Provider: LIFE Inc. (None)

B. Primary Contact Person

Name: Kia M Debnam
Mailing Address: 1802 Azalea Park Lane Montgomery, Alabama 36106
Mobile Phone: 6464628633
Alternate Phone:
Email: Kdebnam@FreedomFellowsInstitute.org
Current Employer: Freedom Fellows Institute

C. Attendance Projections

Grade Level	2021-22 Enrollment		2022-23 Enrollment		2023-24 Enrollment		2024-25 Enrollment		2025-26 Enrollment		At Capacity 2025-26	
	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.
K	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90
1	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90
2			90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90
3					90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90
4							90	90	90	90	90	90
5									90	90	90	90
6	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90
7			90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90
8					90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90
Total	270	270	450	450	630	630	720	720	810	810	810	810

D. Board Members

Name	Title	Contact Information	Current Employer
Chapman, Bettye	Board Treasurer	P: M: 205-999-8489 E: bchapman0624@gmail.com	Bettye Chapman Media, LLC: Independent CEO, Certified Speaker, Coach and Trainer
Chism, Norma	Board Chairperson	P: M: 334-717-0602 E: LifeAL2016@gmail.com	LIFE Inc.
Graham, Audrey	Community Liaison	P: M: 334-833-2079 E: agraham@montgomeryal.gov	Montgomery 4th District Councilwoman, Montgomery County Circuit Clerk
Hill, Beverly	Board Director	P: M: 334-450-3502 E: beverly.hill.2@us.af.mil	Air Force Chaplain Corps College: Director of Academic Curriculum
McDaniel, Kevin	Conflict Resolution	P: M: 334- 221-5561 E: pastormc@aol.com	Fresh Rain Church - Senior Pastor
Taylor, Earl E.	Parent Liaison	P: M: 334-201-4169 E: earltaylor320@yahoo.com	St. Jude Parish, Inc - Development Coordinator
Ward, Evelyn Grace	Board Secretary	P: M: 334-300-5433 E: evelynward50@icloud.com	Retired

E. Start-up Team Members

Name	Title	Contact Information	Current Employer
Debnam, Kia Michele	Founder and Chief Executive Officer	P: M: 646-462-8633 E: Kdebnam@freedomfellowsinstitute.org	Freedom Fellows Institute

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

Name of Proposed School: LIFE Academy (Leaders Influencing Freedom & Excellence)

Primary Contact Person: Kia Debnam - School Founder and Leader

Mailing address: 1802 Azalea Park Lane

City State Zip: Montgomery, AL 36106

Phone: 646-462-8633

Email Address: Kdebnam@freedomfellowsinstitute.org

Primary contact for facilities planning: Joe Neary

Phone Number: 225-447-8301 Email: jneary@4thsectorsolutions.com

Name of team or entity applying: LIFE Inc

Opening Year	New Start or Phase-In/Takeover	*Geographic Community	Opening Grades	Grade Levels at Full Enrollment
2021	New Start	Montgomery, AL (36105, 36107, 36108)	K, 1, and 6	K-8

Model or Focus of Proposed School (e.g., Arts, College Prep, Dual-Language, etc.):

Leader preparation for success in college, trades, and entrepreneurship within a trauma - invested learning environment

Does the school intend to contract with a third party education service provider (ESP) to manage the educational program and operations of the school but not hold the charter directly?

Yes X No _____

If yes, identify the CMO or other partner organization: 4th Sector Solutions

Name of proposed Principal Candidate: Kia Debnam

Current Employment: Freedom Fellows Institute

Daytime phone: 646-462-8633

Email: Kdebnam@freedomfellowsinstitute.org

Attachments

Section 1: Introduction

– No Attachments –

PROCESS & TIMELINES

1. Evaluation Process and Timeline

Attachments

Section 1: Evaluation Process and Timeline

– No Attachments –

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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Section 1: Application Overview

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Executive Summary

LIFE Academy seeks to honor Montgomery's longstanding commitment to educational excellence through the establishment of a high quality, college and career preparatory K-8 Academy. In partnership with Montgomery Public Schools, LIFE Academy is dedicated to serving the students and families of Montgomery residing in the 36105, 36107, and 36108 with a high-rigor, trauma-sensitive, community –based schooling option. LIFE Academy is absolutely committed to raising the bar of student achievement and leading neighborhood schools in the drive towards academic excellence and student wholeness. Our initial aim is to increase the performance of Montgomery Public Schools on state assessments through achieving 5% above the district, however our long-term goal is for LIFE Academy students in 36105, 36107, and 36108 to be among the highest performing in the state of Alabama. LIFE also seeks to help the state of Alabama drive towards its 2030 ESSA goals according to the six performance indicators by leading its district partners in ELA and Math proficiency, ranking in the top 25% of the state in academic growth, strengthening the English proficiency skills of our English Language learners, maintaining an average daily attendance of 95%, and tracking towards college and career readiness.

LIFE Academy is founded and committed to the following four core beliefs which guide students toward our goals of academic excellence and strong student character:

I. All students enter school with a wealth of knowledge rooted in culture, language, and personal experience. That knowledge should be built upon, not diminished, and serve as the foundation for which students learn to navigate the cultures of the world.

II. A strong foundation of self- determination and self-advocacy is essential to student success in education and the professional world. All of our students are capable of reaching high levels of success. School should provide sufficient time for students to identify long term goals, and navigate ways of realizing them.

III. Students' physical and social emotional needs are a pre-requisite to higher order problem solving and rigorous academic achievement. When foundational needs of students are addressed, students can engage at their highest level and meet the cognitive demands required in the classroom.

IV. Direct exposure to local and national resources, beyond the student's current experiences, provides students with the self-confidence and social capital needed to be competitive in the world.

We seek not only to prepare our students to be successful in college, careers, and entrepreneurial endeavors, but also to significantly elevate the percentage of K-8 students currently reading at and above grade level in Montgomery county. To meet these goals, our educational program focuses on rigorous instruction delivered in a trauma invested environment. We also work to create civically responsible citizens with a wealth of academic and social knowledge through holistic programming and enrichment opportunities. LIFE Academy is passionate in our belief that students are capable of completing rigorous educational tasks and achieving grade level proficiency.

LIFE views education as our current civil rights struggle, and our goal is to effectively and measurably transform the academic performance in Montgomery between racially and

economically disparate students. Those disparities reveal themselves in a 24-point academic gap in reading between our Black and White students across the city. This performance gap has slightly narrowed from 28 points since 1998, [1] and LIFE is excited about the opportunity to partner with Montgomery Public Schools to serve students in closing this gap. As Montgomery district schools, Montgomery families, and community stakeholders seek to aggressively improve the quality of education across the city, there exists a critical need for an academically sound, community-based, high quality educational option.

Students spend a majority of their waking hours at school, therefore school needs to be an institution that supports families' and communities' efforts to instill strong values in students. The state's ESSA plan says, "Alabama aspires to have prepared graduates", and the LIFE community is committed to helping students internalize values, beginning in grades K and 1, as an important part of their educational process and overall development. LIFE Academy teachers, leaders, support staff, and board members model and nurture in students the following six core values:

Leadership. LIFE Academy helps students construct an aspirational vision for themselves and their communities. Furthermore, LIFE assists students in operationalizing those personal and communal dreams through goal setting, strategic planning, and inspiring others.

Integrity. The LIFE community values and promotes honesty and strong morality in all areas.

Freedom. LIFE provides a safe, welcoming environment where all are encouraged and supported in being their most authentic selves.

Enlightenment. LIFE believes that each day provides the opportunity to learn and grow. Staff and students are afforded time to reflect on prior knowledge, engage new content, and practice towards mastery.

Empowerment. LIFE encourages students and teachers alike to be catalysts of change in our building and throughout the community. All members of the LIFE community are empowered to take bold risks and effect positive change.

Efficacy. LIFE equips teachers, staff, and students with the academic and social awareness to achieve their aspirational goals.

The LIFE Academy team understands that preparation for college, careers, and entrepreneurial ventures are not a simple undertaking for our students. This is especially true for our students born with economic and racial barriers to overcome. LIFE's leadership and staff, mirroring our student demographic, are well aware of our students' needs and are uniquely prepared to provide the necessary moral and academic supports. LIFE understands such struggles often present themselves academically as early as 3rd grade, though nationally, the effects of these barriers are compounded at the onset of middle school. This phenomenon is called the middle school plunge[2]. The shift from guided learning in a single classroom in elementary to autonomous movement and accountability in middle school correlates to a drop in student performance. The compounding of educational gaps, economic struggles, racial barriers, and a middle school plunge further relegate struggling students to the bottom academic quartile. LIFE Academy speaks to these issues through a supportive school model which establishes strong teacher-student relationships, builds student efficacy in a safe environment, and provides students with a gradual release of responsibility from Kindergarten to grade 8. The LIFE community of teachers, students, and families are committed to establishing an academic village where all students can learn and heal.

Currently in Alabama, 89.3% students are graduating from high school[3], but less than 32% of

our students are successfully completing college within 6 years. Though our students are capable of walking across any college stage, our k-12 classrooms at times are misaligned with the rigor level needed to adequately prepare our students for college success and persistence. The state of Alabama responds to this call and identifies seven college and career readiness indicators[4], four of which are present in LIFE's K-8 student offerings. LIFE seeks to prepare all students, from our youngest learners in kindergarten to our middle school students, to excel in academically rigorous environments with the annual goals of leading its neighborhood schools by 5 proficiency points and scoring in the top 25% of growth across the state in years 1 and 2. By year 3, LIFE students are predicted to rank in the top 5% of growth in Alabama. Alabama's ESSA plan indicates that our African American students are graduating at a rate of 84% annually. While LIFE is currently petitioning for a K-8 school, its first class of sixth graders are scheduled to walk across local high school stages in year 2028. It is our goal for LIFE's first students to assist Alabama in achieving its 2028 graduation goal of 91% for African American students. The road to college success begins for LIFE students on day 1.

LIFE Academy's mission of preparing all students, grades K-8, for a successful future in college, careers, and/or entrepreneurial endeavors, begins with students mastering grade level ELA and Mathematics standards. Students struggling to independently achieve grade level mastery receive timely and targeted invention to close learning gaps. According to the National Institute for Literacy, 70% of citizens with limited literacy skills struggle to secure full time employment. Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Education states that 60% of adults in correctional institutions and 85% of juvenile offenders struggle with limited literacy skills[5]. LIFE Academy's intense focus on literacy development in a loving, energetic, and supportive learning environment seeks to offset the hardships associated with limited literacy proficiency in adulthood and open Montgomery students to a limitless array of future successes and life opportunities.

Unique Model

LIFE Academy is excited about the potential opportunity to partner with Montgomery District Schools to create a unique educational model and provide neighborhood students with a high quality, well rounded schooling experience. Our unique school model is rooted in trauma invested learning environments, student connectedness, culturally relevant and holistic pedagogy, "Kid Culture", and authentic community partnership.

Trauma Sensitive Learning Environment - A trauma sensitive school, according to the Learning Policy Initiative, is defined as *[a school]* in which all students feel safe, welcomed, and supported, and where addressing trauma's impact on learning on a school wide basis is at the center of the educational mission (Cole et al., 2013).

Given that a safe and supportive school climate and culture is linked to positive student outcomes [6], it is critical that LIFE educators understand how to create and sustain such an environment for our Montgomery students. LIFE Academy is a trauma sensitive school that prioritizes the mental health and development of students. LIFE creates an action plan to ensure that our trauma centered environment, and the teachers who serve within it, are positioned to meet the needs required for such support. Using the six TLPI attributes[7], LIFE establishes 3 year one priorities to create the foundations of a trauma centered environment for the students of Montgomery. Each of these priorities is supplemented with two to three tangible action steps, and desired outcomes with measurable goals.

Goal 1. Leadership and staff create joint understanding of trauma's impacts on learning (1). Prior to students' first day, staff receives six hours of training related to trauma and its impact on student cognition and behavior. This initial, school wide professional development plays a key role

in helping staff develop a shared understanding[8] of impacts on learning, which benchmarks the foundation of LIFE's identity as a trauma-sensitive school.

Goal 2. Create and maintain a trauma sensitive learning environment (3). In addition to professional development's influence on creating a trauma sensitive learning environment prior to student arrival, families self-identify students in need of social-emotional supports through interest and enrollment forms. By factoring in guardian knowledge of student needs, LIFE is partnering with families to ensure that student social-emotional needs are identified earlier. One goal associated with this action, is that 75% of students in need of higher social-emotional support (tier 2 and tier 3) are identified by week 2 of the academic school year.

Goal 3. Staff embraces teamwork within the school and community, and shares responsibility for all students (5). Due to the ongoing social-emotional needs and supports of students, LIFE adopts a communal approach. Staff interacts and creates relationships with students and families during student/guardian summer orientation to better inform appropriate subsequent strategies. During the school day, teachers and staff are in the hallways during every transition to greet and strengthen staff and student relationships. At the culmination of each week during professional development, leadership, staff, and teachers share student trends. These actions promise that staff and students create genuine relationships and work in unison to share responsibility for students. A goal for this priority is that by week 4 of the academic school year, every teacher can name every student in school. Also, students can identify at least 2 adults within the school that they trust.

Student-Connectedness - Student connectedness/belonging, can be described in concrete form as feelings of membership within a school (Murphy & Torre, 2014).

LIFE Academy proactively addresses the issues related to student connectedness with focus in two categories: School Involvement and Peer Relationships. School involvement is a critical element that helps define membership. School involvement includes chances for students to have some ownership of school space, staff engagement of student "talents, skills, and interests" (Crosnoe, 2011), student positions of responsibility and opportunity for leadership. Peer relationships is another equally critical component in that "peers exert a powerful influence on adolescent students, which effects academic behaviors, attitudes towards schools, and access to resources (social capital) that may benefit their education" (Rumberger, 2011). We understand student connectedness to the school and positive peer/teacher relationships increase student desire to be present daily and perform. Therefore, our community leverages connectedness to maintain 95% average daily attendance and minimize student misbehaviors. By LIFE strategically providing daily opportunities for student connectedness, all students feel a part of the school culture and therefore perpetuate the core values among one another.

To address school involvement, LIFE's trauma sensitive model prioritizes three key necessities. 1) Each grade level at LIFE will be charged with completing an annual community outreach project. Opportunities for leadership and community service are often found in schools characterized by high levels of school involvement, both within school and in the extended community.[9] 2) LIFE will also designate space for a "Founder's Wall" where each student will contribute to the esthetic of the school facility. Involvement shares considerable room with space ownership[10]. As LIFE students feel a sense of ownership of the facilities they are in, their feelings of belonging are amplified. 3) LIFE will create a horticulture environment in which students plant flowers, trees, fruits and vegetables together. Experiences that lead to tangible outcomes are preferred in their effectiveness of creating physically present, socially connected, and emotionally centered students.[11]

LIFE Academy addresses peer relationships through classroom layout, weekly school celebratory meetings, and a peer mentor model. Classroom layouts include student clusters in the promotion of cooperative learning. Unlike more traditional models, LIFE students sit at round table in groups of four for an interactive model entrenched in student roles and peer learning. LIFE's "kid culture" strategically embeds natural student curiosity and partnership into daily lessons to enhance the learning experience. Special attention to peer relations when assigning youngsters to academic tasks and interventions can be helpful in training students to use peer supported networks. [12]

LIFE also holds weekly SOAR (Student/Staff Ovations and Recognition) meetings where the entire school body comes together to celebrate and acknowledge student and staff mission-driven behavior. Peers serve as a looking glass for teenagers trying to figure out who they are and where they fit in the world. Peers are who teenagers turn to for the majority of their feedback and validation.[13] For middle school age students, SOAR will serve as part of that validation and positive peer feedback.

LIFE's peer mentor model pairs 6th grade students with two to three K-1 students and 7th and 8th grade students with 6th graders. With a pre-established trauma sensitive culture rooted in connectedness, older students understand that it is their responsibility to perpetuate this mission through service to younger students. As young people advance into their teens, more and more time is spent with peers; in turn, teacher influence and proximity decreases over time.[14] This unique model creates a productive space for peer accountability and results in classrooms with less distractions, higher engagement, improved student performance.

Community Partnership - Community partnership refers to leveraging the strengths of existing institutions and peoples that reside within Montgomery, Alabama.

In alignment with Montgomery Public Schools Academic Goals II, III, and IV, LIFE Academy partners with community businesses, banks, non-profits, grassroots organizations, and community members to support student needs, build student social capital, and expose students to different cultures and opportunities within Montgomery.

GOAL II: Every Education Professional is Well-Prepared, Resource-Supported and Effective.

GOAL III Every Student has Access to Support Systems that Maximize Opportunities for Academic and Life Success.

GOAL IV Every School Engages Parents and Community Partners in Support of Student Success.

LIFE Academy partners with MPS, community colleges, trade schools, nurseries, YMCAs, etc. to ensure students and families are offered a plethora of social supports to acknowledge needs such as after-school care, Pre-K literacy workshops, extra-curricular activities, career training, and access to college courses.

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together". LIFE Academy embodies this African proverb because it believes that its longevity, impact, and success rely heavily on the tools already in existence in Montgomery. In true partnership, LIFE Academy is committed to staffing 55% of the total staff with Montgomery county residents. A school cannot be a catalyst for positive change if it does not learn from and financially impact the group in which it serves.

In addition to prioritizing Montgomery County in hiring practices, LIFE Academy's horticulture class and club will develop a community garden. Urban, low-income neighborhoods can be described in terms of its average social-economic status, as well as its increased likelihood to be "food deserts"—that is, areas with low availability or high prices of healthy foods.[15] Auburn

University has recently built a community garden for citizens of Geiger, AL because the nearest grocery store is 23 miles away.[\[16\]](#) Students build teamwork skills and efficacy as they participate in their horticulture class and club. Students tangibly witness their own abilities to reap and sow as a product of their personal labor and dedication. Students are able to learn to work together and further build connectedness within the school and the broader community through service. Student responsibility to allot and organize the distribution of herbs, fruits, and vegetables they've harvested builds employable skills. Lastly, students serve their own neighbors in a personally rewarding way. The surrounding communities and students alike, benefit from this authentic partnership and experience the positive communal impact of LIFE, tangibly.

Kid Culture - Kid culture offers a unique schooling feature where children navigate a physical environment that is truly created for and driven by child-centered learning experiences.

LIFE Academy creates a unique schooling experience that places "kid culture" at the center of its model. The physical and social environments of LIFE are all created with the promotion and celebration of student imagination. Rather than children navigating hallways with arms at their side, LIFE's sensory hallways ignite student tactile learning and curiosity. Student work, cultural artifacts, arrays of colors, and 3-dimensional maps decorate common spaces. In the classroom, LIFE students sit in flexible and comfortable cooperative seating, not individually or in traditional rows. Math manipulatives, literacy tools, and subject-based artifacts are placed in the center of cooperative learning stations to increase student interest and mastery of the day's lesson and objective. Cooperative learning consistently produces academic gains, improves student relations, develops social skills, educates for character, promotes self-esteem, enhances class climate, and fosters leadership and teamwork skills.[\[18\]](#) LIFE's kid culture leverages the natural curiosity of children by creating lessons and a physical environment that helps students translate their natural love of learning into grade level mastery. At LIFE Academy, Montgomery students benefit from a true child-centered learning experience.

Additionally, LIFE Academy provides recess. In recent years, there has been a national trend of removing "play time" to focus on academic tasks, though research suggests the contrary. Play can engage many areas of the brain because it involves various domains of learning, including emotional, cognitive, language, and sensorimotor development. Many cognitive strategies are demonstrated through pretend play, such as joint planning, negotiation, problem solving, and goal seeking (Gmitrova & Gmitrov, 2003). Play doesn't end at recess, however. Gamification is utilized in the classroom to promote productive struggle. The pairing of cooperative seating and gamification provides multiple daily opportunities for students to strengthen their communication and emotional endurance. Learning is not maximized by using the teacher as the sole center of knowledge. LIFE students are able to master and more readily recall academic standards through the intentional merging of standards-based instruction with cooperative learning, gamification, and daily application.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy[\[17\]](#) - Culturally relevant pedagogy is a theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge the inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate (Landson-Billings, 1995).

LIFE is committed to the academic development of its students in a culturally affirming and civically responsible manner. African American students, living in the birthplace of civil rights, have a rare opportunity to see themselves and their deep history reflected in all content areas in daily lessons. LIFE's attention to text selection, cultural connections in grade level standards, and the reinsertion of marginalized groups in academic advancements reignites a waning cultural pride in students and allows them to more readily draw personal connections to taught content. Likewise, as the trend of ELL population growth continues in Montgomery, LIFE Academy is proactive about the use of language acquisition strategies. These strategies include multiple

means of representation, cooperative learning strategies, and connection of content to student background. The same strategies are employed for all students because LIFE views scholastic English as a vernacular of the English language. With this lens, all students are linguistically and culturally supported as they learn to read, write, and comprehend rigorous academic texts.

We understand that student academic success is wholly contingent upon staff preparedness and ongoing development. Therefore, LIFE prioritizes adult development with 4 weeks of professional development and teacher preparation before the first day of school. LIFE's extensive professional development continues by providing teachers with 6 data days throughout the year to analyze and affectively respond to recent student assessments and 120-minute practice-based PDs 3 Fridays per month. This allows every LIFE Academy teacher to receive 180 annual hours of enrichment. These measures ensure that all teachers are adequately prepared to deliver high quality instruction in every class, every day.

Leadership Capacity

During LIFE Academy's pre-petition phase of the chartering process, Kia Debnam as the founder/principal has been the educational lead. Principal Debnam enters this work through the unique perspective of the K-16 lens. As an adjunct professor at North Carolina Central University, she became aware of the number of students unprepared for the cognitive demand and critical thought needed for college success; She committed to changing that. Kia brings to LIFE Academy an academic background in Psychology, Early Childhood Education, and TESOL. With passion and a targeted vision, She designs LIFE Academy with the applied understanding of the impact of a trauma sensitive learning environment and cultural/linguistic competence on student success.

With the hopeful approval of LIFE Academy's Charter in January 2020, Principal Debnam will expand her leadership team to include a Director of Operations (June 2020) and Director of Curriculum & Instruction (January 2021) to ensure the successful transition from a thoroughly written application to a high quality school.

During this critical design phase, Principal Debnam has received a wealth of foundational support from a number of key educators, institutions, and community leaders in Montgomery and across the country.

Kia is currently a fellow in the Freedom Fellows Institute, a 12-month fellowship led by Freedom Preparatory Academy Charter School Network in Memphis, TN. where she is 1 of 6 school leaders of color chosen nationally to found a high quality charter school that supports underserved students with an innovative school model. The Institute has offered extensive support in school design, curriculum evaluation, instructional leadership, organizational leadership, operations and finance.

Principal Debnam was also selected into the New Schools for Alabama School Founders Program which provides expert training on Alabama compliance, school development, operations, and community organizing.

Kia has been trained by Transcend Education which offers innovator leaders extensive support in the re-imagination of school design. Transcend stretches leaders' thinking with regards to reprogramming schools to support 21st century learning.

Principal Debnam and the LIFE Academy board enlists the support of 4th Sector Solutions, LIFE Academy's outsource provider for operational, financial, HR, and financial management. LIFE

Academy contracts with 4th Sector Solutions Inc. (4SS) to provide back-office services (i.e., financial management, human resources, operations, etc). In addition to back-office services, 4SS has extensive experience in the acquisition, management, and supervision of build-out and/or renovations of school facilities. The 4SS team has experience developing financial models for lenders, supporting the financing process with lenders, conducting requests for qualifications and proposals, architect and contractor selection, support in collaboration with architect of progress monitoring the construction, and conducting stakeholder meetings. 4SS possess 20+ years of experience, 50+ projects, and \$350+ million of experience assisting charter schools design, develop and finance high quality, cost-effective facilities. Recent projects in Louisiana include (Mentorship, University Preparatory Elementary, Slaughter Community Charter School, Encore Academy, and Lycee Francais de la Nouvelle Orléans).

Lastly, Principal Debnam's most critical support comes from the LIFE Academy Governing Board. The LIFE Academy board currently has five members, all of whom are Montgomery residents with long standing service records with the community. The board chair, Norma Chism, is a retired U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sergeant with 24 years of military leadership experience; she's an operations executive with the ability to lead diverse teams. Councilwoman Audrey Graham currently represents District 4, a predominantly Black district to whom LIFE Academy will serve upon charter approval. Her strengths include community engagement, a background in policy, and political impact. Dr. Beverly Hill is the Director of Academic Curriculum at the Air Force Chaplain Corps College and is skilled at evaluating and overseeing administrative programs. Evelyn Ward is a retired social worker with a work history in the Federal Direct Student Loan Program. Bettye Hill is a certified professional speaker and trainer whose skills include training facilitation and marketing content creation.

[1] <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2015/pdf/2016008AL8.pdf>

[2] <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/12/02/middle-school-plunge>

[3] <https://www.al.com/news/2019/01/are-alabamas-latest-high-school-graduation-rates-real.html>

[4] <https://www.al.com/news/2019/01/are-alabamas-latest-high-school-graduation-rates-real.html>

[5] <https://literacywa.org/literacy-facts-2/>

[6] https://traumasensitiveschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/TLPI-Final-Report_Full-Report-002-

[7] https://traumasensitiveschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/TLPI-Final-Report_Full-Report-002-

[8] https://traumasensitiveschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/TLPI-Final-Report_Full-Report-002-

[9] Creating Productive Cultures in Schools (Joseph Murphy & Daniella Torre, 2014)

[10] Creating Productive Cultures in Schools (Joseph Murphy & Daniella Torre, 2014)

[11] Creating Productive Cultures in Schools (Joseph Murphy & Daniella Torre, 2014)

[12] [Creating Productive Cultures in Schools \(Joseph Murphy & Daniella Torre, 2014\)](#)

[13] [Creating Productive Cultures in Schools \(Joseph Murphy & Daniella Torre, 2014\)](#)

[14] [ICreating Productive Cultures in Schools \(Joseph Murphy & Daniella Torre, 2014\)](#)

[15] https://web.stanford.edu/~diamondr/AllcottDiamondDube_FoodDeserts.pdf

[16] <https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/local/solutions-journalism/2019/03/29/rural-alab>

[17] <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6fb5/45a918f7a030bc1d3d1904c7ee49db2b98cc.pdf>

[18] Kagan, Dr. Spencer & M. Kagan. *Kagan Cooperative Learning*. San Clemente: Kagan Publishing, 2009.

Attachments

Section 1: Executive Summary

1.1	Cover sheet and Enrollment Projection	Debnam, Kia, 11/16/19 8:32 PM	PDF / 319.191 KB
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2. Mission and Vision

The mission

LIFE Academy prepares all students, grades K-8, for a successful future in college, careers, and/or entrepreneurial endeavors. Through self-efficacy and student empowerment, LIFE helps students achieve mastery of high academic standards and lifelong ambitions.

The vision of LIFE Academy is to create the next generation of civically responsible leaders through the execution of an academically rigorous, culturally relevant, holistic educational program. We believe that all students deserve a learning environment that embraces their whole being.

LIFE Academy proposes to serve the students and families of Montgomery, Alabama residing in the 36105, 36107, and 36108 communities. Montgomery is bursting with potential in the form of its approximately 49, 500 school-aged children. While communities range in diversity, approximately 75% of their students enrolled in public schools, are African American. Montgomery joins state-wide trends of increasing populations of students who speak English as a new language. English Language Learners comprise nearly one quarter of the total Montgomery County school's population, adding diversity to the district. LIFE Academy is excited to utilize UDL (Universal Design for Learning) to serve such a diverse range of students.

While students and families of Montgomery desire a quality education, currently less than 20% of our K-8 students are proficient in reading and math. LIFE is determined to join local students, families, and schools in being part of the solution. LIFE is a liberatory school of innovation and is a perfect match for the city as Montgomery maintains a pervasive legacy and

liberatory essence. The Montgomery community embraces education as a means to freedom, and they are looking for a school that values freedom and prepares their children for college, careers, and entrepreneurship. The core values and beliefs of LIFE Academy are complimentary to and align with our community's need.

With core values of leadership, integrity, freedom, enlightenment, empowerment, and efficacy, graduates of LIFE Academy leave possessing five qualities as measures of student success. Each LIFE Graduate enters our Montgomery community as a:

- Mindful and Resilient Being-LIFE Academy graduates are aware of and accountable to their moment to moment thoughts and actions. They understand that at any given time, feelings and conditions may change, but their goals do not.
- Culturally Conscious Citizen-LIFE Academy graduates are continuously growing in their awareness of peoples and customs across culture, religion, geographical regions, and other lines of diversity. They appreciate this awareness and take responsibility for their own lives and communities in creating room for themselves, and advocating for marginalized populations.
- Compassionate Leader-LIFE Academy graduates are servant leaders who are empathetic to those they lead, while giving themselves the grace to make mistakes. Compassionate leaders are continually revisiting their approaches and communication, ensuring they purposefully create secure spaces for courageously collaboration.
- Holistic Learner-LIFE graduates look at the world (inside and outside of the classroom) through knowledge-based lenses that afford them the ability to continuously combat old thought processes and adapt new patterns.
- Courageous Collaborator-LIFE Academy graduates are team players. Graduates understand that it takes vulnerability to be led by another, and therefore courage to actively contribute to the team dynamic.

These key qualities embody student success in that they incorporate school culture and climate, social-emotional competencies, and success in life. With an emphasis on holistic student wellness and development, the foundation for academic success is paved for LIFE students to lead their district partners by 5% in Year 1, show 1.5 years of academic growth, and rank in the state's top 25% of growth.

In alignment with Montgomery Public Schools Academic Goals II, III, and IV, LIFE Academy partners with community businesses, banks, non-profits, grassroots organizations, and community members to support student needs, build student social capital, and expose students to different cultures and opportunities within Montgomery.

GOAL II: Every Education Professional is Well-Prepared, Resource-Supported and Effective.

GOAL III Every Student has Access to Support Systems that Maximize Opportunities for Academic and Life Success.

GOAL IV Every School Engages Parents and Community Partners in Support of Student Success.

LIFE Academy partners with MPS, community colleges, trade schools, nurseries, YMCAs, etc. to ensure students and families are offered a plethora of social supports to acknowledge needs such as after-school care, Pre-K literacy workshops, extra-curricular activities, and career training.

Attachments

Section 2: Mission and Vision

– No Attachments –

3. Educational Need and Anticipated Student Population

Rationale

LIFE Academy proposes to open a high-rigor, trauma-sensitive, community –based K-8 charter school serving the students and families of Montgomery residing in the 36105, 36107, and 36108 communities. The 36105 community, embracing the Garden District and South Hull, covers 78 sq. miles and is home to over 12,000 residents. The 36107 area, which covers 3 sq. miles including the communities of Forest and Highland Parks, is home to over 9,500 residents. Lastly, the 36108 community, home to over 21,000 residents covers over 75 sq. miles. The proposed overall area has seen fairly consistent population numbers, reflecting a strong culture of resident fidelity and investment. The consistency of the population is further supported by Montgomery’s job market increase.

Montgomery is bursting with potential in the form of its approximately 49,500 school-aged children. While the aforementioned communities range in diversity, an average of approximately 75% of their students enrolled in public schools, are Black. Montgomery also joins in the state –wide trend of a sharp increase of students who don’t speak English as their primary language, who now comprise nearly one quarter of the total Montgomery County schools population[4]. LIFE Academy is excited to witness the evolution and redefining of Montgomery’s diversity, and seeks to partner with the city in meeting the emotional, academic, and social needs of our children, who will be our future leaders and citizens.

The Montgomery community holds the 36105-36108 zip codes, the proposed service area of LIFE Academy. Montgomery is the 2nd largest and most populous city in Alabama. It is a highly exceptional city rooted in the Civil Rights Movement, that holds local, national and international historical significance. Montgomery is the home to Martin Luther King Jr.’s church, the site of Rosa Park’s arrest, and served as a crucial stop for the Freedom Fighters. The pervasive legacy and liberatory essence of Montgomery is lived and breathed by all of citizens, which continues to keep the city as an inspirational center of the south. In line with Montgomery Public Schools Strategy plan[2], LIFE Academy plans to connect with the Alabama Community College system, Alabama State University, and Auburn University at Montgomery in further manifesting the same legacy Montgomery has been known for, by preparing our next generation of academically mature, culturally competent, civically responsible leaders for a successful life after high school.

Table 6

Elementary School Proficiency Comparison with Neighboring Schools[1]				
	Davis	Highland Ave	Johnson	Southlawn
(2-year average)				

	16-17	15-16	16-17	15-16	16-17	15-16	16-17	15-16
Category	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score
Math	15%	14%	14%	13%	16%	15%	26%	25%
Reading	12%	14%	12%	15%	8%	9%	13%	14%

Table 7

Middle School Proficiency Comparison with Neighboring Schools
[\[3\]](#)

(2-year average)	Capitol Heights		Bellingrath		McKee		Southlawn	
	16-17	15-16	16-17	15-16	16-17	15-16	16-17	15-16
Category	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score
6-8 Math	7%	7%	8%	8%	13%	13%	10%	10%
6-8 LA	14%	14%	13%	13%	22%	22%	15%	15%

Educational leaders from Superintendent Dr. Ann Roy Moore to Chief Administration Officer Dr. Barbara Cooper are united in their vision for academic excellence for Alabama students. From Reading Initiative (ARI) and Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI), the eight Strategic Plan Goals for college and career readiness to the updated standards in the Alabama Course of Study, Montgomery’s commitment to improved student outcomes is thoughtful and strategic. LIFE Academy seeks to partner with MPS, Dr. Moore, and the local community in being part of the solution. While the students currently attending the neighboring schools of Davis, Highland Ave, Johnson, and Southlawn have not yet achieved their desired level of proficiency, Table 6 and 7 data impresses upon LIFE Academy a sense of urgency to set a high college-ready bar for academic achievement and establish a highly focused and supportive school culture for students to produce their best work daily. According to the ESSA plan, “Alabama will decrease by 50% the number of students not proficient in 2030”. LIFE works immediately to identify potential students gaps and provide timely interventions support all students in meeting the intellectual requirements and mastering the skills required in the Course of Study. As Montgomery Public

Schools settle into the updated college and career readiness standards, LIFE Academy humbly asks for the opportunity to work alongside the district in the service of Montgomery students.

While Montgomery is unique in its appeal and historical experience, many of our academic struggles can be remedied by replicating best practices from charter schools that systematically achieved strong academic results for African-American students in low-income communities through their curriculum, instructional model, assessment program and aligned people development. Principal Debnam has extensively studied high-performing charter schools and is prepared to adopt a number of high impact, academically tested strategies that have brought success to Uncommon Schools-serving 20,000 students, Achievement First-serving 14,000 students, and Freedom Prep-serving 1900 students.

Anticipated Student Demographics and Home Settings

Projected Student Demographics for LIFE Ac						
Year	Projected Student Enrollment (%)	Grade Levels Served	% Black or African American	% Latino or Hispanic	% Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	% American Indian, Native American, O Alaskan Native
2021-22	33%	K, 1 and 6	75% Black or African American	20% Latino or Hispanic	<1%	<1%
2022-23	56%	K, 1, 2, 6 & 7	75% Black or African American	20% Latino or Hispanic	<1%	<1%
2023-24	79%	K, 1, 2,3, 6, 7 & 8	75% Black or African American	20% Latino or Hispanic	<1%	<1%
2024-25	90%	K,1,2,3,4,6,7&8	75% Black or African American	20% Latino or Hispanic	<1%	<1%
2025-26	100%	K-8	75% Black or African American	20% Latino or Hispanic	<1%	<1%

Anticipated Student Home Setting

Zip code	36108	36105	36108	36116	36107
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Grades Served	K-5	K-5	PK-5	K-5	K-5
% of students w/free or reduced lunch	58%	75%	87%	75%	84%
Adults Unemployed and/or [1] Part-time Employed	71%	68%	71%	57%	60%
Student Demographics	99% Black	100% Black	96% Black 3% Latino	75% Black 18% White 2.5% Asian	87% Black 11% Latino
% Families making <\$25000	52%	41%	52%	32%	44%
Percentage of Household with Children	35%	32%	35%	42%	33%

Non-Academic Challenges

In light of district schools in Montgomery, the area where LIFE Academy proposes to be located, and the communities LIFE expects to serve, the above demographics and settings supported and further informed the educational and non-educational foundations of LIFE Academy.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) have been directly correlated with factors such as low or inconsistent household income, physical and public safety, limited exposure to education, and limited access to transportation. As reflected above, a noteworthy percentage of students are exposed to these ACES, particularly, Black students. Black students are significantly more likely to experience: economic hardship that result in difficulties covering basic food or housing needs, parent/guardian separation, death of a parent, incarceration of a parent, domestic violence, and neighborhood violence[\[1\]](#). Negative outcomes associated with ACEs include some of society’s most intractable (and, in many cases, growing) health issues: alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, suicide, poor physical health, and obesity. There is also some evidence that ACEs are linked to lower educational attainment, unemployment, and poverty.[\[2\]](#) Moreover, adults with 6 or more ACES (adverse childhood experiences) die on average 20 years earlier; children with 3 or more ACES are 9 times more likely to abuse controlled substances; and 90% of students with 3 or more ACES show difficulty meeting the behavioral and academic tasks required by most school environments.

LIFE Academy proposes that Montgomery students need safety in all of its forms, and a re-imagined classroom experience, in order to thrive academically. At its foundation, LIFE Academy is distinguished by its secure and empowering environment, which creates the safe

space for authenticity and true learning. This directly aligns to Alabama's ESSA strategies of "promot[ing] healthy and safe students and schools". Students cannot efficiently learn in disarray and unpredictability, therefore consistent behavioral expectations and positive reinforcement are required. In anticipation for student needs, LIFE Academy utilizes a range of beliefs and strategies to create a highly supportive, consistent, and trauma-invested learning environment. One foundational belief is that misbehavior is the communication of an unmet need. As stated above, 90% of students with 3 or more ACES show difficulty meeting behavioral and academic tasks required in the classroom. Rather than lowering expectations, LIFE Academy provides supports that help address the unmet need and promote student growth.

Among our effective strategies utilized are 1:1 student check-ins, mindfulness/meditation/, choice seating, provided snacks, thresholds, routines, student jobs, and journal prompts. These strategies are utilized to address the four basic needs of students: an emotional need, a need for connection and relationships, a need for control, and a physical need. Each of these needs are viewed by LIFE Academy as necessary and inherently healthy. Students are given the tools to communicate these needs in a non-disruptive, self-empowering manner.

Academically, LIFE Academy's model provides our youngest learners with 180 minutes of literacy development critical to academic progression. 90 minutes of mathematics allows students to engage in the procedural, conceptual, and applied elements required for proficiency. LIFE anticipates that students will arrive with literacy and mathematic skills reflective of average scores in the charts above. By providing extended exposure to foundational subjects, students can more effectively engage content-heavy subjects such as science and social studies.

Enrollment

Year-to-Year Enrollment Plan for Proposed School					
Grade Level	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
	Number of Students				
Kindergarten	90	90	90	90	90
1st	90	90	90	90	90
2nd		90	90	90	90
3rd			90	90	90

4th				90	90
5th					90
6th	90	90	90	90	90
7th		90	90	90	90
8th			90	90	90
Total	270	450	630	720	810

To most effectively implement the school design, LIFE

Academy begins

year 1 with grades K, 1, and 6th, serving 270 students. This results in 9 classes with 30 students and 2 teachers per classroom for a co-teacher model. The rationale behind starting with these grades was to distribute school impact between building academic and social emotional skills in K & 1, while remediating comparable skills and providing daily exposure to grade level content in grade 6. The range of student age and maturation also allows for strategic school involvement. School involvement includes chances for students to have some ownership of school space, staff engagement of student “talents, skills, and interests” (Crosnoe, 2011), student positions of responsibility and opportunity for leadership. 6th graders are given ongoing opportunities to read-aloud and mentor kindergarten and first graders. This mimics a dynamic that many tweens experience at home in caring for younger siblings. This dynamic also helps to meet a student need for control and provides increased responsibility/independence desired by this age group. In reverse, K & 1st graders see themselves in not only faculty and staff, but in older students as well. They are supported and simultaneously reminded of their own self-efficacy and ability to be in a similar position by grade 6.

[1] <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/prevalence-adverse-childhood-experiences-nationally-state>

[2] Metzler, M., Merrick, M. T., Klevens, J., Ports, K. A., & Ford, D. C. (2017). *Adverse childhood experiences and life opportunities: shifting the narrative. Children and Youth Services Review, 72, 141-149.* Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740916303449>.

[1] <https://www.unitedstateszipcodes.org/36107/>

[1] <https://www.publicschoolreview.com/schools-by-distance/36105/5/None/0>

[2] <http://www.mps.k12.al.us/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=13060153>

[3] <https://www.publicschoolreview.com/schools-by-distance/36105/5/None/0>

[4] <https://whnt.com/2019/08/04/schools-faces-challenges-teaching-english-as-2nd-language/>

Attachments

Section 3: Educational Need and Anticipated Student Population

– No Attachments –

4. Community Engagement

Prior to engaging the Montgomery community, LIFE Academy was “Determination Academy of Excellence” and planned to serve grades 6-8. After speaking with families and community members, the community expressed a need for a K-8 school. Parents specifically mentioned they wanted their children to have a “fair chance” at being grade level proficient before middle school; “before it’s too late”.

To get an accurate understanding of local needs, the school leader partnered with a strong community non-profit named LIFE (Ladies Influencing Freedom and Excellence) Inc. Their CEO became Board Chair, and it was decided that the school would be named LIFE Academy (Leaders Influencing Freedom and Excellence). The LIFE Academy team has spoken with community members at churches, community centers, libraries, centers of commerce, with politicians, and to Teach for America leaders and alum, all in efforts to build the gap between a proposed community school, and an actual one.

LIFE has created it's website and interest forms to gauge Montgomery on the types of programming they would like to see implement between the approval of the charter and opening the doors of LIFE Academy in fall 2021. To date, community members have requested tutoring services, literacy courses, and summer camps to provide a safe environment while school is in recess. Also, many parents have requested adult education opportunities. Through multiple interactions, LIFE Academy has been able to acquire names of those who would like to volunteer with LIFE Academy to provide the mentioned services, so that LIFE utilizes the strengths of the people of Montgomery. This also allows for multiple opportunities for the LIFE Academy leadership team to scout for staff and faculty positions.

Other dominant topics that have arose during community outreach have been college preparation and opportunities for student involvement. The issues of increased teenage truancy and gang activity was communicated at length at Councilwoman Graham's quarterly meeting. Research shows that supportive school community is especially important for students from low-income homes, and kids who are socially and academically at risk. Truancy and gang membership fulfill

students' need to feel supported and included. In LIFE Academy focusing on student-connectedness and leadership, it will reduce the number of students being pushed to negative forms of connectivity. This theme continued as parents like Ms. Brenda, spoke of her children's experiences with bullying and her resulting desire to participate in informing school policy. She has agreed to, upon application approval, begin building a parent panel to continue to inform LIFE Academy.

LIFE has also met with community members in the St. Jude neighborhood through "street sweeps". By knocking on doors and standing outside of popular centers of commerce, both the school leader and board members have had a chance to get to build relationships. The board treasurer was also able to organize a speaking engagement with True Divine, the largest Church in Montgomery. As the values and goals of LIFE Academy were communicated, community members signed letters of support to back the opening of LIFE Academy.

LIFE Academy plans to submit a 9-12 charter after two years of operating, so that 8th graders matriculate into the LIFE Academy High School. The High School will utilize relationships with community colleges like Trenholm, to provide trade training and college level courses starting in 10th grade. Exposure to college level rigor and responsibility, alongside teacher mentorship, will work as a scaffold for college and/or trade school success. Within the high school experience, students will complete internships with different community business to cultivate social capitol. In addition, a majority of LIFE academy positions will be held by Montgomery residents.

LIFE Academy is a true community school in that its model is informed by both community members as well as research, and its design is created to impact the entirety of Montgomery. LIFE's impact is not limited to its transference of education. It will benefit Montgomery's west side economically through job creation, and create more opportunities for community members to interact with an array of social resources to build social capitol.

Attachments

Section 4: Community Engagement

– No Attachments –

5. Education Plan/School Design

LIFE Academy prepares all students to excel in college and in life through a focus on character education and college-preparatory academics. The foundation of this college-preparatory academic program is grounded in LIFE Academy's Curriculum and Instruction Design, which is both aligned to Alabama Curriculum Standards and Common Core State Standards and draws upon best practices from charter schools with track records of academic excellence serving our proposed demographic of students. The LIFE Academy Curriculum and Instruction Design proposes a school of academic rigor and academic support for the students and families of Montgomery.

LIFE Academy will raise the bar for what is expected academically of children in Montgomery from our target population. While our initial aim is to increase the performance of Montgomery Public Schools on state assessments through achieving 5% above the district, our long-term goal is for LIFE Academy students to be among the highest performing in the State of Alabama.

Curriculum and Instruction Design: Adopting Best Practices

As Alabama has transitioned to new academic standards, LIFE Academy students benefit tremendously from the alignment between Alabama's academic standards and the Common Core State Standards, which open the door to collaboration and replication of best practices across states. LIFE Academy founder, Kia Debnam, received best-in-class training and support for the design of LIFE Academy through the Freedom Fellows Institute, a 12-month training program for proposed charter school leaders across the United States. As a Fellow through the Freedom Fellows Institute, Ms. Debnam has had the opportunity to train under Mike Brown, former Chief Schools Officer of Freedom Prep Charter Schools, the partner organization of the Freedom Fellows Institute. Freedom Prep Charter Schools, of Memphis, Tennessee, was founded in 2009 through the Building Excellent Schools fellowship and currently operates 5 schools serving 2,100 students in Grades K-12 in the Westwood and Whitehaven neighborhoods of Memphis, Tennessee. Over the course of its 10 years of operation, Freedom Prep's track-record for students' academic growth is unparalleled in Memphis.

The key to Freedom Prep's academic success has been replicating best practices from charter schools that systematically achieve the strongest academic results for African-American students in low-income communities through their curriculum, instructional model, assessment program and aligned people development. Specifically, Freedom Prep has established open partnerships with two such networks that LIFE Academy also seeks to adopt best practices from – Uncommon Schools and Achievement First. Uncommon Schools serves 20,000 students in Grades K-12 across 54 schools in Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York. Achievement First serves 14,000 students in Grades K-12 across 37 schools in Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island. Both Achievement First and Uncommon Schools boast track records for academic excellence that are second-to-none, and both networks also execute high-quality, highly codified academic programs that align to the Common Core State Standards. Through the Freedom Fellows Institute, Ms. Debnam has studied these academic programs and Freedom Prep Charter Schools, all of whom have a strong track record of results with our target population of students, in order to inform the design of LIFE Academy and ensure the academic program executed at LIFE Academy provides excellent academic results to the students and families of Montgomery Public Schools.

Learning Environment

LIFE Academy ensures a structured, focused learning environment in all classrooms across the K-8 spectrum. In Grades K-2, all classrooms have a 1:15 ratio of teachers to students, ensuring students receive significant instructional and socio-emotional attention in these foundational educational years. Each K-2 classroom has 30 students, 1 lead teacher and 1 teaching resident. Subjects instructed by the lead teacher and teaching resident include literacy – which has many components to be described in *Curriculum and Instruction Design: Literacy* – mathematics, science and social studies. The lead teacher and teaching resident instruct students on all subjects, except for Special Education, Electives and support for English Language Learners. This model is adopted from Freedom Prep Charter Schools, which adopted this model from Uncommon Schools, and allows students 90 minutes per day of mathematics and 210 minutes per day of literacy.

As students transition from Grades K-2 into Grades 3-8, they are able to thrive academically in classrooms with a higher teacher-student ratio. Additionally, beginning in Grade 3, significant content knowledge is required to successfully lead students with academic deficits to achieve exceptional academic results. The Alabama ESSA plan explains, "Such a system demands educators with a deep understanding of the subject being taught". For that reason, in Grades 3-8, each grade level has its own teacher for each subject area. This "departmentalized" model allows students to have teachers with true content expertise. Each departmentalized teacher teaches their subject to each of the three classrooms of 30 students that are part of their grade level. Each grade level has one Mathematics Teacher, one ELA Teacher, one Science Teacher and one

Social Studies Teacher. These four teachers instruct students on all subjects, except for Special Populations services outside of inclusion setting, Electives and support for English Language Learners. In order to ensure students in Grades 3-8 receive targeted small group intervention, each grade level has one daily Intervention Hour where all teachers on the grade level team, in addition to members of the Special Populations team, provide tiered small group instruction in groups ranging in size from 4-10. This ensures students continue to have the same opportunity for small group instruction based on their academic needs in Grades 3-8 that they do in Grades K-2. This model is adopted from Freedom Prep Charter Schools.

Key Components of Academic Program

- 1. Data-Driven-** LIFE Academy utilizes high-quality assessments aligned to Common Core and Alabama standards to light the path to college-readiness for all students, families and teachers. These assessments are administered to ensure specific learning gaps are addressed urgently for all LIFE Academy students. LIFE Academy implements assessments including NWEA MAP, STEP (Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress), Achievement First Interim Assessments, Unit Tests & Bi-Weekly/Weekly Quizzes.
- 2. Instructional Rigor-** LIFE Academy holds a high-bar for instructional rigor, codified in our curriculum choices and instructional vision. It is our purpose to ignite students' intellectual selves and sharpen within them the critical thinking skills necessary for success in college and in life.
- 3. Reaching All Learners-** LIFE Academy prioritizes teaching methods and approaches that make daily instruction accessible to all students.
- 4. College-Preparatory Focus -** LIFE Academy instills in students the desire for a college education and prepares them to excel in college through rigorous academics for all students. Early and frequent exposure to college instructional methods, such as technology and discussion, ensure that LIFE Academy alumni will be able to thrive within the academic environment of the college or university they attend.
- 5. Standards Aligned -** LIFE Academy prepares students to excel on Alabama state assessments through tight alignment to Alabama state standards and Common Core state standards.

Attachments

Section 5: Education Plan/School Design

– No Attachments –

6. Leadership and Governance

Leadership Team Members

Name	Planned Role	Gender (Select from dropdown list)	Race (Select from dropdown list)	Short Bio
				Kia Debr child thrc pedagog materiali

Kia Debnam	Principal - Executive Director	Female	Black or African American	mathematics creation and com every stu around tl hone the knowled ongoing emerging Freedom backgro Kia is op Freedom centered students create th college a entrepre Howard I Universit
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Board Members

Name	Planned Role	Gender (Select from dropdown list)	Race (Select from dropdown list)	Short Bio
Norma Chism	Board Chairperson	Female	Black or African American	Norma J Ladies Ir (LIFE). S "to uncor commun and char is a retire with 24 y experien key advi: employe served a Force Fi was resp curriculu institutio experien operatio planning relations
Audrey Graham	Community Liason	Female	Black or African American	Councilm raised in children. Associat from Tre a Bachel Troy Sta Circuit C since 20

				presiden Councilo 4 repres 2018.
Beverly Hill	Board Director	Female	Black or African American	Dr. Beve Specialis Enlisted and Staff previous courses known fo developr Master S varied ac educatio
Betty Chapman	Board Treasurer	Female	Black or African American	Betty C speaker, of Bettye value the organiza developr marketin in Marke and a M: Faulkner Sigma R Independ Trainer a Team.
Grace Ward	Board Secretary	Female	Black or African American	Grace (E States A experien relations developr organizir group co of Youth Alabama Counseli Her expe attaining presiden Counseli Society I
Earl	Parent			Earl Tayl with the athletics. alumni o Earl is pa of St. Ju of LIFE / Developi

Taylor	Laison	Male	Black or African American	Parish, I of coach for the R Pratville Educatio Eric Tayl high rigo self-disci
Kevin McDaniel	Conflict Resolution	Male	White	Pastor "I Senior P was esta 27 years time min strength which is to be in t and mak a differer of the ch the Birmi Karen wi years. H and is kr grandchi

Attachments

Section 6: Leadership and Governance

6.1 [Attachment 1](#)

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7. Enrollment Summary

Grade Level	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
Number of Students					
Kindergarten	90	90	90	90	90

1st	90	90	90	90	90
2nd		90	90	90	90
3rd			90	90	90
4th				90	90
5th					90
6th	90	90	90	90	90
7th		90	90	90	90
8th			90	90	90
Total	270	450	630	720	810

LIFE Academy is dedicated to serving the students and families of

Montgomery residing in the 36105, 36107, and 36108 with a high-rigor, trauma-sensitive, community –based schooling option. LIFE Academy seeks to launch a K-8 program in 2021-22 beginning with kindergarten, 1st, and 6th grade. 90 students per grade level allows 3 classrooms of 30 students per grade. K-5 classrooms at LIFE Academy will benefit from a co-teacher model.

LIFE Academy's decision to begin year 1 with grades K,1, and 6 is a result of a compromise reflecting LIFE's slow-growth strategy and our local community's immediate need for a middle school option. The original plan to grow one year annually beginning with K and 1 would make 6th grade at LIFE available to local families in 2024-2025. The LIFE community internalized the urgency expressed by Montgomery families and elected to provide 90 middle school seats immediately upon opening. LIFE Academy will reach full capacity in 2025-2026 and will be home to 810 promising Montgomery K-8 students.

Attachments

Section 7: Enrollment Summary

– No Attachments –

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN AND CAPACITY

1. Education Program Overview

LIFE Academy prepares all students to excel in college and in life through a focus on character education and college-preparatory academics. The foundation of this college-preparatory academic program is grounded in LIFE Academy's Curriculum and Instruction Design, which is both aligned to Alabama Curriculum Standards and Common Core State Standards and draws upon best practices from charter schools with track records of academic excellence serving our proposed demographic of students. The LIFE Academy Curriculum and Instruction Design proposes a school of academic rigor and academic support for the students and families of Montgomery.

Curriculum and Instruction Design: Adopting Best Practices

As Alabama has transitioned to new academic standards, LIFE Academy students will benefit tremendously from the alignment between Alabama's academic standards and the Common Core State Standards, which open the door to collaboration and replication of best practices across states. LIFE Academy founder, Kia Debnam, received best-in-class training and support for the design of LIFE Academy through the Freedom Fellows Institute, a 12-month training program for proposed charter school leaders across the United States. As a Fellow through the Freedom Fellows Institute, Ms. Debnam has had the opportunity to train under Mike Brown, former Chief Schools Officer of Freedom Prep Charter Schools, the partner organization of the Freedom Fellows Institute. Freedom Prep Charter Schools, of Memphis, Tennessee, was founded in 2009 through the Building Excellent Schools fellowship and currently operates 5 schools serving 2,100 students in Grades K-12 in the Westwood and Whitehaven neighborhoods of Memphis, Tennessee. Over the course of its 10 years of operation, Freedom Prep's track-record for students' academic growth is unparalleled in Memphis.

The key to Freedom Prep's academic success has been replicating best practices from charter schools that systematically achieve the strongest academic results for African-American students in low-income communities through their curriculum, instructional model, assessment program and aligned people development. Specifically, Freedom Prep has established open partnerships with two such networks that LIFE Academy also seeks to adopt best practices from – Uncommon Schools and Achievement First. Uncommon Schools serves 20,000 students in Grades K-12 across 54 schools in Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York. Achievement First serves 14,000 students in Grades K-12 across 37 schools in Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island. Both Achievement First and Uncommon Schools boast track records for academic excellence that are second-to-none, and both networks also execute high-quality, highly codified academic programs that align to the Common Core State Standards. Through the Freedom Fellows Institute, Ms. Debnam has studied these academic programs and Freedom Prep Charter Schools, all of whom have a strong track record of results with our target population of students, in order to inform the design of LIFE Academy and ensure the academic program executed at LIFE Academy provides excellent academic results to the students and families of Montgomery Public Schools.

Learning Environment

LIFE Academy will ensure a structured, focused learning environment in all classrooms across the K-8 spectrum. In Grades K-2, all classrooms have a 1:15 ratio of teachers to students, ensuring students receive significant instructional and socio-emotional attention in these foundational educational years. Each K-2 classroom will have 30 students, 1 lead teacher and 1 teaching resident. Subjects instructed by the lead teacher and teaching resident include literacy – which has many components to be described in *Curriculum and Instruction Design: Literacy* – mathematics, science and social studies. The lead teacher and teaching resident will instruct students on all subjects, except for Special Education, Electives and support for English Language Learners. This model is adopted from Freedom Prep Charter Schools, which adopted this model from Uncommon Schools, and allows students 90 minutes per day of mathematics and 210 minutes per day of literacy.

As students transition from Grades K-2 into Grades 3-8, they are able to thrive academically in classrooms with a higher teacher-student ratio. Additionally, beginning in Grade 3, significant content knowledge is required to successfully lead students with academic deficits to achieve exceptional academic results. For that reason, in Grades 3-8, each grade level will have its own teacher for each subject area. This “departmentalized” model allows students to have teachers with true content expertise. Each departmentalized teacher will teach their subject to each of the three classrooms of 30 students that are part of their grade level. Each grade level will have one Mathematics Teacher, one ELA Teacher, one Science Teacher and one Social Studies Teacher. These four teachers will instruct students on all subjects, except for Special Populations services outside of inclusion setting, Electives and support for English Language Learners. In order to ensure students in Grades 3-8 receive targeted small group intervention, each grade level has one daily Intervention Hour where all teachers on the grade level team, in addition to members of the Special Populations team, provide tiered small group instruction in groups ranging in size from 4-10. This ensures students continue to have the same opportunity for small group instruction based on their academic needs in Grades 3-8 that they do in Grades K-2. This model is adopted from Freedom Prep Charter Schools.

Key Components of Academic Program

1. Data-Driven- LIFE Academy utilizes high-quality assessments aligned to Common Core and Alabama standards to light the path to college-readiness for all students, families and teachers. These assessments are administered to ensure specific learning gaps are addressed urgently for all LIFE Academy students. LIFE Academy implements assessments including NWEA MAP, STEP (Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress), Achievement First Interim Assessments, Unit Tests & Bi-Weekly/Weekly Quizzes.

2. Instructional Rigor- LIFE Academy holds a high-bar for instructional rigor, codified in our curriculum choices and instructional vision. It is our purpose to ignite students' intellectual selves and sharpen within them the critical thinking skills necessary for success in college and in life.

3. Reaching All Learners- LIFE Academy prioritizes teaching methods and approaches that make daily instruction accessible to all students.

4. College-Preparatory Focus - LIFE Academy instills in students the desire for a college education and prepares them to excel in college through rigorous academics for all students. Early and frequent exposure to college instructional methods, such as technology and discussion, ensure that LIFE Academy alumni will be able to thrive within the academic environment of the college or university they attend.

5. Standards Aligned - LIFE Academy prepares students to excel on Alabama state assessments through tight alignment to Alabama state standards and Common Core state standards.

Attachments

Section 1: Education Program Overview

– No Attachments –

2. Curriculum and Instructional Design

LIFE Academy prepares all students to excel in college and in life through a focus on character education and college-preparatory academics. The foundation of this college-preparatory academic program is grounded in LIFE Academy's Curriculum and Instruction Design, which is both aligned to Alabama Curriculum Standards and Common Core State Standards and draws upon best practices from charter schools with track records of academic excellence serving our proposed demographic of students. The LIFE Academy Curriculum and Instruction Design proposes a school of academic rigor and academic support for the students and families of Montgomery.

Curriculum and Instruction Design: Adopting Best Practices

As Alabama has transitioned to new academic standards, LIFE Academy students will benefit tremendously from the alignment between Alabama's academic standards and the Common Core State Standards, which open the door to collaboration and replication of best practices across states. LIFE Academy founder, Kia Debnam, received best-in-class training and support for the design of LIFE Academy through the Freedom Fellows Institute, a 12-month training program for proposed charter school leaders across the United States. As a Fellow through the Freedom Fellows Institute, Ms. Debnam has had the opportunity to train under Mike Brown, former Chief Schools Officer of Freedom Prep Charter Schools, the partner organization of the Freedom Fellows Institute. Freedom Prep Charter Schools, of Memphis, Tennessee, was founded in 2009 through the Building Excellent Schools fellowship and currently operates 5 schools serving 2,100 students in Grades K-12 in the Westwood and Whitehaven neighborhoods of Memphis, Tennessee. Over the course of its 10 years of operation, Freedom Prep's track-record for students' academic growth is unparalleled in Memphis.

The key to Freedom Prep's academic success has been replicating best practices from charter schools that systematically achieve the strongest academic results for African-American students in low-income communities through their curriculum, instructional model, assessment program and aligned people development. Specifically, Freedom Prep has established open partnerships with two such networks that LIFE Academy also seeks to adopt best practices from – Uncommon Schools and Achievement First. Uncommon Schools serves 20,000 students in Grades K-12 across 54 schools in Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York. Achievement First serves 14,000 students in Grades K-12 across 37 schools in Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island. Both Achievement First and Uncommon Schools boast track records for academic excellence that are

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Curriculum and Instruction Design: Mathematics

In Grades K-8 Mathematics, LIFE Academy will implement the curriculum and instructional model utilized by Freedom Prep Charter Schools, which is designed by Achievement First, a charter school network serving 14,000 students in Grades K-12 across 37 schools in Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island with a track record of academic excellence. The key goals of Achievement First’s math program are described in their Program Overview as follows:

For students to thrive in the world they will face after college, they must be able to make sense of

the world through a mathematical lens. Therefore, learning mathematics requires more than learning facts and procedures for solving certain types of problems. A well-prepared student will develop proficiency and expertise in a number of mathematical practices that have longstanding importance in mathematics education. In the K-12 mathematics program at Achievement First, our vision is grounded in a belief that teaching and learning of mathematics should stimulate curiosity, inquiry, joy, and deep understanding of the mathematics outlined in the Common Core. We are building a program in which we will see the mathematical practices come to life through the shifts (focus, coherence, rigor), called for by the standards.

Additionally, Achievement First's program focuses on 5 key areas of: Problem Solving, Conceptual Understanding, Procedural Fluency, Adaptive Reasoning & Productive Disposition.

With the Achievement First math curriculum and instructional model, teachers and leaders in grades K-8 will be provided a suite of instructional plans and assessments to drive mathematics instruction. Course scope & sequences, detailed unit plans, detailed daily lesson plans, high-quality daily lesson materials and homework are all provided to teachers. Unit Internalization meetings and Daily Intellectual Prep meetings are facilitated by school based instructional leadership and teacher-leaders to ensure teachers are intellectually prepared to execute daily lessons. Teacher training, beginning in Summer Orientation, and ongoing observation & feedback cycles will equip teachers with the skills necessary to execute daily lessons.

Grades K-2 Mathematics

Students in Grades K-2 receive 90 minutes of daily math instruction: 10-minute calendar math meeting, 25-minute Math Stories, 55-minute game-based math lesson. During math stories, students will engage in real-world application problems that support problem solving and critical thinking. These story problems will provide students additional opportunities to engage with Common Core standards and work to master the Standards of Mathematical Practice. In our K-2 program, students are co-taught math in order to provide opportunities for enrichment and intervention within the block.

According to recent studies, game based math instruction in lower grades supports students in building conceptual understanding through more engaging activities. The table below shows the fundamentals of the game-based math block. During the daily math block, teachers lead students to mastery of this curriculum by following detailed unit plans and daily level plans.

Introduction:

- Introduce the Math:
 - Teacher models the game procedure but not math strategies (game directions posted on Visual Anchor)
 - Teacher asks a planned question to elicit strategies from students → Students turn & talk

- **Collect Data:** Teacher circulates - “hunt” – find strategies kids are using, plan who to call on in Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract order
- **Elicit & Stamp Key Points:**
 - Share out discussion (and more questions) – T adds to Visual Anchor as kids share strategies in Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract order
 - Teacher and students play one more round, quickly, to stamp the key points for the game directions and strategies
- **Consolidate the Learning:** Before sending off to Workshop, teacher stamps key points through a question that gets students to articulate: “Today we are working on ____ by playing _____” (turn & talk, tell your turtle, etc.)

Workshop:

- Students work in heterogeneous pairs (when possible)
- Teacher circulates – pen in-hand, asks planned CFU question(s) and gathers data using pre-planned paper tracker, gives feedback
 - Lap 1: Procedural – know what to do and on-task / Lap 2: Conceptual – understand the math and strategies

Mid-Workshop Interruption:

- Data-based decision
 - If $<2/3$ correctly using strategies, then address misconception and stamp key points
 - If $>2/3$ correctly using strategies, then focus on using a more efficient strategy
- Students attend to mid-workshop interruption, participate and apply the learning to their work

Discussion:

- Appropriate focus based on data
 - $<2/3$ successful → discuss misconception
 - $>2/3$ → share strategies in CPA order highlighting the more efficient strategy OR extension exercise
- Teacher keeps discussion focused on key points but students do majority of the talking/writing/explaining/etc.

Closing: Students complete exit ticket

Mastery of the curriculum is measured by each unit by state- standard aligned assessments. Students are assessed on a summative basis three times throughout the year and we use the data to inform intervention that students need during the cycle.

Math Stories, mentioned above, will supplement our academic program in grades K-2. Math Stories is a routine that presents students with the opportunity to build their mathematical muscles solving situational word problems that are presented as real-life scenarios. During Math Stories, students first solve the problem using manipulatives, such as unifix cubes, then draw a representation of their model and then create a number sentence to match their strategy. Students

need to be able to think flexibly about situations and develop multiple mathematical strategies that represent a given situation. Through Math Stories, students will be able to excel when challenged by trickier standards involving real-world situations that arise in grades 3-8 and beyond.

Grades 3-5 Mathematics

The foundations build in grades K-2 mathematics through Achievement First lead into the essential learnings of grades 3-5. As with K-2, the 3-5 curriculum continues with the Achievement First curriculum, which provides teachers with both unit and daily level plans. The table below provides an example of a unit's daily level plan. Students will have 75-minutes daily of math instruction: 15 minutes of Math Stories or Fluency/Error Analysis mini-lesson, 60 minute math lesson.

During math stories, students will engage in real-world application problems that support problem solving and critical thinking. These story problems will provide students additional opportunities to engage with Common Core standards and work to master the Standards of Mathematical Practice. Additionally, math fluency must be a priority as a way to help close gaps in mathematical understanding with the belief that if students can compute easily (e.g. multiplication and division facts to 100, subtraction with regrouping, equivalent fractions), they will have more cognitive space for accessing grade level material.

Our 60-minute math lesson is inquiry-based and provides students with an opportunity to explore and activate prior knowledge before engaging with direct instruction. Students in grades 3-5 are co-taught during the math block, which allows for one teacher to lead instruction while the other supports students who may need additional time or support with the grade level material. Students are assessed at the end of each unit based on the Common Core Standards. Students then go through a data cycle where they are able to analyze their mastery and have opportunities for error analysis and re-teach based on gaps. Grades 3-5 have cumulative assessments three times throughout the year, which are used to inform upcoming instruction.

Grades 6-8 Mathematics

As with Grades K-5 Math, LIFE Academy will implement Achievement First's curriculum and daily lesson structures in Grades 6-8 Math. The middle school math lesson structure we will adopt prioritizes the practice opportunities we know are essential to mastery in mathematics while blending in strong daily critical thinking opportunities to activate & build on prior knowledge to discover the key conjecture of the day. The table below, designed by Achievement First, iterates this model.

Middle School Math: Conjecture Based Lesson

Purpose	To develop conceptual understanding of math topics and strategies to persevere by formulating and proving mathematical conjectures through investigation and guided inquiry. They do this by making connections to previously learned content, applying mathematical practices, thinking flexibly, and solving real-world problems.						
Time Stamps	TAI and Opening	Test the Conjecture	Partner Practice	Partner Practice Debrief	Independent Practice	Independent Practice Debrief	Exit Ticket
	15 min	10 min	5 min	2 min	10 min	2 min	5 min

Markers of Excellence for all of Core Instruction: Written and oral responses provided by students meet top quality expectations.

Why	Pace	What Happens	Markers of Excellence – Student Outcomes
TAI: Complete the TAI to activate and		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T communicates expectations for work time Ss work for about 5 min T circulates and collects data on 	<p>Output:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of Ss make a best effort attempt to complete all parts of the TAI in the time allotted <p>Rigor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ss work on TAI problem that meets following criteria: Illuminates the conjecture; Low Floor, High Ceiling; Requires Interpretation; Requires Communication

<p>connect prior knowledge as well as allow for teacher to analyze work prior to the start of the lesson.</p>	<p>5 min</p>	<p>tracker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By the end of work time, Ts know how each student attacked the problem in order to make intentional choices about what work to show and who to call on or speak with throughout the discussion. 	<p>Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of Ss embrace the challenge of a novel problem <p>Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ss are working 98% of the time <p>Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ss respond to teacher prompts to correct work or show grit with problem
<p>Opening: Debrief the mathematical concepts (what and why) presented in the task to arrive at a new understanding and develop a</p>	<p>10 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T show calls S work w/pre-identified strategies and misconceptions T asks Ss to analyze, TT, and vote on work T asks broad and back pocket questions to drive to fencepost(s) T asks synthesis question and engages Ss in 	<p>Rigor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ss analyze and explain S work, arriving at the intended fence post(s) Oral responses are rooted in evidence from S work Ss develop and show understanding of the fence post(s) and conjecture. <p>Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of Ss analyze and discuss show called S work Ss listen to and respond to one another's comments Ss attempt to articulate fence posts and conjecture <p>Thinking</p>

<p>conjecture for the day's lesson.</p>		<p>forming lesson's conjecture w/TT or EW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T clearly states and posts the day's conjecture to be tested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss are thinking, talking, and working for 90% of the time by engaging in TTs, whole class CFUs, EWs, and the discussion <p>Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss correct or clarify their explanations when provided w/feedback • Ss actively engage in discussion to give feedback to show called work and one another
<p>Test the Conjecture: Prove or disprove the conjecture in 1-2 example problem, solidify conceptual understanding and develop a clear</p>	<p>10 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T asks students to explain how the conjecture can be applied in each problem • T uses universal prompts and back pocket questions to engage students in making sense of the problems, testing the conjecture, and solving problems • T models exemplar work expectations while solving problems • T asks if conjecture holds true w/TT + 	<p>Output:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of scholars have notes that match the teachers' exemplar work for both completed problems. <p>Rigor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss think critically about and discuss the conjecture using mathematical reasoning and evidence from work completed in handout or on board • Ss create exemplar work in their notes and develop the CFS concurrently • Ss engaging in higher order thinking to answer questions posed <p>Focus/Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of Ss respond to questions posed with an answer or clarifying question • Ss listen to and respond to one another's comments • Ss attempt to articulate whether or

<p>procedure/CFS for solving.</p>		<p>revises as needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conjecture is stamped and stated in mathematical language, written down, and re-voiced. • Exemplar work and CFS are created and visible for Ss. 	<p>not the conjecture is true using evidence from work completed</p> <p>Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss are thinking, talking, and working for 80% of the time by engaging in TTs, whole class CFUs, EWs, and the discussion • Ss use evidence to support their thinking <p>Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss actively engage in discussion to give feedback to one another and to show called work (when applicable)
<p>PP: Apply the conjecture to reinforce understanding and procedure through collaborative</p>	<p>5 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T frames work expectations with CFS and exemplar created during Test the Conjecture, and states behavioral expectations • Ss work in pairs on problem set • T names first procedural lap • T circulates to provide feedback • T names conceptual 	<p>Output:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of Ss complete the assigned PP problems in the allotted time with work that meets the CFS. <p>Rigor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss solve problems that are pitched to grade level rigor bar • Ss discuss work using mathematical vocabulary and evidence from work <p>Focus/Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of Ss are on task, and collaborate with and provide feedback to partner • Ss persevere with challenging problems and use help seeking strategies (i.e. asking partner,

<p>work and teacher feedback.</p>		<p>lap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T circulates to provide feedback and collect data to drive PP debrief • <i>Repeat previous two bullets 1x</i> 	<p>looking in notes, etc.)</p> <p>Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss are thinking, talking, and working for 100% of the time • Ss use evidence to support their thinking when discussing problems <p>Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss correct or clarify their explanations and work when provided w/feedback
<p>PP Debrief: Provide the class with batch feedback based on trends noticed during PP.</p>	<p>2 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T debriefs highest impact common error using show call of incorrect and exemplar work (20-80% Ss miss), or, T uses funneled questioning to guide Ss through exemplar for a problem that >80% of Ss miss 	<p>Rigor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss analyze and explain the error and how to close the gap • Oral responses are clear and rooted in evidence from S work <p>Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss correct errors in their work <p>Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss are thinking, talking, and working for 95% of the time by engaging in TTs, whole class CFUs, EWs, and the discussion <p>Feedback</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss correct or clarify their explanations when provided w/feedback • Ss actively engage in discussion to explain and give feedback to show called work and one another
<p>IP: Ss get sufficient at-bats applying conjecture to a variety of problems at grade level rigor bar and receive feedback from their teacher.</p>	<p>10 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T frames work expectations with CFS and exemplar created during Test the Conjecture, and states behavioral expectations • Ss work independently on problem set • T names first procedural lap • T circulates to provide feedback • T names conceptual lap • T circulates to provide feedback and collect data to drive IP debrief • <i>Repeat previous two bullets 2-3x</i> 	<p>Output:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of Ss complete the assigned work in the allotted time, getting multiple at-bats and answering all parts of the question. Work is clear, organized, and meets CFS. <p>Rigor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss solve problems that are pitched to grade level rigor bar • S work meets CFS for exemplar work; including following UPESC framework when appropriate <p>Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of Ss are on task the entire time • Ss persevere with challenging problems and using help seeking strategies (i.e. looking in notes, etc.) <p>Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss are thinking and working for 100% of the time • Ss use evidence to support their thinking in written explanations <p>Feedback</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss correct or clarify their written explanations and work when provided w/feedback
<p>IP Debrief: Provide the class with batch feedback based on trends noticed during IP.</p>	<p>2 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T debriefs highest impact common error using show call of incorrect and exemplar work (20-80% Ss miss), or, T uses funneled questioning to guide Ss through exemplar for a problem that >80% of Ss miss 	<p>Rigor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss analyze and explain the error and how to close the gap • Oral responses are clear and rooted in evidence from S work <p>Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss analyze, name, and correct the common error or explain the exemplar work • Ss correct errors in their work <p>Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss are thinking, talking, and working for 95% of the time by engaging in TTs, whole class CFUs, EWs, and the discussion <p>Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss actively engage in discussion to explain and give feedback to show called work and one another
<p>Exit Ticket: Collect data on</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher frames exit ticket work time by naming the CFS that 	<p>Rigor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss complete ET with exemplar work

student learning for the day's lesson.	5 min	student work should meet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss work independently on Exit Ticket 	Investment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ss complete their ET w/exemplar work and are on task 100% of the time. If finished early, students check work or self-assign to other math work available.

In addition to conjecture-based lessons, LIFE Academy will double down on the importance of automaticity with prioritized skills as a key component of a college-preparatory math program. A focus on building mathematical concepts and critical thinking can accidentally become *instead of* prioritized of fluency rather than *in addition to*. Automaticity with the fundamentals and basics is essential for the deep critical thinking work students must engage with daily. Below is an example of prioritized fluency skills for eighth grade, borrowed from Freedom Prep, partner school to the Freedom Fellows Institute, the training program supporting the founder of LIFE Academy.

Grades K-2 Literacy

Literacy is the foundation for all future learning across all content areas. With this fact in mind, Kindergarten through second grade accounts for the first key steps in creating this solid foundation. At LIFE Academy, our K-2 students will engage with all components of literacy in a 210 minute block every day which includes read aloud, reading comprehension, guided reading, phonics and phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and independent reading instruction. Students have multiple opportunities to engage within small, differentiated learning groups with texts at their instructional and independent level as well as the opportunity to observe strong models of fluent reading and high-level comprehension by their teachers. Even our youngest students will be required to engage in meaningful discussion about the texts they read to demonstrate their understanding of what they read with prompting and support. By the age of five, students have developed a vocabulary of millions of words that they access to make meaning of the world around them, whether they are communicating orally, visually through writing, or reading anything they can set their eyes on. However, as is true in our target community, students who have not been exposed to the letters, sounds, and words that make up a rich and fluent vocabulary also lack background knowledge that they access when they communicate, read, write, and express themselves. Acknowledging this reality, we also know that our students and teachers are capable of incredible growth and achievement particularly in Kindergarten.

As readers, our Kindergartners must establish beginning fluency, reading, and listening comprehension. As fluent readers, they will have mastery of individual letters and sounds as well as combinations of letters and the sounds they create. They will internalize and use word attack strategies that aid in their decoding of unfamiliar words to ensure they are reading at an increasing rate with accuracy. Students also will gain mastery of tier I and tier II vocabulary words to add to their schema as they tackle many more texts across content area, topic, and genre. Students also will become proficient in their listening comprehension with the support of a teacher and will gain proficiency in reading comprehension of texts at their independent level. We will use the STEP (Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress) assessment – a product of the University of Chicago - to determine student reading levels as well as monitor progress of their reading growth in both fluency and comprehension throughout the year. As in all grade levels, students will read and comprehend texts within the lexile level band for kindergarten including levels beginning reading (BR) – 150L.

As readers, our first graders must establish beginning fluency, reading, and listening comprehension. As fluent readers they will master individual letters and sounds as well as combinations of letters and the sounds they create with a focus on consonant and vowel blends (commonly used digraphs and trigraphs). They will internalize and use word attack strategies that aid in their decoding of unfamiliar words to ensure they are reading at an increasing rate with accuracy and expression. Students will also gain mastery of tier I, tier II, and some tier III vocabulary words to add to their schema as they tackle many more texts across content area,

topic, and genre. By the end of the year, students will become proficient in their listening comprehension without the support of a teacher. Students will also gain proficiency in reading comprehension of texts at their independent level. Students will also show beginning proficiency of texts at their instructional level without the support of a teacher. As in all grade levels, students will read and comprehend texts within the lexile level band for first grade including levels 150-380L.

Grades K-2 Literacy Block Structure

Our literacy block is broken into several different components that reflect the building blocks of how students learn to read and write – Read Aloud, Guided Reading, Reading Comprehension, Phonics & Phonemic Awareness/Fluency, Independent Reading, and Writing. Vocabulary instruction is embedded in each component as well as present in Math, Science, and Social Studies instruction. Figure 12 provides a breakdown of each literacy block component, how much time is dedicated to each block, and who owns planning and execution responsibilities.

Literacy Block Structure			
Literacy Block Component	Purpose*	Dedicated Time	Ownership
	Read-aloud lessons offer		
Read Aloud (RA)	modeling and whole group practice with a specific text. Teachers introduce and demonstrate a skill that students will apply when they read	30 minutes / daily	Lead teacher plans for the grade and executes in whole group
	independently.		

		25 – 45		
	Comprehension skills lessons	minutes;		
	teach a skill through direct	depending		Lead teacher plans
Comprehension	instruction (I-Do, We-Do, You-	on the		for the grade and
Skills (RC)	Do) and either introduce a new	group's		executes in small
	skill or reinforce one previously	needs / 2		group
	taught.	days a		
		week**		
	PPA lessons teach students to			
	understand the relationship			
Phonics & Phonemic Awareness (PPA)	between letters and spoken sounds and how these come together to form words. These lessons allow students to decode words and contribute to	45 minutes / daily		Co-teacher adapts from scripted curriculum and executes in small group

	overall reading fluency using the			
	Reading Mastery curriculum.			

Literacy Block Structure Continued				
Literacy Block Component	Purpose*	Dedicated Time	Ownership	
Guided Reading (GR)	<p>Guided reading lessons are flexible, small group lessons that should be adapted to target the aspect of reading your students need support with the most while they apply utilize various other skills they need to make meaning of the text they are reading. These lessons provide a mix of targeted instruction through teacher support and reading independence.</p>	<p>20 – 35 minutes; depending on the group's needs / 3 days a week</p>	<p>Lead teacher plans for their classroom and executes in small group</p>	
	<p>Independent reading time is an intentionally-designed, accountable time period for students to read a book without any teacher support.</p>			

<p>Independent Practice & Reading (IPR)</p>	<p>Students use the skills they've already learned to enjoy reading. During this time students will also engage in a computer-based program that supports the other reading components. This time is broken up to provide age-appropriate amounts of independent work time on a specific task.</p>	<p>20 – 45</p>	<p>minutes; depending on task and age-level / daily</p>	<p>Students access leveled library in classroom to choose books on their independent reading level and log into the computer program independently.</p>
<p>Writing</p>	<p>Writing lessons are taught in a separate 45-minute instructional block that includes an introduction to new material and practice opportunities in guided and independent forms, as well as opportunities for individual conferencing on student work. These lessons teach important handwriting, conventional, and expressive skills.</p>	<p>45 minutes /</p>	<p>daily</p>	<p>Co-teacher plans and lead teacher executes, while co-teacher supports.</p>

**descriptions adapted from Great Habits, Great Readers (page 18)*

Reading Block Rotation Schedules

Read Aloud and Writing are two lessons that will take place at the same time every day. The rotation for PPA, Guided Reading, Reading Comprehension, and Independent Reading is dependent on the number of students in each classroom and each child's individual reading level. Guided Reading and Reading Comprehension small group lessons will alternate days and take

place for different amounts of time. Guided Reading lessons are on average 25 minutes and Reading Comprehension lessons are on average 45 minutes. Reading group rotations will follow the general schedule below in each classroom.

Guided Reading Schedule							
Time	Group A** (~5 students)	Group B (~5 students)	Group C (~5 students)	Group D (~5 students)	Group E (~5 students)	Group F (~5 students)	
45 min	PPA (Reading Mastery)	PPA (Reading Mastery)	Independent Computer* - 25 minutes	Independent Center – 25 minutes	Guided Reading Small Group E – 25 min	Independent Reading – 20 minutes	
			Independent Center – 20 minutes	Independent Computer* - 20 minutes			Independent Reading – 25 minutes
45 min	Independent Computer* - 25 minutes	Independent Center – 25 minutes	Guided Reading Small Group C – 25 min	Independent Reading – 25 minutes	PPA (Reading Mastery)	PPA (Reading Mastery)	
	Independent Center – 20 minutes	Independent Computer* - 20 minutes	Independent Reading – 20 minutes	Guided Reading Small Group D – 20 min			
	Guided Reading	Independent			Independent Computer*	Independent	

45 min	Small Group A – 25 min	t Reading – 25 minutes			- 25 minutes	Computer* - 25 minutes
	Independent Reading – 20 minutes	Guided Reading Small Group B – 20 min	PPA (Reading Mastery)	PPA (Reading Mastery)	Independen t Center – 20 minutes	Independent Center – 20 minutes

**The structure of the 45-minute independent work block is dependent upon the number of computers in each classroom with maximum 10 students on computers and as little as 4-5 students.*

***Grouping letters assume that groups by reading level from highest readers in group A to lowest readers in Group F.*

Reading Comprehension Schedule						
Time	Group A** (~5 students)	Group B (~5 students)	Group C (~5 students)	Group D (~5 students)	Group E (~5 students)	Group F (~5 students)
45 min	PPA (Reading Mastery)	PPA (Reading Mastery)	Independent Computer* - 25 minutes	Independent Center – 25 minutes	Reading Comp Small Group E&F – 45 minutes	Reading Comp Small Group E&F – 45 minutes
			Independent Center – 20 minutes	Independent Computer* - 20 minutes		

45 min	Independent Computer* - 25 minutes	Independent Center - 25 minutes				
	Independent Center – 20 minutes	Independent Computer* - 20 minutes	Reading Comp Small Group C&D – 45 minutes	Reading Comp Small Group C&D– 45 minutes	PPA (Reading Mastery)	PPA (Reading Mastery)
45 min	Reading Comp Small Group A&B –	Reading Comp Small Group A&B – 45 minutes	PPA (Reading Mastery)	PPA (Reading Mastery)	Independent Computer* - 25 minutes	Independent Computer* - 25 minutes
	45 minutes				Independent Center – 20 minutes	Independent Center – 20 minutes

Foundational Beliefs Informing Literacy Rotations in Grades K-2

Our literacy rotations are built upon beliefs regarding our students and their developmental needs for strong reading instruction. First, we believe that given the age and attention-span of our students, we provide different learning activities to effectively break up the 45 minutes of time they are working independently throughout the literacy block. We also believe that limiting the amount of time that students are engaged on a computer program to less than 30 minutes provides adequate time for students to make progress each day and stay focused and on-task. Independent Reading is also limited to a maximum of 25 minutes, which represents an appropriate amount of time for students to read and re-read the texts available to them. We believe that students must have daily exposure to phonics instruction to build automaticity and can focus best in a small group environment so every student is in a comprehension-focused small group every day. Our group structure also ensures that we can combine and break groups up depending on the reading levels and needs, with a maximum of 10 students in each group.

As a team, every adult in the building is committed to ensuring our students are ready for college

and a life of choice. This means that our students end the academic year as strong readers and writers and by 2nd grade are performing on grade level. Given that our literacy model supports our students at their age and reading level, we must commit to strongly delivering literacy instruction every day. As a team and individually this means that:

K-2 Literacy Rotations Key Indicators of Excellence

Literacy Block Component	Key Indicators of Excellence	Dedicated Time
Read Aloud (RA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong description and model of targeted skill (I do): The teacher clearly states the aim for the day, why it is important for readers to know/be able to do, the process taken to perform the skill and models the skill for the students. • Strong student practice (We do): There is time for varied amounts of practice. 2-3 practice opportunities are planned. The first is a whole group practice and the second and third are in pairs. Because the text used during reading comprehension is at or above grade level, the teacher provides support with the decoding of the text by either reading it aloud or facilitating a shared reading of the text. • Time for scaffolded independent practice: Teacher introduces the closing check for understanding and ensures that individuals have a time to formulate their responses individually and then takes a pulse check of the room by calling on a few students to determine what students mastered in the whole group. • Teacher Heavy Lifting: In this whole group setting, the teacher should do the work of 	30 minutes / daily

	<p>modeling the strategy, evaluating of responses, and modeling fluent reading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Feedback: Scholars should receive oral feedback to identify when their reading behaviors and/or responses about the text are accurate and if the responses are not accurate, the scholar should receive feedback on how to shift their behaviors/responses to aid in stronger comprehension of the text. 		
<p>Comprehension Skills (RC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong description and model of targeted skill (I do): The teacher clearly states the aim for the day, why it is important for readers to know/be able to do, the process taken to perform the skill and models the skill for the students. • Strong student practice (We do): There is time for varied amounts of practice. 2-3 practice opportunities are planned. The first is a whole group practice and the second and third are in pairs. Because the text used during reading comprehension is at or above grade level, the teacher provides support with the decoding of the text by either reading it aloud or facilitating a shared reading of the text. • Time for scaffolded independent practice: Teacher introduces “check-out” question. Teacher differentiates reading of text excerpt based on student independent reading level. Students independently answer “check-out” question. • Student Heavy Lifting: Whenever possible, the scholar should do the work – the evaluating of responses, the answering of questions, the reading of the text. 	<p>25 – 45 minutes; depending on the group’s needs / 2 days a week**</p>	

- **Teacher Feedback:** Scholars should receive both oral feedback and some form of written feedback (in a way that scholars can access it if they are non-readers). Each scholar should know when their reading behaviors and/or responses about the text are accurate and if the responses are not accurate, the scholar should receive feedback on how to shift their behaviors/responses to aid in stronger comprehension of the text.

- **Number of practice opportunities with sounds:** Teachers maximize the number of times each student hears and says a sound or word correctly. There are at least 10 repetitions of both sounds and words per minute and ideally 15-20 repetitions per minute.
- **Mix of whole group and individual responses:** During the lesson there are lots of opportunities for practice through whole group response and individual turns.
- **Use of correct procedures:** Teachers use correction procedures to correct any mistakes and to get more correct repetitions with the correct pronunciation of a sound.
- **Multiple Readings of Story Book:** Students read the story book multiple times (generally 3-4) in multiple ways (echo reading, choral reading, pair reading, individual reading, cloze reading) to help practice fluency.
- **J-Factor:** Phonics lessons should be fun and joyful. Teachers use chants, cheers, and other fun strategies

45 minutes/daily:

- 35 minutes of Reading Mastery Curriculum
- 10 minutes of word works activities

Phonics & Phonemic Awareness (PPA)

- quickly and strategically so that the focus stays on learning and affirming student progress.
- Check for Understanding: Teachers assess the progress of students using daily check-outs and in-program assessments. All students should show firm mastery of the sound/letter combination of the day.

Literacy Block Component	Key Indicators of Excellence	Dedicated Time
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear Aim: The teacher states a clear aim that is supported by a visual anchor. • Text Selection: The text chosen for this class is at the group's instructional reading level and is appropriate to work on the skill/strategy necessary to take students to the next level. • Concise Intro to New Material: There is a 5-minute mini-lesson which includes a well-planned explanation and examples of the aim and provides time for the students to quickly practice the focus skill. This section of the lesson introduces and makes reference to a visual anchor. • Read, baby, read: Students are reading almost the entire time, depending on their reading level (10-17 out of the 25 minutes). In the early levels (A-D), students will often be rereading the text several times to continuously work on synthesizing their reading skills. • Planned questioning: Prior to the lesson teachers should plan 	

Guided Reading (GR)

several questions for both their conferences and for the group to discussion at the end of the lesson. These questions should facilitate discussion between students about the text. At least once a week, scholars are engaging in written response to high-level questions.

- Quality conferencing: The bulk of teacher time is spent conferencing with students, monitoring their reading by asking them questions and providing mini-instruction on a group or individual basis. Teachers take notes during conferencing to help guide future instruction and perform progress monitoring. Teachers use conferencing time to check on student use of the “focus” for the class, but also can use this time to help students synthesize reading skills, select the right skill to use, and “bring it all together.” This time is also used to prompt students to use what they know and provide “in the moment coaching” to help scholars use the right skill/strategy to use when struggling (along with the daily aim).
- Students are engaged and on task: Before reading, students are listening attentively to the teacher, responding to questions and practicing skills when prompted. During reading, students are immersed in texts and reading the entire time. After reading, students are all volunteering to answer questions and practicing habits of discussion.
- Formative data collection: Through running records, conference notes, continuous Reading A-Z testing and eventually written responses to text, students are constantly assessed to ensure they are progressing towards their learning

20 – 35 minutes; depending on the group's needs / 3 days a week**

goals, receiving the appropriate intervention and targeted instruction.

Independent Reading

- Independent level texts: During this time, students should be reading on their independent levels.
- Sustained silent reading: Teachers do everything possible to preserve silent, sustained reading to build stamina.
- Text selection: Students can self-select texts during this time at their independent or instructional reading levels and texts that interest them.
- Accountability: Students are held accountable for independent reading through a variety of mechanisms including:
 - Independent reading logs with written responses
 - In-the-moment redirection and affirmation of on-task behavior

Computer-Based Independent Practice

- Computers are functioning: On a weekly basis, 100% of the computers are working every day. Computer and software problems are reported same-day to the Operations Manager. All computers have working headphones. Broken headphones are immediately replaced.
- Transitions to and from the computer are efficient: Students follow routines to quickly log into the software they are using and get to work. When the computer time is over, students know how to exit the program, take off their headphones, push in their chair and leave the workstation ready for the next student.
- Students are engaged and on

Independent Practice & Reading (IPR)

task: Students are purposeful in their use of the software and maintain focus on their own work. When the computers are not working properly, students have problem-solving strategies that they can apply to fix their own problems to the extent possible (close a tab, re-open the browser, re-enter their username and password). In the event that students can't solve their own problems, they know the procedures to follow in order to remain productive (taking out a worksheet, opening a book, studying sight words on a key ring).

- Purposeful use: The software that the students are using serves a clear purpose to advance student reading achievement. Teachers should be able to explain the role that the software plays in driving reading growth and set goals for each scholar or group of scholars based upon reading level.
- Formative data collection and review: In K and grade 1 (through STEP 9) readers are continually assessed by the software in their reading development: phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. In grade 1, more advanced readers are reading books independently on the computer and are completing reading comprehension quizzes. Reading software data can also be shared with parents and most programs can be accessed from home for additional independent practice.

Center Independent Practice

20–45 minutes; depending on task and age-level/daily Independent Reading: 15 min Computer Based Independent Practice: 30 min Center Activity:

15-25 min

Literacy Block Component	Key Indicators of Excellence	Dedicated Time
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a high dose of sacred daily writing time: We learn to write through writing. Our job as teachers is to provide students with a “daily writing workout.” There should be at least 25 minutes spent with students putting pencil to paper in our K-1 writing classrooms. • Have a clear picture of excellence 	

and push scholars toward that: Writing teachers should deeply know the grade level rubrics and anchor papers. They should use this vision to push rigor, not just accepting “okay” but actively challenging each writing to meet – and then exceed – rigorous Common Core standards and curricular expectations.

- Provide daily feedback to each scholar: Students receive feedback in two ways during writing class:
- Students meet with the teacher at least once a week to discuss their writing and receive targeted feedback aligned to the aim of the day and aligned to the scholar’s individual writing goals. The goal is for at least 6 students to take part in a writing conference each day.
- Students who did not receive a conference that day receive written feedback on their writing that is aligned to a rubric. This feedback goes beyond assigning the scholar a grade or rubric score and provides the students actionable feedback that the scholar can apply to their writing in the future. In K-1, before students can read written feedback, the teacher has a system for providing visual cues for written feedback (e.g., a ? means “tell me more” A circled word means to check spelling; an underlined letter means to consider capitalization)
- Plan and provide models of thinking and writing in highly structured mini-lessons: Teachers should use their own writing and/or examples of writing from mentor texts in each lesson to model and evaluate the craft of the genre. These mini-lessons should include a clear aim and use models of the genre (from mentor texts, teacher modeling, or examples from student writing) to model that aim as well as a visual anchor. These lessons should be drawn from Lucie Calkins Units of Study for the grade-level.
- Use data to inform instruction: Teachers should have a method to keep track of daily writing

Writing

45 minutes/
daily

conferences and daily writing feedback that they use to track student growth and development in writing. This data should be used strategically to determine:

- Which student to prioritize during conferring time (while every student should be part of a rotating conferring cycle, some scholars will need to be prioritized throughout the week)
- Which aims to stretch over another day, which aims to spiral back to and which aims to skip. While units themselves are time-bound and teachers should stick to the suggested start and end dates, teachers will be able to select aims to prioritize and/or de-prioritize within a unit.
- Individual goals for each student to attend to in their writing

Literacy in Grades 3-8

Our ELA program in Grades 3-8 operates around one core belief: literacy is freedom. We want our students to become voracious readers who see literature as both a window to other worlds and a mirror to themselves. We want them to advocate through compelling written and oral communication. Ultimately, we want them to discover that, as Frederick Douglass so eloquently stated, “once you learn to read, you will forever be free.”

We prioritize culturally relevant texts for curriculum and robust access to diverse, high-interest independent reading books. Novel units include culturally diverse works such as: *Esperanza Rising*, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Chains*, and *The House on Mango Street*. Ensuring these culturally relevant texts are cognitively challenging and paired with the proper instructional scaffolds ensures our students can meet the demands of more rigorous ELA standards (Shanahan, Fisher, & Frey, 2012).

To foster lifelong readers and writers, we ensure every student has at least 20 minutes of independent reading time every day, as well as access to robust classroom libraries. Prioritizing time, access, and choice within our independent reading structures improves reading motivation and comprehension (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004) and dramatically increases the likelihood students will read outside of school (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001).

As with our mathematics program, the curriculum serving as the backbone of our Grades 3-8 Literacy program will be adopted from Achievement First, a best-in-class charter network serving 14,000 students in Grades K-12 across 37 schools in Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island. Achievement First’s curriculum separates Reading and Writing into separate, aligned blocks each day. As with mathematics, Achievement First’s curriculum provides rigorous, Common Core and Alabama Standards-aligned scope and sequences, unit plans, daily lesson plans and lesson frameworks. As an example of the high quality of texts included in the Achievement First curriculum, several are listed in the table below in the grade-level where they would be taught at LIFE Academy:

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>The Outsiders</i> ii. <i>Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice</i> iii. <i>Number the Stars</i> iv. <i>The Odyssey</i> v. <i>Twelve Angry Men</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>The Giver</i> ii. <i>The Crossover</i> iii. <i>Romeo & Juliet</i> iv. <i>Night</i> v. <i>Persepolis</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>To Kill A Mockingbird</i> ii. <i>Animal Farm</i> iii. <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> iv. <i>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</i>

We believe it is imperative for students to understand the inherent connection between reading and writing: we read to write, and we write to be read. Research also shows that writing about a text improves reading comprehension and is a more impactful than reading alone, reading and rereading, reading and discussing, or reading and studying (Graham & Herbert, 2010). Therefore, we will combine Achievement First’s Reading and Writing classes into one English Language Arts Course. Students have at least 95 minutes of literacy instruction each day, with 75 minutes per day in ELA class and 20 minutes in Accountable Independent Reading time.

Finally, we begin preparing students for AP Language and Literature from 6th grade on by implementing a common set of vertically-aligned written assessments for each unit of instruction. Each unit includes a common mid module short response and a longer end of unit essay focused on one type of writing. Prompts are designed to mirror the rigor of AP English free response questions and scored using a holistic scoring guide. Teachers will gather twice a quarter to commonly score these assessments, analyze results, and evaluate teaching practices in order to prioritize forthcoming instruction. Below is an example of the rubrics that would be used to score such assessments.

Middle School ELA Scoring Guide for Analysis

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Level of Performance	AP Essay Score <i>(Student and teacher facing - aligned to AP English scores)</i>	Paragraph/short response score <i>(teacher facing - aligned to TN Ready scores)</i>	Paragraph/short response symbol <i>(student facing)</i>
Inadequate	1 - 2	1	X
Emerging	3 - 4	2	Check -
Proficient	5	3	Check
Advanced	6	4	Check +

Middle School Sample Scoring Scales

Essay Score	SR Score	Description	Bottom line:
		<p>These demonstrate clear and consistent competence although they may have occasional errors. Such papers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide persuasive analysis of how literary element or device contributed to meaning • Supply specific, detailed 	

6	4	<p>supporting textual evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are well-developed and well-organized using appropriate sequencing and transitions • Are distinguished by an effective style, including descriptive words and phrases, sensory details, effective word choice, and a sense of voice • Demonstrate consistent and effective control of standard English grammar and mechanics 	<p>More than adequate in every way.</p>
5	3	<p>These demonstrate reasonably consistent competence although they will have occasional errors or lapses in quality. Such responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a reasonable analysis of how the literary element or device contributed to meaning • Use appropriate supporting textual evidence • Are generally well-developed and well-organized using appropriate sequencing and transitions • Are distinguished by descriptive words and phrases, sensory details, and appropriate word choice. • Demonstrate consistent and effective control of standard English 	<p>Enough. Technically correct, but a bit tedious to read.</p>
		<p>These demonstrate adequate competence with occasional errors and lapses in quality. Such responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer an inadequate analysis of how the literary 	

4	2+	<p>element or device contributed to meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May present some supporting textual evidence, but commentary often lacks depth, is misguided/inaccurate, or is missing altogether • Are somewhat developed and organized • Display limited variety in descriptive words and phrases, sensory details, and adequate word choice • Demonstrate adequate control of standard English grammar and mechanics although they may have several errors 	<p>Unconvincing, simplistic, or misguided.</p>
3	2-	<p>These demonstrate developing competence. Such responses may contain one or more of the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate understanding of the writing task (how a device/element contributes to meaning) • May contain limited or weak evidence • Demonstrate minimal development and/or weak organization • Few examples of descriptive words and phrases, sensory details, or effective word choice • Contains recurrent errors in grammar and mechanics 	
		<p>These demonstrate some incompetence. Such responses are flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious misunderstanding of the task (how a device/element contributes to meaning); 	

2	1+	<p>little to no analysis - often a mere summary of the passage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disjointed or inappropriate evidence (if any is included) • Inadequate development, or vague generalizations; confusing or poor organization • Almost no examples of descriptive words and phrases, sensory details, or effective word choice • Frequent errors in grammar and mechanics that interfere with the reader's understanding 	<p>Unacceptable. Misses the mark completely</p>
1	1	<p>These papers demonstrate incompetence. Such responses are seriously flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only a passing reference to the writing task • Unacceptable brevity • No attempt to supply supporting evidence • Consistent lack of organization and development • Serious errors in grammar and mechanics 	
0	0	<p>These responses are completely off-topic or are blank.</p>	

Graham, S., & Hebert, 2010. *Writing to read: Evidence for how writing can improve reading* . New York, NY : Carnegie Corporation. Kirsch , I.S. , & Jungeblut , A.

Guthrie, J. T., & Humenick, N. M. (2004). Motivating students to read: Evidence for classroom practices that increase motivation and achievement. In P. McCardle & V. Chhabra (Eds.), *The voice of evidence in reading research* (pp. 329–354). Baltimore: Paul Brookes.

Ivey, G., & Broaddus, K. (2001). Just plain reading: A survey of what makes students want to read in middle schools. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 36, 350–377.

Shanahan, T., Fisher, D. , & Frey, N. (2012). The challenge of challenging text. *Educational Leadership*, 69 (6), 58 – 63.

Common Instructional Practices

To create consistent outcomes for every student in every classroom across every campus, all LIFE Academy teachers, leaders, and staff members will work diligently to uphold key academic and cultural practices that, when done effectively, promote a higher rigor resulting in a college ready classroom environment. Intentionally using the techniques charted below in as part of LIFE Academy’s school programming and culture was inspired by Doug Lemov, Founder of Rochester Prep in Rochester, NY, Founding Principal of the Academy of the Pacific Rim in Boston, and author of *Teach Like A Champion*. Mr. Lemov is among the most accomplished school leader trainers in school design, curriculum, assessment, and data driven instruction. He currently serves as the Managing Director of *Teach Like a Champion*, the training organization associated with his techniques. *Teach Like A Champion* has a multi-year partnership with Freedom Prep Charter Schools, the partner organization to the Freedom Fellows Institute, which LIFE Academy’s founder has received training and support from for the opening of LIFE Academy.

Common Instructional Practices		
There is an exhaustive list of barriers to academic achievement for African American and	Behavioral	Approach that encourages teachers to enforce compliance with every expectation, including aspects that may seem minor.
Do it Again	Behavioral	Technique in which a teacher instructs students to complete a procedure or process that has been practiced and demands that students repeat the process if it is not done well or by all students.
		Many teachers respond to a correct answer by saying “good” or

<p>Latino students from economically depressed communities, and those</p>	<p>Academic</p>	<p>“right.” With this technique a teacher can push students to higher standards by asking them to “stretch” their answer by explaining how they arrived at an answer or asking them to answer a more complex question that builds on that same concept or standard.</p>
<p>Ratio (and sometimes personal) impediments so often psychologically remove</p>	<p>Academic</p>	<p>Method in which the teacher purposefully minimizes the time spent talking to afford more opportunities for the class to lead instruction by answering questions as a group or individually.</p>
<p>No Opt Out</p>	<p>Academic</p>	<p>Process in which a student who answers incorrectly is not able to give up on the learning process. We have high expectations for student performance and a teacher should not accept “I don’t know” for an answer. Instead the teacher should prompt the student to answer a clarifying question, or push the student to attempt to answer. If the student genuinely does not know the answer the teacher will call on a fellow classmates to assist, and then the student will be asked the same question or be given a similar question to answer correctly.</p>
<p>the will for educators, families, or the</p>	<p>Academic/ Behavioral</p>	<p>Strategy that combines a caring tone with a ‘no exceptions’ standard of behavioral expectations. Often used by teachers to build culture and set the tone inside their classrooms.</p>
<p>Warm/Strict</p>	<p>Academic/ Behavioral</p>	<p>Technique used by teachers to reward students with praise using very specific examples that are meaningful and genuine. For example: “Lisa you did a great job using three distinct adjectives to describe the main character.”</p>
<p>to advocate for their learning. LIFE Academy acknowledges those</p>	<p>Academic/ Behavioral</p>	<p>Strategy that combines a caring tone with a ‘no exceptions’ standard of behavioral expectations. Often used by teachers to build culture and set the tone inside their classrooms.</p>

barriers but focuses its full and undivided attention on creating high impact, gap closing K-8 school uniquely customized to help marginalized students overcome the institutional roadblocks, tap into their community-created resiliency, and excel in life amidst adversity.

A culture of structure and consistency is key to achieving strong academic results with students in the short- and long-term. Students cannot learn in chaos; there must be a clear, consistent behavior strategy and plan that includes positive and negative reinforcements. LIFE Academy establishes a highly structured, consistent, and disciplined school environment for children to learn. Staff explicitly teach behavioral expectations and daily requirements for academic support and behavioral consequences. In classrooms, all teachers use a Common Blackboard Configuration (BBC) that contains the Alabama Standard of study, Daily Objective, Do Now, Agenda, and Homework. Beginning in the sixth grade, each student has a Common Binder Configuration to further reinforce the structure and consistency of the educational program. Students continue to have a Common Binder Configuration and Common Blackboard Configuration until they reach the eighth grade when LIFE Academy will begin to phase out these supports to better prepare students for the rigor, flexibility, and increased responsibility of a college preparatory course of study in the high school.

LIFE Academy will strategically support the completion of homework for every student, knowing a lack of successful homework completion is often a promoter of student underachievement. To ensure effectiveness, professional development will allow staff to be explicitly trained in the appropriate role of homework (as an effective method of review for previously disseminated content), the development of good homework assignments, and the sharing of all homework expectations with families. The school design provides time to closely monitor student homework completion each day as homework is collected in the morning as students arrive, and immediately checked for completion, accuracy, and overall quality. Those students who do not complete their assignments appropriately and professionally are required to attend Success Lab the same day during their scheduled lunch period. All families are informed of their student's homework completion rates on a bi-weekly basis.

Student behavior, lesson engagement, student-teacher relationship, and motivation to learn are each variables that, if not controlled and thoughtfully planned for, can derail student learning and create a less than ideal learning environment. Classrooms where these variables are not accounted for quickly become "classrooms on fire" that consistently drain administrative time and resources, minimize student learning, and (most immediately) place the social, emotional, and physical safety of everyone in the room in danger. Proactively controlling for the mentioned variables, LIFE Academy will plan with meticulous detail and develop teachers to meet the following standards:

Learning Environment/ Physical Space

- Neat/Clutter free
- Desk configuration is neat, thoughtful, and conducive to learning
- Student data is posted, visible, and updated
- Exemplary student work is posted, visible, and updated
- LIFE Academy core beliefs are neatly, visibly, and attractively posted (via core values, mission, vision, or motto)

Classroom Procedures & What To Dos

- There is always a prompt start and a smooth finish to class.
- The classroom is highly urgent, and procedures seem routine to all.
- Gives What to Do directions that are specific, concrete, sequential, observable and student-friendly.
- Always narrates compliance instead of narrating what not to do.

100% Engagement

- 100% of students actively/visibly engaging the content through reading, writing, responding, or tracking the speaker.
- The teacher always notices and addresses off-task behavior.
- If a student moves off task, teacher immediately addresses the student always using the least invasive form of intervention and without major adjustments to the pace of instruction.

Relationships with students

- Creates a climate of caring in the classroom by addressing students in a respectful and positive manner.
- Positive relationships with students support learning in the classroom.
- Demonstrates responsibility for students’ academic and personal growth.
- Teacher demonstrates that s/he will not give up on students.

Differentiation

As articulated in our model for Grades K-2 Math & Literacy, both are co-taught, which provides significant additional instructional attention to all students. Through phonics rotations, guided reading rotations and small group math instruction, all students in grades K-2 receive individualized and/or small group instruction multiple times per day.

In Grades 3-8, each school day has a 45-minute intervention block where all grade level teachers and special education teachers each pull a small group and provide additional instructional attention in either Math or ELA. During this block, students also receive the opportunity for 20 minutes of independent reading, as previously articulated.

After School tutoring will also be offered in Math and ELA 2-3 times per week beginning in Grade 3. Tutoring in Grades K-2 will be established on an as-needed basis in response to data.

Additionally, one row of our proposed Teacher Evaluation Framework articulates our overall vision for Differentiation during whole group instruction.

	Exemplary	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Needs Improvement
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<p>Differentiation</p>	<p>Teacher enters daily lesson with a likely-to-succeed plan to make daily lesson activities and assessment accessible to all students. Teacher seeks additional one-on-one or small group instructional time with students needing the most academic support. Teacher also provides additional challenge to students for whom the daily lesson content does not present enough of an appropriate challenge.</p>	<p>Teacher enters daily lesson with a likely-to-succeed plan to make daily lesson activities and assessment accessible to all students. Teacher seeks additional one-on-one or small group instructional time with students needing the most academic support.</p>	<p>Teacher enters daily lesson with a plan to make daily lesson activities and assessment accessible to all students, but this plan is not likely-to-succeed.</p>	<p>There is little to no evidence to suggest the teacher considers differentiation as part of the lesson planning process.</p>
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Attachments

Section 2: Curriculum and Instructional Design

2.1	Attachment 3	Debnam, Kia, 11/15/19 8:33 AM	DOCX / 189.019 KB
2.2	Attachment 2	Debnam, Kia, 11/15/19 7:14 AM	DOCX / 189.917 KB

3. Student Performance Standards

Student Performance Standards - Academics

LIFE Academy prepares all students to excel in college and in life through a focus on character education and college-preparatory academics. In all areas, LIFE Academy looks to the Common Core State Standards and the Alabama Curriculum Standards as both a high-bar for academic rigor and as the most important learning outcomes to prepare students to demonstrate exceptional results on Alabama state assessments. The table below outlines student performance standards, by grade level.

Grade	Literacy	Math	Social Studies	Science
Kindergarten	Alabama Curriculum Standards, Common Core State Standards & STEP Assessment "Bottom Lines"	Alabama Curriculum Standards & Common Core State Standards	Alabama Curriculum Standards	Alabama Curriculum Standards
1 st Grade				
2 nd Grade				
3 rd Grade				
4 th Grade				
5 th Grade	Alabama Curriculum Standards & Common Core State Standards	Alabama Curriculum Standards		
6 th Grade				
7 th Grade				
8 th Grade	Alabama Curriculum Standards & Common Core State Standards			

Beyond Academics

In addition to academics, LIFE Academy recognizes that each student graduating from its program will possess five qualities. Graduates will be a: Mindful and Resilient Being, Culturally

Conscious Citizen, Compassionate Leader, Holistic Learner, and Courageous Collaborator. These qualities are rooted in LIFE core values, and contribute to the development of adults who are civically responsible, global minded leaders rooted in self-awareness.

Mindful and Resilient-Being

LIFE Academy graduates are aware of and accountable to their moment to moment thoughts and actions. They understand that at any given time, feelings and conditions may change, but their goals do not. Graduates acknowledge their humanity, feel their emotions, and grow from all circumstances.

Culturally Conscious Citizen

LIFE Academy graduates are continuously growing in their awareness of peoples and customs across culture, religion, geographical regions, and other lines of diversity. They appreciate this awareness and take responsibility for their own lives and communities in creating room for themselves, and advocating for marginalized populations.

Compassionate Leader

LIFE Academy graduates are servant leaders who are empathetic to those they lead, while giving themselves the grace to make mistakes. Compassionate leaders are continually revisiting their approaches and communication, ensuring they purposefully create secure spaces for courageously collaboration.

Holistic Learner

LIFE Academy graduates are open-minded and curious. Holistic learners look at the world (inside and outside of the classroom) through knowledge-based lenses that afford them the ability to continuously combat old and adapt new thought processes.

Courageous Collaborator

LIFE Academy graduates are team players. Whether in school, a career, or an entrepreneurial endeavor, graduates are adults who can work with any team. Graduates understand that it takes vulnerability to be led by another, and therefore courage to actively contribute to the team dynamic.

Grade 2 and Grade 8 Proficiency Profiles

Attachments 2 & 4 outline, in detail, the skills, mindsets and dispositions expected of students by the end of 2nd Grade and 4th Grade in order to ensure they are on track to excel in college and in life.

Promotion Criteria

Students at LIFE Academy may be retained in their current grade level based on the following criteria, or due to additional criteria outlined in our Student Handbook or additional reasons agreed upon by LIFE Academy and the students' parent/guardian to be in the best interest of the student.

To be promoted from Kindergarten to 1st Grade:

- Students must achieve STEP 3

To be promoted from 1st Grade to 2nd Grade:

- Students must achieve STEP 5

To be promoted from 2nd Grade to 3rd Grade:

- Students must achieve STEP 7

In grades 3-8, students must achieve the following to be promoted to the next grade:

- 60% or higher cumulative average in Math
- 60% or higher cumulative average in Reading

Family Communication Regarding At-Risk for Promotion

Following STEP Round 1 in Grades K-2 and the first report card in Grades 3-8, families whose children are at-risk for not being promoted to the next grade level will be sent written notice requesting an in-person meeting focused on action planning from all angles to better support the academic success of the student. Prior to a student being retained in a grade level, three such meetings must take place and be documented with family signatures, as follows: a minimum of one such meeting in Semester 1 and a minimum of two such meetings in Semester 2.

Attachments

Section 3: Student Performance Standards

3.1	Attachment 5	Debnam, Kia, 11/19/19 2:35 AM	DOCX / 200.689 KB
3.2	Attachment 4	Debnam, Kia, 11/19/19 2:35 AM	DOCX / 174.136 KB

4. High School Graduation Requirements

Per the instructions below, this section is not applicable to LIFE Academy's Charter as LIFE Academy is a proposed K-8 school.

Attachments

Section 4: High School Graduation Requirements

– No Attachments –

5. School Calendar and Schedule

Academic Calendar

LIFE Academy’s annual school year calendar reflects and supports the needs of our academic

program by providing ample time for teacher professional development and providing 180 instructional days. Teacher Orientation runs for 21 full days in the summer prior to the first day of school. During this time, LIFE Academy leadership will acculturate and train new teachers to lead strong LIFE Academy classrooms in their first year with LIFE Academy. ESSA aspires for Alabama schools to "maintain superior educator preparation programs and support continuous improvement of world-class educators". LIFE meets this need by hosting professional development every other Friday, with a dismissal time of 1:30pm in order to allow for two additional hours of teacher training and development. Every eighth Friday, students will dismiss at 12pm for an extended Friday Professional Development, which will include instructional development, data analysis as well as other urgent topics necessary to execute the vision of LIFE Academy.

School Day

LIFE Academy's instructional day runs from 7:35am-3:30pm, with school doors opening at 7:05am and breakfast beginning at 7:10am daily. Dismissal is daily at 3:30pm, with exception of early release days, which are most often a dismissal of 1:30pm and occasionally a dismissal of 12:00pm. Below is an outline of how academic time is allocated throughout our school day in grades K-2 and 3-8, as is reflected in the daily schedules in Attachment 7 for all three dismissal times and as is consistent with Educational Program Design and Capacity Section 2. The table below accounts for the 470 minutes of daily instruction that fall between the end of breakfast and the beginning of dismissal.

Grades K-2

Community Circle/Goal-Setting/Socio-Emotional Learning - 20 Minutes

Literacy – 210 Minutes

- 135 Minutes: Phonics, Guided Reading & Independent Reading Rotations (Three 45 minute rotations)
- 30 Minutes: Read Aloud
- 45 Minutes: Writing

Mathematics – 90 Minutes

- 10 Minutes: Calendar Math
- 25 Minutes: Math Stories
- 55 Minutes: Game-Based Math Lesson

Science/Social Studies/Electives – 45 Minutes

- Alternating between 45 Minutes Science, 45 Minutes Social Studies & 45 Minutes of Electives

Lunch & Recess – 50 Minutes

Reflection/Socio-Emotional Learning - 30 Minutes

Grades 6-8

Community Circle/Goal-Setting/Socio-Emotional Learning - 20 Minutes

Literacy – 90 Minutes

- 75 Minutes: ELA Lesson
- 20 Minutes: Accountable Independent Reading

Math – 75 Minutes

- 60 Minutes: Math Lesson
- 15 Minutes: Math Fluency/Math Stories

Science – 75 Minutes

- 75 Minutes: Science Lesson/Science Lab

Social Studies – 75 Minutes

- 75 Minutes: Social Studies Lesson

Lunch & Recess – 50 Minutes

Intervention Block - 45 Minutes

Reflection/Socio-Emotional Learning & Electives (Rotates) - 30 Minutes**Attachments****Section 5: School Calendar and Schedule**

5.1	Attachment 7	Debnam, Kia, 11/20/19 7:25 PM	XLSX / 87.893 KB
5.2	Attachment 6	Debnam, Kia, 11/16/19 10:38 PM	DOCX / 43.303 KB

6. School Culture**School Culture is the Catalyst to Academic Achievement**

LIFE Academy views academic success as dependent on the environment in which the learning is occurring. Given that a safe and supportive school climate and culture is linked to positive student outcomes, it is critical that educators understand how to create and sustain such an environment [1]. LIFE faculty and staff receive 180 hours of professional development, including 120 hours during the summer, prior to student arrival focused heavily on creating and maintaining a climate and culture reflective of the vision of LIFE Academy. A school's academic achievement is contingent upon and inextricably linked to its ability to establish a strong school culture [2]. For this reason, LIFE leadership and staff hold two, 4 -hour student and guardian orientations prior to entering school. During this time, faculty and families are given time to meet, connect, and commit over the core beliefs and values of LIFE. Students who begin their LIFE journey mid year as a transfer student start with a family meeting with the Principal, spend their first morning with the Dean of students for a mini-orientation, and are placed in a friend group within their homeroom to help ease the transition to the new school and new expectations. In partnering with families and the community, LIFE creates a sustainable culture for all students.

With a sense of connectedness, a priority of maintaining a trauma-sensitive learning environment, and involvement of students in their learning, disciplinary problems and disruptions are minimal. The LIFE community is unwavering in maintaining a safe and considerate environment in which students are held socially accountable for displaying the high levels of integrity, kindness and respect already learned within their homes. The school environment must be allied with home values, so that students are continually held to the same high standards prescribed by guardians. Therefore, students greet and are greeted with respect upon entering and maneuvering the LIFE space (thresholding). Greetings incorporate a warm gesture (handshake, hug, or whichever is most comfortable for both parties), and a verbal acknowledgment including the individual's name. LIFE's core values of *freedom* and *efficacy* rely heavily on social awareness and social currency. In students consistently greeting faculty and staff, they're given the opportunities to practice and apply these values.

LIFE Academy will utilize community circles to build relationships between students and their peers, students and teachers, teachers and their peers, leadership and teachers, the community and school, and so on. Community circle is a restorative justice practice where individuals sit in a circle, while questions are posed. As a "talking piece" is passed around, individuals answer the question provided. This activity allows individuals to learn about one another's similarities and

differences in experiences and thought processes. Community circles range in intensity from shallow GTKY (Get to know you) circles, to conflict resolution and pre discussions for content learning.

Academic Culture

LIFE Academy is passionate about the use of the UDL model of language acquisition. These strategies include multiple means of representation, cooperative learning strategies, and connection of content to student background; these approaches are often employed for English Language Learners. LIFE utilizes the perspective that scholastic English is a vernacular of the English language, and therefore should be taught as an entirely new language to our students. With this lens, all students are linguistically supported as they learn to read, write, and comprehend academic texts. Students are taught the linguistic and cultural competencies that inform the English language and thus students are provided the nuances of language. This fashions students who interact with ELA as a perpetual mathematic equation rather than an isolated concept. This approach also makes all content accessible to any level of English literacy.

Social sciences at LIFE Academy are meant to analyze historical patterns and promote critical thought of current, local and global perspectives. K-2 students experience History through literacy and exposure to non-fictional and historical texts. Grades 3-8 are exposed to psychology/sociology/anthropology alongside of History to build contextual understandings and develop interpretations of motivations leading to historical decisions and their consequences.

In cultivating global leaders, LIFE Academy is intentional about interweaving psychology and empathy within all academic tasks. To support this understanding and promote sense of belonging and social awareness, students sit in pods of 4 to 5 students within the classroom. Working as a solo individual is obsolete. In the 21st century, offices and educational centers are run like open forums with integrated spaces and group dynamics to provide multiple perspectives; our school classrooms will do the same.

In continuance of supporting the growth of leaders, social emotional health is another LIFE priority. Community circles provides students 25 minutes each morning to positively connect with their peers, self-reflect, and set attainable goals for the day. At the end of each school day, students are provided 35 minutes to revisit their goals and access the day's performance. Because staff will be trained and continuously supported by LIFE leadership and social workers, these times for social emotional learning and grounding will set foundation for each school day as a new day.

The school day and curriculum have been designed to constantly expose students to grade level content while allotting time for small group remediation. This provides both rigor and support to scaffold students from current proficiency levels to above grade level proficiency.

Highly Supportive, Consistent, and Trauma-Invested School Environment

At its foundation, LIFE Academy is distinguished by its secure and empowering environment, which creates the safe space for authenticity and true learning. Students cannot efficiently learn in disarray and unpredictability, therefore consistent behavioral demands and positive reinforcement are required. Faculty explicitly teaches behavioral expectations, defines and provides academic supports, and offers physical space in each room where students can address socio-emotional needs (The "Nest"). Within each classroom, all teaching staff utilizes Common Blackboard Configuration (CBC) which includes the objective of the day, the Common Core Learning Standard, Do Now, Agenda, Homework, Core Value, and any upcoming project due dates. At the sixth grade level, this configuration is still available on the board, and students are given agendas to copy the CBC into, to begin the structural release of responsibility. By the 8th grade, the

classroom board CBC discontinues, and it is the student responsibility to scribe as the teacher provides the information verbally. In the same current of release of responsibility, notes are taken using graphic organizers in earlier grades, and those organizers are gradually discontinued as students finish 8th grade. There is a gradual release of responsibility across many areas within the school including classroom transitions, autonomy in choosing elective courses, responsibility for younger literacy circles, etc.

Character Enrichment

Students spend a majority of their waking hours at school, therefore school needs to be an institution that supports families' and communities' efforts to foster strong values in students. LIFE refers to the development of character values as "character enrichment" to emphasize that our students are coming into school with a wealth of pre-established knowledge, experience, character traits, and values that will be absolutely validated, and then either reinforced or restructured. Educators are charged with the duty of assisting students to understand that consistently executing values are an important part of the educational process, as well as their overall development as an individual. LIFE Academy is governed by six core values that form its framework. For LIFE to stay true to its mission of preparing all students for a successful future in college, careers, and/or entrepreneurial endeavors, these are the values to which our teachers, leaders, support staff, and board members demonstrate robust fidelity that unavoidably becomes contagious to student development:

Leadership. LIFE Academy helps students construct and work towards the vision of their own future, and provides the strategies and understanding of how to motivate and inspire others to engage in that vision.

Integrity. The LIFE community values and promotes honesty and strong morality in all areas.

Freedom. LIFE provides a safe, welcoming environment where all are encouraged and supported in being their most authentic selves.

Enlightenment. LIFE believes that each day provides the opportunity to learn and grow. Staff and students take the time to reflect on what was learned and how it challenges and changes what is already known.

Empowerment. LIFE grants teachers and staff the audacity to be self-determined and autonomous. With educational exposure and permission to make mistakes, staff models for and grooms students to become self-aware, powerful, and catalysts of change.

Efficacy. LIFE equips teachers, staff, and students with the academic and social awareness and capital to produce their own desired results.

Students are exposed to these core values during the summer student/guardian orientation, on the walls of every classroom, during weekly "SOAR" meetings where students who embody these values are celebrated, and more. As a culturally relevant, trauma sensitive school, character enrichment is at the foundation of every class. Written in the CBC on the board is the core value most related to the lesson. At the close of each day, students spend the last 35 minutes reflecting on which core value(s) they've personified, something new learned that has shifted what they already know, and a goal for the following day. This daily practice of identification and reflection strengthens the habit of self-reflection in students, and supports them in their lifelong utilization of the core values.

Character Enlightenment through Support Blocks

According to the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI), one of the attributes embodied by a trauma sensitive school is “the school explicitly connects students to the school community and provides multiple opportunities to practice newly developing skills.” The skills and values being practiced among the community, will reflect the core values. Weekly, students participate and engage with the support block , a core –value themed block of two hours rooted in community service and student connectedness. Examples of support day theme and executions are:

Leadership – Older and/or higher performing students tutor younger/developing students in course work.

Integrity – Students participate in scavenger hunts/games, mazes, or group projects designed to expose student honesty and morality.

Freedom – Social workers and school counselors lead group sessions on therapeutic strategies rooted in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) that give students the tools they need to be their most healthy, authentic selves.

Enlightenment – Community elders, parents, business owners, and school leaders lead themed break-out talks that address topics ranging from social emotional health to entrepreneurship.

Empowerment – Students involved in student council, beautification club, and other associations meet with faculty advisors to create initiatives to present to the student body to vote on.

Efficacy – In exercising their power to create change, students are broken into groups to serve in the community garden or grounds keeping, to better understand how their decisions effect their trajectory, as well as the trajectory of the community.

Classroom Learning Environment

Safety, joy, student engagement, physical space, and staff relationships with students are thoughtfully planned for as to not create anything less than an ideal learning environment. Classrooms where these factors are not proactively addressed become chaotic classrooms that consistently over utilize administrative time and resources, diminish student learning time, and most pressingly place the social, emotional, and physical safety of students and staff alike in the room, in danger. LIFE Academy is strategic with great detail and develops teachers to meet the following standards:

Learning Environment/ Physical Space

- LIFE core beliefs are visibly posted
- Orderly and Organized
- Students are seated in peer learning groups, facing one another
- Different types of seating are available
- Student data is self created and posted
- Student work is posted and updated
- The space is colorful and elicits joy
- Statements of affirmation and inspirational quotes are on walls

Classroom Procedures

- Procedures are routine to all classrooms
- Each class begins punctually
- Classes follow the same time allotment (review of CBC, opening, exposure, independent practice, exit survey)
- Directions are given clearly, directly, and with economy of language
- Transitions are limited to 5 minutes
- Celebrations and chants are taught as procedure

Relationships with students

- Positive and genuine relationships with students
- Faculty and staff know all students by name
- Shared core belief among faculty and staff that all students are capable
- Each day starts anew
- Every semester, teachers make one positive call home for each student on their roster
- LIFE Community Meetings (known as parent teacher conferences) have once a semester

Student Engagement and Responsibility

- Students feel empowered to ask questions
- Students feel safe to answer questions
- “Wrong” is a path to understanding, not failure
- Attention is given to positive behaviors
- Excellence is possible, and therefore required

Student Care

- Trauma invested learning environment
- A “Nest” Cool down corner is clearly designated in each classroom for student de-escalation
- Bullying is not tolerated
- Inclusive classroom
- Hygiene products and clean clothes are available
- Each room has a rainbow flag (for LGBTQ students and staff) and a butterfly (for undocumented students)

LIFE Academy classrooms are organized with kid culture in mind, consistent, and dedicated to maximizing learning time. Students enter the classroom after greeting the teacher, and check-in on their social engagement and emotional status. For younger students, they place a green, yellow, or red card next to their name, so all teachers in the classroom are aware and can proceed accordingly. For older students with one on one technology, they'll come into the classroom and enter their status on their laptop/tablet. For older students, they track trends in their social emotional status and use support day to address ongoing concerns. Within two minutes of the start of class, students will have completed their brief self-evaluation, taken their seats, and began engaging in the do-now. As students complete their do-now, each teacher circulates the classroom to monitor student work, check-in with “red” students, assess which fragments of the content must be reviewed, and gather a greater understanding of what students know. As the lesson begins, students listen to the teachers explain the objectives for the day and the necessities for reaching that objective. Customarily, all students are looking at and giving their attention to the speaker. This shows a sign of respect, and is the same respect given to students as they speak. Students use the American Sign Language (ASL) gesture to show agreement or support when another student provides a thoughtful response, answers correctly, or needs encouragement.

LIFE Academy classrooms are safe for risk-taking. Students are encouraged to engage and answer questions, even if they are unsure of the answer. The propensity for students to take risks is in direct correlation with the psychological and physical safety of the classroom. LIFE understands that sometimes learning best takes place when someone, student or teacher, is wrong. Students are primed to see one another as competent decision makers and catalysts of greatness. With this in mind, many questions and activities posed to the class will allow students to work in conference with their table pods. Students practice hearing the thoughts of others, compromise, and asserting one's voice when necessary. LIFE embodies the African Proverb "If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together". Students learning to leverage the strengths of their pods.

LIFE Academy faculty do not monopolize airtime in the classroom. Rather, the focus of educational leaders (especially the leaders of the classroom) is to increase student voice. 61% of students feel they have a voice upon entering middle school, and only 1/3 of students leaving high school say the same^[1]. Encouraging and providing the space for students to use their voice is empowering and promotes efficacy.

Student voice is increased when ample amount of opportunities are provided for students to navigate their curiosity in questioning, discovering, and analyzing. LIFE invokes its innovative spirit within the structured yet student driven culture of the classroom. However novel, this model activates higher order thinking in students. Rather than memorizing and repeating facts to the teacher, LIFE students are continually applying and analyzing new information. These are the skills needed to embrace the entrepreneurial nature that is being cultivated in students.

At the conclusion of class, students complete their set-up (clean-up) process. Students are setting themselves up for organizational success in the next class, as well as providing the next class entering with the same privilege of a clean and structured space that they received. In wording responsibilities as positive action, LIFE deters from the negative association adopted with certain pro-active organizational terms. I.e. cleaning and fixing are referred to as preparing and preserving.

LIFE views student behavior as communication of an unmet need. These unmet needs fall into one of two categories, as either something the student wants or something the student wishes to avoid.^[1] Additionally, Van Marter Souers & Hall (2018) further classifies these needs into four groups: Emotional, Relational, Physical, and Control –based. There is nothing inherently wrong with these needs, and students will be guided in learning to communicate these needs in a non-disruptive manner. LIFE Academy students will be nurtured in self-assessing their own needs and the required behavior to meet those needs, by 3rd grade.

Behaviors of a student communicating an unmet emotional need are: shutting down, moodiness, restlessness, tough transitions, and a short-temper. Some strategies utilized when a student presents signs of an unmet emotional needs are: brain breaks, mindfulness/meditation, and the "Nest" reset station. Students need the time and a designated space to de-escalate their fear and reinforce that they are safe.

Behaviors of a student communicating an unmet relational need are: constant need to be in close proximity to adults, use extreme language like "never" and "hate", and behavioral outburst for attention. Some strategies utilized when a student presents signs of an unmet relational needs are: 1 to 1 check-ins, kneel, compliments, journal prompts, and thresholding.

Behaviors of a student communicating an unmet physical need are: sleeping during the school

day, stomach pains, irritability, isolation from other students, and unkept appearance. Some strategies utilized when a student presents signs of an unmet physical needs are: supplying snacks throughout the day, supplying clean uniform pieces within a school closet, asking questions, and reaching out to guardians with only positive assumptions of student circumstance.

Lastly, behaviors of a student communicating an unmet need of control are: class disruption, a deep need of predictability, fractured interpersonal relationships, and negative self-talk. Some strategies utilized when a student presents signs of an unmet control-based needs are: school and classroom jobs, clear rubrics and expectations, self-selected exit strategies, forecasting changes in routine, goal setting, and monitoring.

In preparation for providing a learning environment that is safe, connected, and set up to nourish higher order thinking, LIFE Academy trains teachers through the ideology of Conscious Discipline [1]. “Children come to school asking ‘Am I safe?’, ‘Am I loved?’, or ‘What can I learn?’. Effective schools create cultures that answer the first 2 questions in the affirmative, and then provide the academic and social-emotional skills necessary for optimal growth.” Safety (physical and psychological) is a LIFE Academy priority because we stress the belief that real learning cannot occur within a classroom that is mismanaged and unsupported; essentially unsafe. With the use of a variety of management tools provided to teachers and ongoing PD inundated with practice, teachers and staff will recall and automatically implement said tools in the moments that call for such action. LIFE routinely allots 60-65% of development time, to practice. LIFE Academy leadership understands that the format of professional development must model classroom dynamics and independent time, so teachers have first-hand understanding and empathy for student learning. LIFE Academy teach and practice the following conscious values:

Safety. LIFE Academy builds a classroom that utilizes the acronym N.A.R.C.S. These tools stand for Noticing, Assertiveness, Routines, Composure, and the shared language of Safety. This conscious value speaks to the proactive portion of behavioral intervention. By understanding the Brain state model, and acknowledging and providing unmet student needs, teacher and staff prevent many behaviors before they begin.

Connection. Healthy connections promote problem solving and thriving. LIFE Academy promotes student-connectedness and utilizes the acronym R.E.J.E.C.T. These tools are Rituals, Encouragement, Jobs, Empathy, Choices, and The School Family. To ensure continuous brain and social development, LIFE creates a compassionate classroom where children care about themselves and others on a deep level.

Problem Solving. In alignment with the core values of freedom and efficacy, the conscious value of problem solving uses tools outlines in the acronym S.P.A.C.E. Solutions, Positive Intent, Academic Integration, Consequences, and Executive Skills. As reflected in research and LIFE, problem solving (academic achievement) can only occur when we create a sense of safety and increase connection by building a compassionate School Family [2]. If we want students to learn from their mistakes and make different choices in the future, we must create internal and external conditions that support this goal.

Three school characteristics stand out as helping young people feel connected to school while simultaneously encouraging student achievement: (1) a physically and emotionally safe school environment; (2) an environment in which adult and student relationships are positive and respectful; and (3) high academic standards coupled with strong teacher support. Students who feel connected to school (independent of how these students are faring academically) are less

likely to use substances, exhibit emotional distress, demonstrate violent or deviant behavior, experience suicidal thoughts or attempt suicide, and become pregnant (Lonczak, Abbott, Hawkins, Kosterman, & Catalano, 2002; Samdal, Nutbeam, Wold, & Kannas, 1998).

In addition, when young people feel connected to school, they are less likely to skip school or be involved in fighting, bullying, and vandalism (Schapps, 2003; Wilson & Elliott, 2003). These students are more likely to succeed academically and graduate (Connell, Halpern-Felsher, Clifford, Crichlow, & Usinger, 1995; Wentzel, 1998).[\[3\]](#)

For students who struggle to meet classroom behavioral goals, a number of interventions are present to ensure that the student is identifying the feeling behind the behavior, practicing methods of self-regulation, reflecting on the behavior and making better choices. These interventions include non-verbal and verbal acknowledgement of unsafe/unhealthy behavior, assertive statements, use of proximity, restorative conversations by teacher, adding SOAR dollars, parent phone calls, parent meetings, standing or impromptu check-ins with school counselor, temporary removal from class and meeting with the Dean. In-school detention and out-of-school suspension are our most drastic measures and are only used if a student harms self or others. If used at all, LIFE Academy commits to maintaining a suspension rate < 3% annually. Incorporating aspects of the restorative justice approach to classroom management (community meetings), teacher development on effective classroom management strategies, encouraging greater involvement of our on-campus social workers and special populations team to closely support identified students, and carefully implementing the Behavior RTI program increase the opportunities for struggling students to rebound from mistakes, return to class in a healthy mental space, and continue their daily enlightenment.

Supporting Students with IEPs

For students with IEPs or 504 accommodations, LIFE Academy ensures that we make the necessary adjustments to comply with all mandates of State and federal laws, including the IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Plan of 1973, regarding the discipline of students with disabilities. Specifically, if addressing a major incident involving a 504 student or special education student, the Principal convenes a review committee to determine the following:

- whether the student's misconduct was a manifestation of his or her disability
- whether the student was appropriately placed and receiving the appropriate services at the time of the misconduct
- whether behavior intervention strategies were in effect and consistent with the student's IEP or 504 Plan

If it is determined by the LIFE team that the student's misconduct was not a manifestation of his or her disability, that the student was appropriately placed, was receiving appropriate services at the time of the misconduct, that the behavior intervention strategies were in effect and consistent with the student's IEP, then the student may receive the same consequence aligned to the incident as documented in the handbook. If any element was not in place, LIFE works with the student and his/her family to ensure that all protected rights are secured as the school reworks and improves the implementation of the documented plan.

Another key component of LIFE Academy's school-wide discipline system is a token economy, measured by SOAR dollars. This system, described in more detail below, allows teachers to reward students for positive behavior. (look up research for positive reinforcement vs punishment)

Students will receive \$50 PRIDE dollars weekly. Teachers will award or deduct PRIDE dollars from students throughout the week. At the end of each week, a staff member will tally the bonuses and deductions and print PRIDE paychecks. Paychecks will be distributed on Mondays.

Students must bring paychecks home, have a parent or guardian review the paycheck and sign it, and bring it back to school the following school-day. Failure to bring a signed paycheck back to school will result in a student having \$50 PRIDE dollars deducted from their bank account. There will be various rewards and consequences associated with paycheck dollars. On the rewards side, scholars will have the opportunity to spend their accumulated PRIDE dollars on tangible prizes like toys, school utensils and or LIFE Apparel. Additionally, students can purchase "hall passes" and accumulate classroom parties. Hall Passes allow students to dress casual, wear fun sneakers with their uniform, wear a funny hat and the like. Classroom parties can include a dance, pizza, or popcorn party. As the staff builds relationships with students, these options are sure to reflect student interests.

While all LIFE Academy teachers are trained to uniformly hold a high bar behaviorally, the method of progress monitoring student behavior differs based on age appropriateness.

[1] Bailey, Rebecca Anne. Conscious discipline: Building resilient classrooms. Oviedo, FL; Loving Guidance, 2015.

[1] <https://inclusiveeducationplanning.com.au/uncategorized/behaviour-is-a-way-of-communicating-unr>

[2] Ibid

[3] <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr05/vol62/num07/A-Case-for-School-Cor>

[1] <https://inclusiveeducationplanning.com.au/uncategorized/behaviour-is-a-way-of-communicating-unr>

[1] https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1757&context=oa_diss

[1] https://traumasensitiveschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/TLPI-Final-Report_Full-Report-002-

[2] Fullan, Michael. The Moral Imperative of School Leadership. Published by Corwin Press, 2003

Attachments

Section 6: School Culture

– No Attachments –

7. Supplemental Programming

In alignment with Montgomery Public Schools Academic Goals II, III, and IV, LIFE Academy partners with community businesses, banks, non-profits, grassroots organizations, and community members to support student needs, build student social capital, and expose students to different cultures and opportunities within Montgomery.

GOAL II: Every Education Professional is Well-Prepared, Resource-Supported and Effective.

GOAL III Every Student has Access to Support Systems that Maximize Opportunities for Academic and Life Success.

GOAL IV Every School Engages Parents and Community Partners in Support of Student Success.

LIFE Academy partners with MPS, community colleges, trade schools, nurseries, YMCAs, etc. to ensure students and families are offered a plethora of social supports to acknowledge needs such as after-school care, Pre-K literacy workshops, extra-curricular activities and sports, family career training and access to college courses.

LIFE Academy understands that in the first years of its operations, it will not be able to provide all of it's own supplemental programming. This humbling truth works in tandem with partnering community resources such as the YMCA, AmeriCorps, and Boys & Girls Club. In LIFE Academy providing the school building as a venue, supplemental programming can come to LIFE Academy.

Examples of supplemental programming currently in discourse with the governing board and LIFE Inc. are a 2020 children's summer camp, adult and child literacy classes led by the school leader, and public health classes led by LIFE Inc. members. The details such as schedule, day length, and participant requirements will be established after approval of the charter and resulting acquirement of facility.

Attachments

Section 7: Supplemental Programming

– No Attachments –

8. Special Populations and At-Risk Students

Serving Special Populations and At-Risk Students

LIFE Academy's comprehensive plan for serving students with special needs include the following:

Conduct universal screeners (i.e. STEP for K-2, and MAP for 3-12) and identifying students falling below the 40th percentile as candidates for RTI (Response-To-Intervention) services. After students are populated for RTI services:

- Grades K-2- students are tiered based on how many STEP levels they are behind the goal
- Grades 3-8- students are assessed with the Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), then tiered

- Students placed in tier 2 receive daily intervention from their classroom teacher
- Students placed in tier 3 receive daily intervention in RTI-appropriate small groups during intervention block
- Students in tier 2 are progress monitored bi-weekly, and tier 3 students are progress monitored weekly
- In addition, students with disabilities also receive instructional supports with accommodations and modifications as outlined in their IEPs

In addition to serving students academically, we will also implement a Response to Intervention-Behavior (RTI-B) process and system to identify, track, and respond to students' disciplinary actions that may be linked to the social/emotional health and development of the student. A universal screener for behavior will be administered 2-3 times per school year to identify high, medium, and low behavioral risks. After the universal screener is conducted, the risk roster will be cross-referenced with the behavioral referral tracker to analyze the behavioral risks. Students will then be tiered based on risk rating. Students that are synonymously high risk will be referred for a functional behavior assessment (FBA) and development of a tier three behavior intervention plan (BIP). Students that are rated as medium risk may or may not be referred for an FBA, data collection of specific behavior are tracked, and based on the outcome are considered for the development and implementation of a Tier 2 BIP.

Students rated as low risk will be monitored for behaviors exhibited via classroom observation of social emotional learning (SEL) curriculum implementation. Appropriate family supports will also be offered to all students through our service personnel, which includes our School Social Worker, Contracted ESL Teachers, Special Populations Teachers and Special Populations Team Lead. Our School Social Workers will host monthly events for families and parents, as well as our Contracted ESL Lead Teacher will serve as the committee chairperson for our ESL parent/family advocacy group. In addition, our Special Populations teachers will contact parents regularly via phone, text, and in-person at arrival/dismissal and school events. School leadership and instructional staff will ensure that students with disabilities participate in a full school day, with regards to their IEP services and accommodations. Students receiving transportation services outlined and documented in their IEPs will also receive those services. School leaders and teachers will track assessment, progress monitoring, exit ticket, and other pertinent intervention data by inputting data into a goals tracker for each student with an IEP, which captures CBM data for RTI purposes, intervention data, and classroom performance. Special Populations teachers will collaborate and plan with general education teachers weekly about student progress. Making changes to the services and programming, if necessary, this will be done by the Case Manager/Special Populations Teacher contacting the parent to schedule an IEP meeting, along with the IEP team members to discuss student progress.

Identifying Students with Disabilities

LIFE Academy will implement a research-based system to identify students with disabilities, also known as our Referral Process, which will include observations, medical history, parental input, teacher input, along with academic and behavior data. In addition to the process, we will have a student support team (SST) in which our Special Populations Lead will facilitate to schedule, gather, and conduct meetings to present student cases. The student support team (SST) will make team decisions and be comprised of our contracted school psychologist, speech and language pathologist (if applicable), general education/referring teacher, school social worker/behavior specialist (if applicable), and parent. Parents will be invited to attend the student support team meeting to advocate and discuss academic/behavioral/developmental concerns, and to give consent for a comprehensive evaluation, if deemed necessary by the student support team. Likewise, during student support team meetings, action plans will be developed for

students that may or may not include assessment or 504 initials. In the event that a student requires more intervention or additional support services but not a 504 or comprehensive evaluation, an action plan will be completed at the student support team meeting to address all responsible parties, the actions to be taken, and a timeline for the actions to be completed. In addition to the student support team, students continuing with academic and behavior intervention are reviewed and discussed during monthly RTI² data team meetings facilitated by the Special Populations Lead. The Special Populations Lead facilitates the team, which includes the general education teacher/interventionist, contracted school psychologist, and Dean of Curriculum.

Special Populations Qualified Staffing

The need for special populations' staff is planned based on the projected enrollment of the school, as well as the individual needs of the students. The cohort rotations of academic blocks within the daily schedule is customized at the beginning of the school with first priority being special populations, the type of services that are needed, and the human resources we have available. In addition, our overall staffing plan is to keep the student-teacher ratio low, especially in Grades K-2, while also providing high quality, rigorous instructional support and direct instruction to students based on their individual skill deficit areas as outlined in their IEPs; or accommodations/service plan according to his/her 504. Service providers such as a school nurse and behavior specialist/analyst will be hired as-needed on a contract basis. The speech language pathologist and occupational/physical therapist will also be contracted through a third party service provider, as needed. Our audiology services will be fulfilled by contracting with a third-party vendor on an as-needed basis or with the student's servicing audiologist as outlined in medical documentation or his/her IEP. Our behavior analyst/specialist will be hired as a contracted service on an as-needed basis for a set number of hours per week, based on the service needs of the caseload. Support strategies will include tier two and three math and reading intervention embedded within math and literacy grade level instruction (per literacy rotations and math instructional block). Teachers will serve as interventionists to provide research-based academic interventions in the areas of math and literacy. These interventions will be in addition to special education staff for the specific purpose of intervention and progress monitoring.

Data Driven Instruction for Special Populations

Various means of data will be utilized to drive instruction and evaluate academic progress for Special Populations students. Universal screeners will be administered in the fall semester, along with secondary and tertiary screeners to determine students needing intervention. After the universal screener is conducted, then students will be assessed with the benchmark assessment system (BAS) for comprehension/fall benchmark (CBM). This data will be cross-referenced along with WIDA Access scores for ELs to help make informed decisions about servicing. Likewise, the universal screeners will provide necessary data for the initial indicator or characteristic of gifted students. Students scoring above the 90th percentile nationally on the MAP assessment will initially be considered for identification for gifted education. In addition to universal screeners and tertiary assessments ongoing throughout the school year, goal trackers will be created for special education case managers/teachers, interventionists, and ESL teachers to update with exit ticket tracking information, interim assessments (benchmark), as well as attendance and discipline data. The goal tracker will be utilized for teacher accountability and to also inform service providers of how current services and instruction is impacting the achievement gap between skill deficits and standard mastery. General education and special populations' teachers will collaborate weekly, as well as during professional development. The data will also be utilized to

make programmatic changes. Data will be analyzed and used to inform instructional shifts, cultural norms, and to inform the network team of school needs.

Educating Students With Special Needs

The methods for identifying students with special needs while avoiding misidentification includes implementing our child-find study process, which requires multiple sources of information to be considered and reviewed by our student support team. Additionally, our student support team, while some team members are stationary, some members are constantly changing based on the type of referral, utilizing multiple referral sources. Likewise, in the event that parents request evaluation, the student support team will respond to the parent's request by conducting a meeting and inviting the parent to share his/her concerns and to consider all academic/behavioral data. Our school will address over-identification by ensuring that we offer high quality, tier one quality instruction, and consistently analyzing student achievement data, as well as behavioral data, to ensure that our academic programs and behavioral/culture programs align to consistently create a conducive learning environment. Also, instructional staff will receive ongoing training through observations and feedback and professional development which includes modeling and execution of research-based teacher moves.

Additionally, we will address over-identification is by implementing our child-find study process/protocol with fidelity for every suspected case. Response to intervention, data team meetings, and intervention-planning will be pivotal to ensure that students are not over-identified. All teachers conducting intervention will be held to a very high standard of practice for implementing intervention, progress monitoring, conducting universal screeners, as well as following up with secondary and tertiary assessment to identify the most basic skill deficit areas. Providing meaningful, and strategic training to interventionists, the Special Populations Teachers and Team Lead, as well as the Dean of Curriculum and Head of School will be necessary to ensure that each person of the team is clear and aware of his/her role in providing, implementing, and monitoring intervention practices. Specific instructional programs that will be utilized to improve basic skill deficiencies include phonics programs such as Reading Mastery and Wilson Phonics. In addition to the phonics instructional programs, comprehension programs to be implemented including Guided Reading.

Special Populations Teachers will employ the same standards of student expectations as general education teachers, with consideration to the skill deficit areas. Special Populations Teachers will be advocates, service providers, and liaisons for students with disabilities. Special Populations Teachers will inform and educate General Education Teachers by co-teaching along with them, when applicable. The co-teaching model will be used for inclusive settings, which not only benefits students with disabilities, but general education students as well. Co-Teaching models can vary from low leverage to high leverage. Our Special Populations Teachers will implement the high-leverage co-teaching models such as pull a group within a group, alternate teaching, and parallel teaching.

Ensuring academic success for all students is a priority, especially students with disabilities. Our Special Populations Teachers will have access and be encouraged to share a service provider directory which includes various service providers, and resources for wrap around services for our students. Providing informational access to our parents and families increases the success rate for students with disabilities. Special Populations Teachers will be trained in providing accommodations, and making modifications to ensure students' access to the general education curriculum. Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress of students with disabilities include data tracking with a goals tracker spreadsheet, tracking attendance and discipline data via our Student Information System, discipline referrals and behavior data as tracked by the Dean of

Students, and using all data points in a comparative analysis. The comparative analysis will be conducted through out the school year to verify that student success is aligned with student services. Likewise, if student success and services are misaligned, then we will consider programmatic changes, professional development for teachers, deans, instructional coaches, or change in service providers/services per an IEP team decision.

Goals

The Special Populations Department will be driven by three main goals and the priorities for each goal. The goals are as followed:

1. Goal: Department will be in compliance with all federal and state mandated laws.

- Priority: Special Populations teachers hold themselves accountable in accordance with federal and state laws, district policies and LIFE Academy expectations.

2. All students with disabilities grow 10 percentile points annually in math and/or reading as measured by NWEA's MAP assessment.

- Priority: Special Populations teachers use student achievement data to drive instruction.

3. By the end of 8th grade, students will lead their IEP meetings.

- Priority: Students meet grade-level expectations for self-advocacy.

Educating English Language Learners

Identifying our English Language Learners will begin during open enrollment on the application. We will include the home language survey, which gives us a starting point for identifying possible ELs. We will also inquire about further information during entrance interviews with students and families. In addition, we will be reviewing incoming WIDA scores from students that may come from Montgomery Public Schools, or other schools out of state to help determine language proficiency. We will employ phonics and comprehension instructional programs. The plans for monitoring and evaluating progress and success of EL students, including those that may be exiting from EL services will be data analysis, and ongoing collaboration between our ESL and general education teachers. Analyzing student work samples, comparing skill mastery to standard mastery, reviewing intervention data, if applicable, as well as universal screeners and interim assessments is going to be key in evaluating our ESL program and the progress of our EL students. Conducting classroom observations during ESL service times and providing valuable and actionable feedback to the ESL teacher regarding instructional strategies, techniques, curriculum-use, etc. will also be a means to evaluate the progress and success of EL students. Analyzing the rigor of the instructional delivery to ELs will be vital in determining the impact on student success.

Intellectually Gifted Students

Our methods for identifying and meeting the needs of intellectually gifted students include the child-find study process beginning with the universal screeners and then following up with observations and questionnaires to be completed by general education teachers. Our research-based instructional programs include adaptive rigor to provide additional challenge for gifted students. Likewise, instructional strategies such as action-based learning/project-based learning will be implemented to provide gifted students a more individualized approach to learning with more rigor. Special Populations Teachers will inform and educate General Education Teachers by co-teaching along with them, when applicable. The co-teaching model will be used for inclusive settings, which not only benefits students with disabilities, but general education students as well. Co-Teaching models can vary from low leverage to high leverage. Our Special Populations Teachers will implement the high-leverage co-teaching models such as pull a group within a group, alternate teaching, and parallel teaching. Ensuring academic success for all students is a priority, including intellectually gifted students. Students scoring above the 90th national percentile on the NWEA MAP assessment will be further assessed for gifted and talented services provided by teachers with appropriate certification. Families will be provided notification of identification and provided monthly reports on academic and affective progress. Services will be provided during the 45-minute independent rotation in Grades K-2 Literacy Block and during the 45-minute Intervention Block in Grades 3-8.

Attachments

Section 8: Special Populations and At-Risk Students

– No Attachments –

9. Student Recruitment and Enrollment

Overview

In accordance with Section 1 of the Guidelines of Alabama Charter Schools, LIFE Academy as a public charter school "is open to any student residing in Alabama" and will in no way "limit student admission based on ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, income level, disability, proficiency in the English language, or academic or athletic ability". LIFE Academy's recruitment plan and admissions policies is intentionally created to offer a high quality educational option to Montgomery students and families. Recruitment efforts seek to provide all eligible parents with accurate knowledge of LIFE Academy while the admissions process is dedicated to ensuring a fair and equitable enrollment for potential students and their families.

LIFE Academy will advertise for open registration such that all interested families will be able to meet with the staff of LIFE Academy and learn about the innovative model, offerings, responsibilities, and expectations of the school. Should there be more families indicating interest in seats than seats available, LIFE Academy shall hold an admissions lottery, ensuring that a random selection process is used in admission. After all seats have been assigned, a waiting list will be established for the remaining students who have registered in the event that a seat should open up. Any seated students for whom the required paperwork has not been submitted by a date in the Summer of 2021 agreed upon with Montgomery Public Schools may lose their seat. After all efforts have been made to complete school registration, and if those efforts are unsuccessful, the family will be notified of un-enrollment by certified mail. These un-enrolled spots will then open to the wait list.

Recruitment Strategies

To assess and build parent and community demand for the proposed K-8 school, LIFE Academy will employ a comprehensive recruitment and marketing campaign. The goal is not only to attract a sufficient number of students to meet LIFE Academy enrollment projections but to equally ensure that LIFE Academy accurately assess the needs of the community and provides the high quality educational option deserving of the families of the City of Montgomery. In compliance with state and federal law, the school targets all K-8 students in Montgomery Public Schools, regardless of race, disability, ethnicity, or gender.

LIFE Academy is a community based upon shared values and shared goals. Parents are a key part of that community, thus LIFE Academy will actively engage families and active community members by:

Visiting Community Churches. Recognizing the large and active local faith community, LIFE Academy teammates will gather to attend a church service twice a month to support local ministries, meet community members, and discuss the academic program and benefits of the proposed school.

Building Nonprofit Relationships. LIFE Academy is excited about the opportunity to visit, learn about, and partner with Montgomery nonprofits with a trusted history of serving families in our target community.

Neighborhood Canvassing. LIFE Academy teammates canvass the various residential areas within close proximity to the proposed school to visit potential students and parents in their homes to explain how LIFE Academy's mission and school design will have a positive impact on their child's future.

Family and Community Meetings. Before the 2021-22 school year, LIFE Academy will hold information sessions for all families, sharing the Student and Family Handbook, and reviewing all key academic and operational elements of the school, and together signing the community contract. The Dean of Students will meet with individual families and conduct home visits with new families enrolling at LIFE Academy. The founding Special Populations teacher will meet with all families whose children have a pre-existing IEP, to review goals and services, and to update the IEP if needed. LIFE Academy intends to take full technological advantage using key social media outlets including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to provide families access to LIFE Academy to research, contact LIFE Academy founding teammates, and enroll in school.

Key Recruitment Messages:

- Safe and secure learning environment for children to thrive in
- College preparatory focus designed to make college an option for your students!
- Private school-quality education for FREE!
- Public charter school
- Eliminate distractions to maximize instructional time
- School culture focused on community and whole child

Strategies:

LIFE Academy will accomplish our objective by carrying out the following strategies for engagement with key audiences.

1. Align with Community Partner Organizations who advocate on behalf of LIFE Academy to

amplify awareness of and affinity for LIFE Academy.

2. Host and attend events where LIFE Academy can interact with potential new parents and students to educate them on the benefits of a LIFE Academy education.
3. Target (low-performing and other) schools near our service areas and in some cases partner with schools whose students will matriculate to a different school.
4. Leverage current parents' networks and influence to inform potential parents
5. Use traditional marketing/communications methods to provide an extra layer of reach to prospects, including grassroots neighborhood efforts.
6. Align with our neighbors to develop and maintain relationships that could lead to their advocacy

LIFE Academy will also engage in efforts of engagement through print, TV, and social media, including promotion of the LIFE Academy website

Based on the guidelines for Alabama Public Charter Schools, LIFE Academy will first enroll students who reside within the local school system in which the public charter school is located. Enrollment preference is next given to students enrolled in the public charter school the previous school year and to siblings of students already enrolled in the public charter school. Children of the LIFE Academy founders, governing board members, and full-time employees will then be given enrollment preferences not to exceed ten percent of the school's total student population if enrollment capacity has not been reached. LIFE Academy will not deny enrollment preferences or admission to students who do not meet the mission, academic approach, or theme of the school including career technical education, visual and performing arts; liberal arts, classical education science, math, or technology. This includes students with disabilities, students of the samegender, students with severe disciplinary issues, students at risk of academic failure, and students who are English learners.

If at any time the applicant pool exceeds the capacity of LIFE Academy; all subsequent applications for enrollment will be put on a wait list. If and when space becomes available, a lottery will be conducted to determine which students are allowed to enroll.

Lottery

The lottery will be governed by a few basic rules:

- All students who are on the wait list will be allowed to enter the lottery.
- Waitlisted siblings will be entered into a separate lottery by grade and drawn before non-sibling applicants for that grade
- If a student is chosen in the lottery and there is a sibling or siblings on the waitlist for that grade or another grade, they will immediately move into the sibling lottery and will be given preference so the family may all attend the same school.
- The lottery will be conducted by the second Saturday of April of each year. Each student's lottery draw will determine the number that student has on the non-sibling or sibling wait list for the following school year.
- After the available slots are filled, LIFE Academy will keep drawing the names of the remaining applicants in the appropriate category and place them on a wait list in the order they are drawn.
- LIFE Academy has an interest in making sure that any prospective students and their families understand the particular mission and focus of the school and are interested in being a part of that school community. To that end, LIFE may: Require students to complete the grade preceding the grade the student plans to enter, strongly encourage parents/guardians to attend informational sessions. Ask students and parents/guardians to sign the LIFE Community Contract that demonstrates their agreement with the school's mission and values.

Attachments

Section 9: Student Recruitment and Enrollment

9.1 [Attachment 8](#)

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10. Student Discipline

LIFE views student behavior as communication of an unmet need. These unmet needs fall into one of two categories, as either something the student wants or something the student wishes to avoid.^[1] Additionally, Van Marter Souers & Hall (2018) further classifies these needs into four groups: Emotional, Relational, Physical, and Control –based. There is nothing inherently wrong with these needs, and students will be guided in learning to communicate these needs in a non-disruptive manner. LIFE Academy students will be nurtured in self-assessing their own needs and the required behavior to meet those needs, by 3rd grade.

Behaviors of a student communicating an unmet emotional need are: shutting down, moodiness, restlessness, tough transitions, and a short-temper. Some strategies utilized when a student presents signs of an unmet emotional needs are: brain breaks, mindfulness/meditation, and the “Nest” reset station. Students need the time and a designated space to de-escalate their fear and reinforce that they are safe.

Behaviors of a student communicating an unmet relational need are: constant need to be in close proximity to adults, use extreme language like “never” and “hate”, and behavioral outburst for attention. Some strategies utilized when a student presents signs of an unmet relational needs are: 1 to 1 check-ins, kneel, compliments, journal prompts, and thresholding.

Behaviors of a student communicating an unmet physical need are: sleeping during the school day, stomach pains, irritability, isolation from other students, and unkept appearance. Some strategies utilized when a student presents signs of an unmet physical needs are: supplying snacks throughout the day, supplying clean uniform pieces within a school closet, asking questions, and reaching out to guardians with only positive assumptions of student circumstance.

Lastly, behaviors of a student communicating an unmet need of control are: class disruption, a deep need of predictability, fractured interpersonal relationships, and negative self-talk. Some strategies utilized when a student presents signs of an unmet control-based needs are: school and classroom jobs, clear rubrics and expectations, self-selected exit strategies, forecasting changes in routine, goal setting, and monitoring.

In preparation for providing a learning environment that is safe, connected, and set up to nourish higher order thinking, LIFE Academy trains teachers through the ideology of Conscious Discipline ^[1]. “Children come to school asking ‘Am I safe?’, ‘Am I loved?’, or ‘What can I learn?’. Effective schools create cultures that answer the first 2 questions in the affirmative, and then provide the academic and social-emotional skills necessary for optimal growth.” Safety (physical and psychological) is a LIFE Academy priority because we stress the belief that real learning cannot occur within a classroom that is mismanaged and unsupported; essentially unsafe. With the use of a variety of management tools provided to teachers and ongoing PD inundated with practice, teachers and staff will recall and automatically implement said tools in the moments that call for such action. LIFE routinely allots 60-65% of development time, to practice. LIFE Academy leadership understands that the format of professional development must model classroom

dynamics and independent time, so teachers have first-hand understanding and empathy for student learning. LIFE Academy teach and practice the following conscious values:

Safety. LIFE Academy builds a classroom that utilizes the acronym N.A.R.C.S. These tools stand for Noticing, Assertiveness, Routines, Composure, and the shared language of Safety. This conscious value speaks to the proactive portion of behavioral intervention. By understanding the Brain state model, and acknowledging and providing unmet student needs, teacher and staff prevent many behaviors before they begin.

Connection. Healthy connections promote problem solving and thriving. LIFE Academy promotes student-connectedness and utilizes the acronym R.E.J.E.C.T. These tools are Rituals, Encouragement, Jobs, Empathy, Choices, and The School Family. To ensure continuous brain and social development, LIFE creates a compassionate classroom where children care about themselves and others on a deep level.

Problem Solving. In alignment with the core values of freedom and efficacy, the conscious value of problem solving uses tools outlined in the acronym S.P.A.C.E. Solutions, Positive Intent, Academic Integration, Consequences, and Executive Skills. As reflected in research and LIFE, problem solving (academic achievement) can only occur when we create a sense of safety and increase connection by building a compassionate School Family^[2]. If we want students to learn from their mistakes and make different choices in the future, we must create internal and external conditions that support this goal.

Three school characteristics stand out as helping young people feel connected to school while simultaneously encouraging student achievement: (1) a physically and emotionally safe school environment; (2) an environment in which adult and student relationships are positive and respectful; and (3) high academic standards coupled with strong teacher support. Students who feel connected to school (independent of how these students are faring academically) are less likely to use substances, exhibit emotional distress, demonstrate violent or deviant behavior, experience suicidal thoughts or attempt suicide, and become pregnant (Lonczak, Abbott, Hawkins, Kosterman, & Catalano, 2002; Samdal, Nutbeam, Wold, & Kannas, 1998).

In addition, when young people feel connected to school, they are less likely to skip school or be involved in fighting, bullying, and vandalism (Schapps, 2003; Wilson & Elliott, 2003). These students are more likely to succeed academically and graduate (Connell, Halpern-Felsher, Clifford, Crichlow, & Usinger, 1995; Wentzel, 1998).^[3]

For students who struggle to meet classroom behavioral goals, a number of interventions are present to ensure that the student is identifying the feeling behind the behavior, practicing methods of self-regulation, reflecting on the behavior and making better choices. These interventions include non-verbal and verbal acknowledgement of unsafe/unhealthy behavior, assertive statements, use of proximity, restorative conversations by teacher, adding SOAR dollars, parent phone calls, parent meetings, standing or impromptu check-ins with school counselor, temporary removal from class and meeting with Dean. In-school detention

and out-of-school suspension are our most drastic measures and are only used if student harms self or others. Incorporating aspects of the restorative justice approach to classroom management (community meetings), teacher development on effective classroom management strategies, encouraging greater involvement of our on-campus social workers and special populations team to closely support identified students, and carefully implementing the Behavior RTI program increase the opportunities for struggling students to rebound from mistakes, return to class in a healthy mental space, and continue their daily enlightenment.

A key component of LIFE Academy's school-wide discipline system is a token economy,

measured by SOAR dollars. This system, described in more detail below, allows teachers to reward students for positive behavior. (look up research for positive reinforcement vs punishment)

Students will receive \$50 PRIDE dollars weekly. Teachers will award or deduct PRIDE dollars from students throughout the week. At the end of each week, a staff member will tally the bonuses and deductions and print PRIDE paychecks. Paychecks will be distributed on Mondays. Students must bring paychecks home, have a parent or guardian review the paycheck and sign it, and bring it back to school the following school-day. Failure to bring a signed paycheck back to school will result in a student having \$50 PRIDE dollars deducted from their bank account. There will be various rewards and consequences associated with paycheck dollars. On the rewards side, scholars will have the opportunity to spend their accumulated PRIDE dollars in two different ways:

While all LIFE Academy teachers are trained to uniformly hold a high bar behaviorally, the method of progress monitoring student behavior differs based on age appropriateness.^[1] Bailey, Rebecca Anne. *Conscious discipline: Building resilient classrooms*. Oviedo, FL; Loving Guidance, 2015.

[1] <https://inclusiveeducationplanning.com.au/uncategorized/behaviour-is-a-way-of-communicating-unr>

[2] Ibid

[3] <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr05/vol62/num07/A-Case-for-School-Cor>

[1] <https://inclusiveeducationplanning.com.au/uncategorized/behaviour-is-a-way-of-communicating-unr>

Adapted from the LIFE Academy Family & Student Handbook:

2 Vision Statement

The vision of LIFE Academy is to create the next generation of civically responsible, global leaders through the execution of a culturally relevant, holistic educational program. We believe that all students deserve a learning environment that embraces their whole being.

3 Mission Statement

LIFE Academy prepares all students, grades K-8, for a successful future in college, careers, and/or entrepreneurial endeavors. Through self-efficacy and student empowerment, LIFE helps students achieve mastery of high academic standards and lifelong ambitions.

4 Core Values We value...

Leadership. LIFE Academy helps students construct and work towards the vision of their own future, and provides the strategies and understanding of how to motivate and inspire others to engage in that vision.

Integrity. The LIFE community values and promotes honesty and strong morality in all

areas.

Freedom. LIFE provides a safe, welcoming environment where all are encouraged and supported in being their most authentic selves.

Enlightenment. LIFE believes that each day provides the opportunity to learn and grow. Staff and students take the time to reflect on what was learned and how it challenges and changes what is already known.

Empowerment. LIFE grants teachers and staff the audacity to be self-determined and autonomous. With educational exposure and permission to make mistakes, staff models for and grooms students to become self-aware and powerful catalysts of change.

Efficacy. LIFE equips teachers, staff, and students with the academic and social awareness and capital to produce their own desired results.

5 Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is the governing body for LIFE Academy.

5.1 LIFE Academy Governing Board

Norma Chism, Chair

Dr. Beverly Hill, Director

Betty Chapman, Treasurer

Grace Ward, Secretary

Councilwoman Audrey Graham, Community Liaison

Earl Taylor, Parent Liaison

Pastor Kevin McDaniel, Conflict Resolution

5.2 School Administration

Kia Debnam, Headmistress

TBD, Chief Officer of Operations

TBD , Operations Fellow

TBD, Dean of Curriculum

TBD , Dean of Culture

TBD, Social Worker

TBD, Front Office

5.3 Non-Profit Company

LIFE Inc.

P.O. Box 681762

Prattville, AL 36068

Phone: 337-304-0772

6 GUARDIANS/GUARDIANS/PARENTS

LIFE Academy relies on guardians/guardians/parents for active involvement in their child's education, growth and development. It is the hope of LIFE Academy that all families will devote time to volunteer. Guardians/guardians/parents are children's first and most effective teachers and are encouraged to become active partners with their children's teachers. Background checks are required of all LIFE Academy volunteers, including family.

6.1 Volunteers

It is the policy of LIFE Academy to encourage volunteers to work in the school. A volunteer must receive a background check to certify that they have not been charged with child abuse, neglect, or a felony. All volunteers must attend an orientation meeting before working in a classroom with children. All volunteers will be under the supervision of the classroom teacher. Volunteers shall be responsible for maintaining confidentiality regarding information seen or heard while working as a volunteer. Volunteer activities include responsibilities such as being tutors, mentors, classroom assistants, and guest speakers. Guardians and guardians/parents are encouraged to become volunteers. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please notify the office.

6.2 Community Meetings

Community meetings will be scheduled in evenings throughout the year. Different topics will be

discussed to give you the opportunity to learn more about the LIFE Academy. These topics include upcoming events, feedback on previous events, community initiatives, etc.

6.3 Partnership in Responsibility

The Code of Student Conduct is named “Partnership in Responsibility” in anticipation of guardians/guardians/parents, students, teachers, administration, support staff, and Board of Directors forging a strong bond on behalf of the children at LIFE Academy. The Partnership is based on mutual respect, responsibility, and results. You are encouraged to embrace the partnership philosophy and translate it into action.

6.4 Guardians/parents’ Rights and Responsibilities

Guardians/Guardians/parents have the right:

- To know that their child is cared for in a safe, supportive environment;
- To unlimited access to their children (unless prohibited by a court order);
- To access the school staff during the school’s normal hours of operation;
- To be informed about serious misbehavior on the part of their own child;
- To be regularly informed of school activities.

Guardians/parents have the responsibility to fulfill their obligations as described in various portions of this handbook. These obligations include, but are not limited to:

- Keeping their child’s records up-to-date;
- Letting the school office know if their child will not be attending on a regularly scheduled day; • Noting any communications from the administrators or teachers regarding their child’s behavior, and to cooperate in any efforts to bring about improvement in the situation;
- Attempting to attend school activities that involve guardians/parents;
- Informing the school of any significant changes that occur in the home.

7 Philosophy

7.1 Core Beliefs

LIFE Academy is founded and committed to the following core beliefs that guide toward our goals of academic excellence and strong student character:

I. All students enter school with a wealth of knowledge rooted in culture, language, and personal experience. That knowledge should be built upon, not diminished, and serve as the foundation for which students learn to navigate the cultures of the world.

II. A strong foundation of self- determination and self-advocacy is essential to student success in education and the professional world. All of our students are capable of reaching high levels of success. School should provide sufficient time for students to identify long term goals, and navigate ways of realizing them.

III. Students' physical and social emotional needs are a pre-requisite to higher order problem solving and rigorous academic achievement. When foundational needs of students are addressed, students can engage at their highest level and meet the cognitive demands required in the classroom.

IV. Direct exposure to local and national resources, beyond the student's current experiences, provides students with the self-confidence and social capital needed to be competitive in the world.

We seek not only to prepare our students to be successful in college, careers, and entrepreneurial endeavors, but also to significantly elevate the percentage of K-8th grade students currently reading at grade level in Montgomery county. To meet these goals, our educational program focuses on rigorous instruction delivered in a trauma sensitive environment. We also work to create civically responsible, global citizens with a wealth of academic and social knowledge through holistic programming and enrichment opportunities. LIFE Academy is passionate in our belief that students are capable of completing rigorous education tasks and achieving grade level proficiency.

7.2 What We Expect From Students

First and foremost, we expect a lot from the students. We expect students to:

Follow our dress code, and come to school on-time and prepared

Be inclusive and kind with their peers

Be courteous to all staff and speak with staff in an appropriate tone

Present themselves well in all situations

Ask for help when needed

Be honest and accept responsibility for their actions and any associated consequences

Complete all of their assignments

Continue to try, even after experiencing challenges

Take feedback to heart and work to make improvements based upon that feedback

Produce and submit their best work

Be a positive role model for all of LIFE Academy

Make good choices, even when no one is looking

7.3 What We Expect From Families

Along with the countless and seemingly endless responsibilities you carry as families, we also expect you to do certain things as a LIFE Academy family. For example, you are expected to:

Act respectfully to all members of our school community

Ensure that your student arrives daily, punctually, and in uniform, ready to actively participate in all classes.

Oversee your student's completion of all homework assignments

Ensure your student reads nightly

Require your scholar to fully accept all consequences of his or her behavior

Work with the school to ensure that your student is surrounded by one voice—while we may disagree over certain things, it is of the utmost importance that when communicating to your student, the message that your student receives from you is the same as the one that they receive from us

7.4 What You Can Expect From Staff

Along with the daily responsibilities we carry as educators, we also expect ourselves to do certain things and behave in certain ways as LIFE Academy staff. You can expect us to:

Act respectfully to all members of our school community

Prepare engaging, demanding lessons in all of our classes every day

Assign and evaluate appropriate homework assignments

Provide tutoring regularly during enrichment after school

Be responsive to guardians/parents and families, and work to keep you updated on your students behavior and academics

Be held accountable for our behavior as teachers dedicated to the mission of preparing all students for a successful future in college, careers, and/or entrepreneurial endeavors

8 General Information

8.1 Entry Age for Elementary

LIFE Academy provides instruction for grades K-8. Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, a child is eligible to enroll in kindergarten if he or she is at least five years of age on or before September 1 of the school year of enrollment.

8.2 School Hours

The daily school schedule begins at 7:30 AM and ends at 3:05 PM. Every student must stay for mandatory enrichment from 3:05-4:05 daily. Students in an activity or club have access to the building until 5:00 pm. Once the afternoon bus has left however, guardians/parents are responsible for students staying until 5:00 pm.

8.3 Attendance

Consistent school attendance is incredibly important to your child's adjustment to school and contributes to the realization of the importance of education. When they are not in school, students miss valuable instruction and fall behind academically and socially. If you arrive late or must pick up your child early, please call the office where you will need to sign your child in and out. For specific attendance and excused absence requirements refer to The Student Code of Conduct .

8.4 Make up Work for Absence from School

Students are responsible for getting and completing any work they have missed due to absence from class. Make up work should be completed within three days of return to school for short-term absence of 1-2 days and within five days of return for absence of 3-5 days as agreed upon with the classroom teacher. In cases of extended absence of more than five days due to illness, a student may request special consideration for additional time to make up work. Guardians/parents/guardians may request this in writing.

8.5 Visitors

All guardians/parents or visitors must report to the office upon entering the school grounds. A daily sign-in sheet will be available for the use of guardians/parents and pre-approved visitors to visit in the school. You are to stop in the office, sign-in, and tell the school secretary whom you wish to visit. All guardians/parents and approved visitors will be given a "Visitor's Badge", which must be visible. Sign-in and approval procedures are necessary for the safe protection of our children and to avoid disruption of classes.

Visitors will be required to secure permission of the school leader to be on school grounds. Visitors who are not known by the school secretary or the school leader will be required to present a form of official identification, for example, driver's license, to have their request to visit in the school or to be on school grounds considered. No one is to bypass the office and go directly to the classroom or to the playground area.

The staff must provide safe, secure supervision of all children. Guardians/parents are welcome to visit and must make advanced arrangements with the teacher for in class visitation. Small children are not permitted to visit classrooms during school hours. Unauthorized persons must not loiter in the school use area. Any person, who comes into the school area and does not properly sign in at the office, will be considered a trespasser. The person will be asked to leave the school area immediately. Failure to leave the school area will be reported to the Police Department for action.

8.6 Messages to Students and Staff

Messages to students and or staff must be dropped off or called into the school office. Messages will not be delivered when it will disrupt classroom activities. Guardians/parents are encouraged to communicate the message as early as possible to ensure timely delivery to the proper person. All staff members have email accounts that guardians/parents can communicate through. Safe, secure classrooms and disruption-free instruction require us to seek total cooperation of guardians/parents in not going directly to the classroom.

8.7 Early Dismissal Requests

The student may need to leave school during the school day. The parent is to receive approval of the School Principal in advance by written or personal request for a justifiable reason, including such early dismissals for doctor's appointments, religious observations, family funerals, and other prearranged events. Students will only be released to guardians/parents and designated adults. In child custody situations, the custodial parent must properly inform the School Principal of any limitations. Excessive early dismissals will be viewed similarly to tardies. These do not include early release days.

8.8 Vacations

LIFE Academy discourages the practice of taking family vacations on school days or during times other than regular school vacation periods. If a student will be out of school for a family vacation, they will be responsible for making up any work upon returning. If possible, allow the school at least a week's notice when a student will miss multiple days so that work can be provided and the student will not fall behind.

8.9 Emergencies

Most emergencies involve the weather. Procedures have been developed in an effort to ensure safety and security for all children when they are under the care of LIFE Academy. Guardians/parents are encouraged to keep informed of weather patterns and possible school closings and to make sure childcare arrangements are in place for emergency closings.

8.10 Fire and Tornado Drills

Fire and tornado drills are regularly scheduled to educate students in safe practice in case of an emergency. The teacher will review rules of safety and evacuation routes with students. Evacuation routes and tornado watch locations are posted in each classroom and use area of LIFE Academy. The teacher or person responsible for a group of students will take class roll to determine the presence of all students who are in attendance on that day. Students and staff will return to class when the teacher is given approval—verbal or hand signal—by the School Principal or school secretary

8.11 Tornado Emergencies

During a tornado warning or tornado, all students and staff members will remain in the building. Everyone will take shelter in designated areas and will follow outlined safety precautions. Students may be detained beyond the usual dismissal time. Guardians/parents who have come to the school to pick up students are encouraged to stay at school until the tornado warning or tornado has passed and safe conditions prevail. Out of respect for parental responsibility for their children, a student will be released to guardians/parents only.

8.12 Lock Down Drills

The State of Alabama has made it mandatory for schools to practice two Lock Down Drills per year (One in the first 6 weeks of school, and one within the first 6 weeks of the second semester). We will follow this mandate just as we do Fire Drills and Tornado Drills. These drills will be conducted in coordination with the local emergency management coordinator.

8.13 Academy Full Day Closing Announcements

Notice of school cancellation is given by announcements on several radio and television stations. We also will contact families by phone through our automated School Messenger family contact program. Please monitor the stations below for closing information.

8.14 Emergency Closing During the School Day

In the event of severe weather or other unexpected emergencies, the school may be forced to dismiss students early. If school must be dismissed early, guardians/parents are encouraged to have prearranged, adult supervision of their children. Guardians/parents should discuss emergency procedures with their children in case there is nobody at home when the child arrives. Guardians/parents are expected to provide the school with a working emergency number in case of the child's illness or emergency closing. If the parent cannot be contacted, the school will make reasonable efforts to contact the person designated for emergency situations.

9 Dress Code Policy

In order to improve the school's educational environment, promote a more effective climate for learning, foster school unity and pride, and allow students to focus solely on learning and not on attire, the school has a dress policy which applies to school days and school sponsored events.

9.1 Uniform Guidelines

LIFE Academy 2021-2022 Uniform Guidelines

Uniform Item	Boys	Girls	Notes
Blazer	Lands' End Black Blazer with LIFE Logo		See Catalog for ordering
Shirt	Dress shirt with collar Acceptable colors: -White -Grey -Black		Can be bought from any retail store of choice
Pants	LIFE Academy highly recommends Lands' End Khaki/Black pants but will allow similar pants that meet the following expectations: - Black, Gray or Khaki Color - Khaki Style (No Jeans/Rivets) - No cargo pockets - Must include belt loops - No special designs - No brands or logos showing - No flares or bell bottoms - Regular fit LIFE Academy reserves the right to ask a scholar's family to bring in different pants if the ones worn do not meet expectations.		Besides Lands' End, we recommend the following: <u>Gap</u> Classic Style Khakis <u>Dockers</u> Signature Straight Fit <u>French Toast</u> Plain Uniform Bottom <u>Southern School Uniforms</u> Khakis

Skort	<i>Not Applicable</i>	Lands End Skort Only	See catalog for ordering
Leggings/Tights For Skorts	<i>Not Applicable</i>	Solid Colors – Black, Brown, Gray, Skin Tone, and White Only	
Belt	Plain Black or Brown Belt of your choice (please note: scholars may NOT wear belts with large or distracting belt buckles).	Plain Black or Brown Belt of your choice (please note: scholars may NOT wear belts with large or distracting belt buckles).	
Footwear	Black sneakers or dress shoes	Black sneakers or dress shoes	

9.2 Ordering

The blazer, shirt ,dress and skort (for girls) of the uniform must be purchased through Land’s End. There are three ways to order:

1) Go to www.landsend.com/schools (Click on “Find your School’s Dress Code” on the left-hand side of the screen; click on “Preferred School Number” and enter our preferred school number, which is TBD; click on “shop using this dress code.”)

2) Call 1-800-963-4816 and reference our preferred school number, which is TBD.

3) Go to the Lands’ End Shop at Sears in Kings Plaza and reference our preferred school number,

which is 900132911. Delivery will take 2 weeks, but there is no delivery charge when you order in person at Sears.: 2500 Riverchase Galleria, Birmingham AL 35244. Their phone number is (2050 403-7914.

Uniform pants may be purchased through another vendor, but the pants must meet the uniform guidelines detailed below. LIFE Academy reserves the right to ask a scholar’s family to bring in different pants if the ones worn do not meet expectations. The exact number of uniforms that you order is up to you. We recommend that you begin the school year with at least 3 sets, and then order more as needed. Please order the Lands’ End items by the first week of June 2021. The summer is high season for Lands End, which causes many items to be on back-order. Scholars must be in full uniform by the start of school. Lands’ End uniforms are slightly more expensive, but their high quality will last longer, and can help save money in the long-run. We know, however, that the cost of uniforms can be a burden for families. For this reason, all families will be provided one free uniform.

9.3 Dress Code Enforcement

The dress code policy will be enforced for all students in grade levels kindergarten through eight. The following procedure will be used for dress code violations:

	Kindergarten – 5th grade	6th-8th grade
1 st offense	Written warning sent home	Verbal warning to student
2 nd offense	Phone call to guardian	Written warning sent home
3 rd offense	Guardian Conference	Phone call to guardian
4 th offense		Guardian conference

When students enter the school building, they must be in the proper uniform. They cannot change into the school uniform upon arrival or tuck their shirts in only after getting to class. Students also may not change out of their uniform before dismissal. Students who participate in spirit weeks or attend school events (i.e. dances, trips, etc.) – on school grounds or otherwise – are expected to be properly dressed in accordance with a dress code shared in advance. At all times during the school day – including afterschool – shirts must be tucked in. Students who do not have their shirts tucked in will earn a paycheck deduction. Any exceptions to this expectation will be clearly communicated.

9.4 Gym

During gym class, if a student is wearing an appropriate undershirt, which may include a college t-shirt; a LIFE Academy t-shirt; or a solid, blank t-shirt, they will be allowed to remove their dress shirt and wear only their undershirt during gym class. Please note that in these instances, students must still arrive at school in their full uniform, and may only change into a t-shirt at the beginning of gym class.

If a scholar does choose to remove their uniform shirt for gym class, he or she must put the uniform shirt back on and tuck in his or her shirt prior to returning to classrooms.

9.5 Hair, Hats, and Jewelry

Once students enter the school building, the wearing of hats, head wraps, with some exceptions, bandanas (even as headbands), or kerchiefs is not permitted unless it is in accordance with religious observation. Scholars wearing hats in the building will be asked to store them.. Jewelry should be appropriate for a professional, school setting and may not serve as a distraction to others or it will be confiscated. Medium- or large-sized chains must stay inside a student's shirt. Scholars who are wearing large and/or distracting jewelry items will be asked to remove the item or will have it confiscated. Students will not be required to remove jewelry or piercings that are worn in accordance with religious observation. Any accessories that serve as a distraction – at the determination of the school – will not be permitted.

10 Meals

Breakfast, Lunch, and end of the day snack will be provided to students in attendance at LIFE Academy.

11 Snacks

Snacks are distributed twice a day around school provided meals. If a family decides to send snacks with a student, we ask that it be limited to healthy options. In an effort to promote nutritional awareness, no beverage outside of water permitted, including before and after school.

This includes, chocolate milk, Vitamin water, juice, and soda. Confiscated drinks or other food items will not be returned. We encourage all students to practice healthy eating habits for breakfast, lunch, and snacks.

Please respect any notices regarding food allergies that are posted on your child's classroom bulletin board. If your child must be restricted to certain food and/or is on a special diet, please inform the staff and indicate so on the registration form. If your child has a severe allergy, for your child's safety, please provide your child's daily snack.

11.1 Birthday Snacks & Holiday Parties

Sometimes families like to provide a special treat on a child's birthday. We welcome the opportunity to celebrate. Please speak to your child's teacher about birthday treats. Grades K-8 have holiday parties throughout the year. Parties must comply with the USDA mandated wellness policy and practices.

12 Telephone Use

All cell phones will be collected and stored at the beginning of the school day, and returned at the end. This allows for a less distracting learning environment and greatly reduces the likelihood of cyber bullying. Students may make school-related calls to guardians/parents or other designated childcare providers from the office, with permission from classroom teachers. Please make sure that after school rides are arranged in advance (if your child is not taking the bus), so students do not need to use the telephone at the close of school to make such arrangements.

13 Pesticide Use

LIFE Academy utilizes an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to control pests. IPM is a pest management system that utilizes all available and appropriate techniques to attain the goal of preventing pests from reaching unacceptable levels or to reduce an existing population to an acceptable level. Pest management techniques emphasize pest exclusion and biological controls. However, as with most pest control programs, chemical controls may also be utilized at our facility or on facility grounds.

14 Transportation

LIFE Academy provides bus transportation. Guardians/parents dropping off or picking up their children are reminded to pay close attention to movement of students and vehicles in the parking area.

15 Verbal Communication

In an effort to promote and enhance effective communication between guardians/parents, teachers and administration, we ask that any problems or concerns be routed to the appropriate person as soon as possible. Part of problem solving is making sure the right people are aware and involved in the resolution process.

16 Channels of Communication

Classroom Teacher	Headmistress	Office Staff
	School Policy	

Child's Progress	Parent Education	
Classroom Activities	Academic Policy	Absence Calls
Classroom Assistance	Admissions	Registration
Class Procedures	Donations	
Daily Scheduling	Facilities	
Field Trips	Legal Matters	

Guardians/parents who wish to address specific issues or concerns about their child's education are asked to speak first to their child's classroom teacher to seek a suitable resolution. Unresolved issues should be brought to the attention of the Headmistress. The Headmistress has primary responsibility for management of the school. The communications "chain of command" is the following: 1. Teacher 2. School Principal 3. Board Liaison. Except in extreme or prescribed situations, a teacher will discuss a behavior problem with the student and the parent before a referral is made for assistance from the Headmistress. Prescribed situations are listed in the Code of Student Conduct.

17 LIFE Academy Newsletter

LIFE Academy will periodically distribute a newsletter or bulletin, as well as post the newsletter on the school website. The newsletter contains information about school activities and programs as well as an updated calendar for the month. For the good of the environment, we will send newsletters through email unless a paper copy is specifically requested.

18 Medications/Immunizations

Students are not allowed to keep any type of medication in their possession during school hours. All medication should be sent to the school in a container labeled by the pharmacist. A written, signed, and dated directive from the physician must accompany any medication to be administered at school. This includes, but not limited to, over-the counter medications such as Tylenol, Ibuprofen, lotions, creams, and aspirin. The school is only authorized to dispense Band-Aids and water without a physician's written directive.

LIFE Academy encourages guardians/parents to arrange for students to take all medications at home, if possible. Medications will be administered at school, provided approved guidelines are followed. "Medication" includes prescription, non-prescription, and herbal medications, and includes those taken by mouth, by inhaler, those that are injectable, and those applied as drops to

eyes, nose, or medications applied to the skin. Students are to register non-prescription medications in the office under the same guidelines as prescription medications.

A pupil who requires the use of an inhaler for relief or prevention of asthma symptoms will be allowed to carry and use the inhaler if there is written approval from the child's physician and parent/guardian are on record at the school and provided the School Leader has been informed and has notified the child's teachers.

Any adverse reaction to medication, as described on the physician's written instructions, and/or any errors made in the administration of medications shall be reported to the child's parent/guardian immediately.

State law and the local County Immunization Code require all students entering LIFE Academy to provide evidence of having received the required immunizations for Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Measles, Rubella, Mumps, and Chicken Pox. State law and local County Immunization Code prohibit LIFE Academy from admitting children without the required immunizations.

18.1 Illness

The school does not have facilities to care for the children when they are sick. The nurse will triage student needs, and provide immediate and temporary care. Guardians/parents will be notified by phone when a child needs additional care. For the health and well-being of our staff and students, guardians/parents will be responsible to make sure the child is picked up within the hour after notification. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make sure all emergency contact phone numbers are current.

If your child becomes ill while at school, you will be notified using the information you provided on your Child Information Card. Please have a plan so that you, or your emergency person, will be able to pick your child up promptly if necessary. Children should not attend school when the following conditions are present:

- Temperature above 100 degrees.
- Unusual drowsiness, excessive sleep or the child appears ill.

- Vomiting two or more times in a 24-hour period.
- Three or more loose or watery bowel movements in a 24-hour period.
- Body rash with fever.
- Severe cough or difficulty breathing.
- Red swollen eyes or pus draining from eyes.
- Open areas on the skin
- Ringworm, lice or pinworm.

18.2 Child Information Card

The Guardians/parents will be asked to sign an emergency medical card to permit the teacher or adult in charge to secure medical assistance for the child in an emergency. The guardians will be notified as quickly as possible of medical care being given to the child.

18.3 Insurance

Guardians/parents are encouraged to be sure their child has medical insurance. If the child does not have medical insurance and the parent wants insurance for the child, the parent is encouraged to notify the School Leader so they can work together to secure insurance for the child.

19 Personal Property

LIFE Academy will work with guardians/parents to protect personal property. Reasonable guidelines will contribute to our success.

School Materials: Students are responsible for taking care of school owned materials and are expected to pay replacement or damage costs if applicable.

Clothing: LIFE Academy recognizes that all clothing is very expensive and must be cared for. Proper care includes labeling articles that the child will most likely remove upon arrival at school. Items such as coats/jackets, hats, gloves, and boots should be labeled. LIFE Academy does not assume responsibility for lost articles of clothing.

Money: Guardians/guardians/parents are discouraged from sending their child to school with money. If necessary, guardian/parent should be sure the child has properly secured any money brought to school. Guardians/parents are encouraged to place money sent to school in an envelope with a note stating the reason the money is being sent, i.e field trip. The child's name and teacher's name should be clearly written on the outside of the envelope.

Electronic Equipment: Cellular phones or other electronic devices, not school related, shall be handed in and not be turned on at any time during school hours. If these devices are found to be powered on or in view, they will be confiscated until the end of the day. A second offense will necessitate a parent meeting to retrieve the device.

20 Academics

In order for students to be prepared and ready for instructional activities, students will be expected to be at school on time, to have completed homework assignments, and to have proper instructional materials with them. Teachers will provide guardians/parents with a list of extra supplies needed for each class.

21 Report Cards/Conferences/Progress Reports

At the end of the first and second grading periods, guardians/parents must meet with the child's teacher to receive a progress report on the child's academic, behavioral, and citizenship progress. Guardians/parents must sign the report card at the conference and will receive a copy. Guardians/parents are encouraged to discuss the information on the report card with their child and to encourage excellence in achievement and behavior. The purpose of report cards is to communicate to guardians/parents and students the child's progress on the knowledge and skills the student is working on in class and to provide insight into the child's growth. Academic reports for all students are distributed in October, December, March, and May. Every elementary learning environment educator will arrange at least one planned conference with each child's parent(s)/guardian per year, preferably done during conference nights. It is understood that educators shall, if necessary, arrange additional conferences with parents. Conferences with educators must be scheduled during non-instructional time

21.2 Portfolios

Your child's teacher will work with your child to compile a portfolio of their projects and work throughout the year in all academic and interest areas. The portfolio will provide a documented record of your child's developing knowledge base, skills, and work quality.

21.3 Character Enlightenment: Character Choices

LIFE Academy is committed to the development of children becoming responsible, global citizens. We work to support the building of a strong, supportive community of learners in each classroom. Communication skills, conflict resolution, integrity and courtesy, teambuilding activities and character enlightenment are a vital part of our curriculum.

21.4 Field Trips

Written parental or legal guardian permission is required for a student to go on any field trip off school grounds. Parents may sign a blanket permission slip for local (walking distance) field trips. For trips involving travel, teachers will inform parents of such details as destination, lunches, spending money, departure and arrival times, and any special rules. A permission slip will be sent home before each field trip involving travel.

Teachers work to schedule field trips that are relevant to the school curriculum. The Family Handbook/Student Code of Conduct guidelines outline that for the supervision of field trips, for every 10 students there will be 1 adult chaperone. Student/adult ratios may vary with the nature of the field trip. Students who disobey school rules and/or defy teacher authority may be denied the right to participate in future field trips. The decision will be made by the Headmistress in consultation with the teacher(s) conducting the field trip. The Code of Student Conduct applies to students at school and on school related trips/activities away from school. Students are expected to follow LIFE Academy rules and pay for any costs incurred. Parents who cannot provide such costs for their child's participation are encouraged to contact the Headmistress. Parents will always be given prior notice of field trips. The student who is not going on the field trip is to attend school. The student will be provided alternative learning opportunities at school during the school day.

21.5 Testing

LIFE Academy administers state mandated assessments at grades 3-8. LIFE Academy also administers a computer based adaptive assessment three times a year in grades K-8. This enables us to more effectively and accurately monitor the growth and identify the needs of our students. The results of the state assessment tests, and the computer based test, are used to guide instruction and assist in the improvement of curriculum and instruction. Parents will be sent

individual scores of their children, when available. Test scores will be included in the child's cumulative folder.

21.6 Special Education

LIFE Academy attempts to provide appropriate educational programs for children who are identified with disabilities and who have an approved Individual Educational Plan. When the IEP calls for pullout services, the student will be permitted to leave the classroom to work with a properly trained professional educator. The goal of special education programming is to provide students with an educational plan that best meets their individual needs in the least restrictive environment. This means that, to the extent appropriate, students will be provided services within the regular education classroom with the necessary support.

21.7 Homework

Homework is a very necessary and integral part of a child's education. The purpose of homework is to reinforce those skills and concepts taught in the learning environment. Homework also includes work not finished during class time. Guardian/parental support and cooperation are very important in this area. A request for homework for a child that is ill should be made the first morning the child is absent. This will allow time for the educator to organize the materials. Homework may be picked up in the office the following school day morning.

21.8 Fundraising

Students may solicit only for LIFE Academy-sponsored activities. The Headmistress, or Governing Board, when appropriate, must approve fundraisers in writing prior to announcement of fundraising activities, placing orders, or making commitments. LIFE Academy students are prohibited by Board Policy from door-to-door solicitation of any type in the community.

21.9 Additional Instructional Programs

The following classes are an integral part of our curriculum. All students are expected to participate in these classes.

Enrichment: 3:05 – 4:05 pm mandatory study hall and time for reflection.

Spanish (2x-3xs a week): Students are introduced to basic grammar, language skills, and different customs.

Technology: Instruction is offered in each learning environment and in the technology lab. Students will apply their technology learning throughout each of the classes/activities.

Physical Education: All students are required to participate in Physical Education. Students must have a note from home to be excused from Physical Education for one class period. Extended non-participation requires a physician's note. Suitable clothing and tennis shoes must be worn during class. (Suitable clothing: gym wear or dress code pants/shorts and shirt.)

21.10 Before and After School Care

LIFE Academy partners with Boys & Girls club and YMCA to provide before school care starting at 7:00am and afterschool care starting at 4:05 pm.

22 Behavioral Expectations

22.1 School wide Behavior

Students at LIFE Academy have the right to be treated with respect by their teachers and classmates. They are to be treated equally and fairly with dignity. All students should be included in all activities and made to feel welcome in all activities of LIFE Academy. Teachers work to facilitate internal discipline within each child. Staff members work as coaches for children, helping them to make good decisions and reflect on bad decisions in order to determine a better choice next time. Through classroom discussions, students acknowledge that certain behaviors, such as talking without permission, calling out, passing notes, bullying, students making fun of other students, and talking back to teachers, interfere with learning. Bullying will not be tolerated in the classroom or on school grounds and is considered intimidation and if severe enough "assault." There are school wide behavior expectations posted throughout the buildings. These behaviors are modeled and taught to students multiple times throughout the school year.

22.2 Consequences

We work to help children recognize disruptive behavior and develop self-control out of respect for self and others. Disruptive students may be asked to utilize "The Nest", also known as the cool

down corner for 5-8 minutes when they are ready to return to class as a responsible participant. If the student threatens harm to self or others, they may be removed from the class to meet with school social worker or Headmistress. A conference with parents and the School Leader will be called for any student, who repeatedly interferes with a teacher's ability to teach, another student's right to learn, or demonstrates an inability to improve behavior. Behaviors that are considered major infractions are listed in the Code of Student Conduct and consequences for these behaviors are determined by the Headmistress. The Code of Conduct explains discipline procedures, including suspensions and appeals. If there is insignificant improvement in the child's behavior, the parent may be scheduled to spend a day with their child to observe the classroom dynamics.

22.3 Playground Behavior

Students are provided with the opportunity to engage in unstructured, open-ended, social interaction during recesses. Recess time is supervised by a classroom teacher who is responsible for student safety. Equipment appropriate for use at recess time is available through classroom teachers. Consult with your child's teacher to find out if equipment from home is appropriate for use on the school playground. Equipment brought to school should be appropriate for group activity and should be shared with other students. Equipment such as skate boards and scooters is not allowed at school.

Children are expected to maintain the same level of respect on the playground as in the classroom. Respect for self, others and materials is essential. Students who disregard this will lose the privilege of recess until the next day where they have a chance to make a different choice. Recess is an important part of the total curriculum. When recess is held outside, **ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO GO OUTSIDE**. A student may be excused from recess for one day with a note from the parent/guardian. Extended excuses will be honored upon receipt of a physician's note. Parents are responsible to see that their child is dressed appropriately for the weather.

While on the playground, students are expected to:

- Use playground equipment and structures carefully
- Play within the designated areas and
- Share equipment and follow the rules of the game
- Leave all personal items at home that may be damaged or endanger the safety of others.

22.4 Breakfast & Lunch Behavior

Breakfast and lunchtime provides students with another opportunity to practice social skills in an

informally structured environment. During this time students are expected to: speak softly and be considerate of classmates, remain seated while eating, clean up after themselves, and be courteous to the people in charge.

Cafeteria Rules

- Students are expected to follow the Code of Student Conduct.
- Students are expected to sit while eating.
- Students are to use quiet voices when conversing with other students.
- Students are expected to use good table manners and to clean up after eating.

22.5 Tobacco/Smoke Free School Zone

The use of any tobacco products and E-Cigarettes, within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds by any individual, including school personnel, is prohibited. Students will be subject to disciplinary procedures outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.

22.6 Drug & Alcohol Use

The use and/or possession of drugs or alcohol are illegal and will be treated by the school as a serious offense. Any student found with or using alcoholic beverages or drugs during school hours or at school-related activities shall be referred to the School Leader for disciplinary action. The student's parent(s) will be notified and required to attend a conference with the Headmistress and social worker. The police may be notified and the student may be liable for arrest and prosecution.

22.7 Firearms

The federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 requires school districts to expel a student from school for a period of not less than one year if it is determined that the student brought a firearm to school. Expulsion may be permanent.

22.8 Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (including cyber-bullying)

LIFE Academy will not tolerate bullying of any kind, including cyber bullying, on its school grounds or during school-sponsored activities/events. The school's Board's revised anti-bullying policy has been included as an addendum to Student Code of Conduct. You are encouraged to read the policy, understand that it is based upon law, and encourage your child to refrain from bullying activities and report incidents observed at school.

22.9 Sexual Harassment

LIFE Academy is committed to providing a working and learning environment based on dignity and respect, free of harassment or intimidation. All those associated with LIFE Academy are expected to foster a climate that is supportive, respectful and conducive to teaching and learning. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) and the Department of Education's implementing regulations prohibit discrimination based on sex in federally assisted education programs and activities.

"Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment of a student can deny or limit, based on sex, the student's ability to participate in or to receive benefits, services, or opportunities in the school's program. Sexual harassment of students is, therefore, a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX under the circumstances provided in this guidance" ("Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance: Harassment of Students by School Employees, Other Students, or Third Parties, U. S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, January 2001).

Sexual harassment is among the behaviors that are destructive to a positive working and learning climate, and as such is prohibited by state law, federal law, and school board policy. Any member of the school community who engages in sexual harassment as defined below will be in violation of this policy. The Employee Manual is explicit in its discussion of sexual harassment and consequences of inappropriate behavior by employees. This policy encompasses behavior of adults towards adults or students, and students towards students or adults.

DEFINITION: It is a violation of this policy when a person makes any sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejections of advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the provision of benefits, privileges, employment or placement services or as a basis for the evaluation of academic achievement; or such advances, requests, or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's education or career by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational or employment environment.

Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Verbal or written harassment or abuse,
- Pressure for sexual activity,
- Repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications,
- Unwelcome touching,
- Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats including, but not limited to, one's grades, and job.
- Display of lewd or sexually explicit materials, inappropriate jokes, or language of a sexual nature.

RESPONSIBILITIES: All persons associated with the Academy are responsible for:

1. Insuring that their behavior does not sexually harass any other person associated with the schools.
2. Reporting any observed or experienced harassment or mistreatment immediately to the Sexual Harassment Grievance Officer and cooperating fully in the investigation of alleged sexual harassment; and
3. Actively participating in LIFE Academy's effort to prevent sexual harassment in the schools. Retaliation of any form, including threats, intimidation, reprisal or harassment, towards any person who makes a sexual harassment complaint, or who assists in or participates in an investigation,

proceeding, or hearing is unlawful and will not be tolerated and can be considered grounds for dismissal of staff and/or removal of a student from school.

FALSE REPORTS: False (fabricated) claims of sexual harassment can cause permanent damage to the victim of such claims and must therefore be treated as a very serious matter. A false claim will be considered grounds for dismissal of staff, or the removal from the educational setting for a student, who makes a false claim.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Reports and complaints of sexual harassment will be kept as confidential as possible consistent with the rights of all parties.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT GRIEVANCE OFFICER: The school social worker will be responsible for processing all sexual harassment complaints in accordance with the procedure outlined below.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES:

1. What one person may consider acceptable behavior may be viewed as sexual harassment by another person. Therefore, the victim should make clear to the harasser that the behavior is offensive and must stop. If the harasser does not stop the behavior or the victim is uncomfortable confronting the harasser, or if the behavior warrants further action in the opinion of the victim, the victim should lodge a complaint with the Grievance Officer.

2. Upon receipt of the written complaint, the sexual harassment Grievance Officer will investigate the matter. The complaint should be as specific as possible, including names, dates, times, places, witnesses, and specific words or action which were experienced as offensive. In cases involving students, the student's parents will be notified immediately of the complaint, the steps to be followed, and the ways in which they will be involved in the process.

3. All complaints of sexual harassment will be promptly investigated. Depending on the circumstances, the investigation may encompass any or all of the following:

a) The alleged victim may write a letter to the alleged harasser describing the offensive behavior, the circumstances under which it took place, the way the behavior made the victim feel, and requesting that the harasser apologize and promise not to repeat the behavior. The Grievance Officer will then meet with the alleged harasser, hear the harasser's account of the situation, present the victim's letter, and discuss the matter.

b) Where appropriate in the opinion of the Grievance Officer, a meeting will be held between the alleged victim and the alleged harasser to clarify the facts and to attempt to mediate a resolution.

c) The Grievance Officer may interview all parties and witnesses to the alleged harassment.

4. In cases of alleged student harassers, the Grievance Officer will determine if these facts constitute harassment. Disciplinary consequences such as detention, suspension, or expulsion consistent with school rules may be implemented. In cases of alleged adult harassers, the Grievance Officer will report the facts of the alleged harassment and will determine if these facts constitute harassment. The Grievance Officer will recommend appropriate action, which could include disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

5. If disciplinary steps are taken, copies of the reports of facts and the written decision will go to the harasser, the personnel file in cases of adult harassers, and to the parents in cases of student harassers. The victim, and their parents, if the victim is a student, will also be informed of the determination as to whether harassment occurred.

6. Repeated or extreme forms of harassment, violence, or civil rights infringements will result in a recommendation for expulsion or termination from LIFE Academy.

The Grievance Officer will make complete records of all sexual complaints, facts, steps taken, determinations, and resolutions, and those records will be kept in a central file in the School Leader's office for a period of 60 years.

STATE and FEDERAL REMEDIES:

In addition to the above, if someone believes he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment, he/she may file a formal complaint with the governing agency set forth below. The complaint process does not prohibit filing a complaint with this agency. The agency has a short time period for filing a claim: EEOC - 180 days.

22.10 Suspensions and Expulsions

Detentions, in and out of school suspensions, and/or expulsions are levels of consequences that

are administered to students who demonstrate disobedient, disruptive, violent, disrespectful, or otherwise harmful behavior at school. A student whose presence creates, or is likely to create, a specific threat or risk to the safety or well-being of the school community or any of its members will be suspended or expelled from school. The Code of Student Conduct clearly spells out the responsibilities of parents and students, appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, and consequences for unacceptable behaviors.

23 Student Rights

In connection with rights there are responsibilities that must be assumed by students; Among these rights and responsibilities are the following:

1. Civil rights, including the rights to equal educational opportunity and freedom from harassment and discrimination; the responsibility not to harass and discriminate against others.
2. The right to attend free public schools; the responsibility to attend school regularly and to observe school rules essential for permitting others to learn at school.
3. The right to due process of law with respect to suspensions, expulsion, and decisions the student believes injure their rights.
4. The right to free inquiry and expression; responsibility to observe reasonable rules regarding these rights.
5. The right to privacy, which includes privacy in respect to the school's records.

Students have the right to know the standards of behavior that are expected of them, and the consequences of misbehavior. The rights and responsibilities of students, including standards of conduct, will be made available to students and their parents through the Code of Student Conduct, which is distributed annually. Parents are required to sign the Code of Student Conduct as an acknowledgment that they have reviewed and discussed the Code with their children.

Children's Rights and Responsibilities

Children have the right:

- To experience a safe, supportive, and consistent environment;
- To use all of the program equipment, materials, and facilities on an equal basis with all of the other children;
- To receive respectful treatment;
- To experience discipline that is fair and non-punitive;
- To receive nurturing care from staff members. Children have the responsibility:
- To be accountable for their actions;
- To respect the school rules that guide them while at school;
- To remain with the group and staff at all times;
- To care for materials and equipment properly.

23.1 Child Abuse or Neglect

Alabama State law rightfully requires the school to report any suspicious or obvious abuse or neglect of a child to the Alabama Department of Human Services. Please be aware that the staff takes this responsibility seriously and will act immediately to meet this reporting requirement of the law. Alabama Children's Protective Services phone number is 334-262-2951.

23.2 Interrogations and Searches

23.2.1 Searches by Staff

The right to inspect students' cubbies, backpacks/book bags, and belongings is inherent in the authority granted school boards and administrators. This authority may be exercised as needed in the interest of safeguarding children, their own and school property. More detailed information on interrogations and searches is in the Code of Student Conduct. In exercise of that authority by school officials, it is incumbent upon them to protect each child's constitutional rights to personal privacy and protection from coercion and to act in the best interest of all students and the school.

Interrogation by Police and Other Outside Agencies

The schools have legal custody of students during the school day and during hours of approved extracurricular activities. It is the responsibility of the school administration to make an effort to protect each student's rights with respect to interrogations by law enforcement officials and representatives of other agencies.

Therefore:

1. When law enforcement and or agency officials find it necessary to question students during the school day or periods of extracurricular activities, the school, School Leader or designee will be present when possible.
2. An extensive effort will be made to contact the student's parent or guardian to ensure that the responsible individual is notified of the situation.
3. If custody and/or arrest is/are involved, the School Leader will request that the law enforcement officials observe all procedural safeguards, as prescribed by law.

23.3 Summary of Regulations Pertaining to Student Records

A parent has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available to the parent or student within a reasonable period of time after the request, unless the parent or student consents to a delay. The parent and the student have the right to receive copies of any part of the record, although a reasonable fee (\$.25 per page) may be charged for the cost of duplicating the materials. The parent and student may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional of the school or a third party if desired with written approval of the parent.

23.4 Confidentiality of Records

With few exceptions, no individuals or organizations but the parent, student, and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without the specific informed, written consent of the parent or the student.

23.5 Amendment of Record

The parent and student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent and student have a right to request that information in the record be amended or deleted. The parent and student have a right to a conference, and the School Leader must render a decision in writing. If the parent and student are not satisfied with the decision, the decision may be appealed to the Governing Board.

23.6 Non-Discrimination Policy

LIFE Academy does not discriminate against applicants, employees or students on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, political belief, marital status, sex, age, height, weight or handicap unless it impairs an individual's ability to perform work responsibilities adequately. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated at LIFE Academy employment practices and/or educational programs or activities. Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX, Section 504, or any other federal or state regulations may be directed to the School Leader, the Alabama Department of Education, or the Director of the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

23.7 Notification of Rights under FERPA

The Family Educational; Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) afford parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal [or appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate. Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment.

3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits

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Attachments

Section 10: Student Discipline

10.1	Attachment 9	Debnam, Kia, 11/29/19 2:53 AM	DOCX / 267.873 KB
10.2	Attachment 10	Debnam, Kia, 11/20/19 7:22 AM	DOCX / 267.873 KB

11. Parent and Community Involvement

Prior to engaging the Montgomery community, LIFE Academy was “Determination Academy of Excellence” and planned to serve grades 6-8. After speaking with families and community members, the community expressed a need for a K-8 school. Parents specifically mentioned they wanted their children to have a “fair chance” at being grade level proficient before middle school; “before it’s too late”.

To get an accurate understanding of local needs, the school leader partnered with a strong community non-profit named LIFE (Ladies Influencing Freedom and Excellence) Inc. Their CEO became Board Chair, and it was decided that the school would be named LIFE Academy (Leaders Influencing Freedom and Excellence). The LIFE Academy team has spoken with community members at churches, community centers, libraries, centers of commerce, with politicians, and to Teach for America leaders and alum, all in efforts to build the gap between a proposed community school, and an actual one.

LIFE has created it's website and interest forms to gauge Montgomery on the types of programming they would like to see implement between the approval of the charter and opening the doors of LIFE Academy in fall 2021. To date, community members have requested tutoring services, literacy courses, and summer camps to provide a safe environment while school is in recess. Also, many parents have requested adult education opportunities. Through multiple interactions, LIFE Academy has been able to acquire names of those who would like to volunteer with LIFE Academy to provide the mentioned services, so that LIFE utilizes the strengths of the people of Montgomery. This also allows for multiple opportunities for the LIFE Academy leadership team to scout for staff and faculty positions.

Other dominant topics surfaced during community outreach have been college preparation and opportunities for student involvement. The issues of increased teenage truancy and gang activity was communicated at length at Councilwoman Graham's quarterly meeting. Research shows that supportive school community is especially important for students from low-income homes, and kids who are socially and academically at risk. Truancy and gang membership fulfill students' need to feel supported and included. In LIFE Academy focusing on student-connectedness and leadership, it will reduce the number of students being pushed to negative forms of connectivity. This theme continued as parents like Ms. Brenda, spoke of her children's experiences with bullying and her resulting desire to participate in informing school policy. She has agreed to, upon application approval, begin building a parent panel to continue to inform LIFE Academy.

LIFE also met with community members in the St. Jude neighborhood through "street sweeps". By knocking on doors and standing outside of popular centers of commerce, both the school leader and board members have had a chance to get to build relationships. The board treasurer was also able to organize a speaking engagement with True Divine, the largest Church in Montgomery. As the values and goals of LIFE Academy were communicated, community members signed letters of support to back the opening of LIFE Academy.

LIFE Academy plans to submit a 9-12 charter after two years of operating, so that 8th graders

matriculate into the LIFE Academy High School. The High School will utilize relationships with community colleges like Trenholm, to provide trade training and college level courses starting in 10th grade. Exposure to college level rigor and responsibility, alongside teacher mentorship, will work as a scaffold for college and/or trade school success. Within the high school experience, students will complete internships with different community business to cultivate social capital. In addition, a majority of LIFE academy positions will be held by Montgomery residents.

LIFE Academy is a true community school in that its model is informed by both community members as well as research, and its design is created to impact the entirety of Montgomery. LIFE’s impact is not limited to its transference of education. It will benefit Montgomery’s west side economically through job creation, and create more opportunities for community members to interact with an array of social resources to build social capital.

Communication is Key

School-to-Community communication is vital to bringing into fruition the village concept often referred to in the Yoruba proverb regarding the raising of children. Well-attended PTSO meetings each month will be a highly effective mechanism in sharing with school families and the broader community updates on academic progress, policy changes, and pertinent information about the local educational landscape. Annually, by September 1st, an annual report will be published and made available to families and stakeholders communicating the academic progress and areas of improvement for the school based on the prior year’s state test data and other assessment data.

Family Meetings

Parents and LIFE Academy staff begin forging meaningful relationships before day 1 of the school year through individual parent meetings for all incoming LIFE Academy students. In this initial interaction, bonds are formed and expectations are agreed upon. The parent, student, and teacher sign their names in commitment to being present every day and on time (with any exceptions accompanied by a parent note). These relationships pay dividends as LIFE Academy leaders connect with each family and pave the way to engage in trusting, candid, and helpful conversations when a student shows patterns of arriving late, missing school, or misbehaving. All LIFE Academy parents are also asked to participate in LIFE's Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO), which will meet on the third Thursday of each month. Translators, will be provided along with dinner and childcare for those who need. During this meeting our parent leaders share the goals they have set for the organization for the upcoming school year. There are four main areas of focus: 1) Advocacy, 2) Volunteer, 3) Fundraising and 4) Enrollment & Registration. LIFE Academy intentionally creates a family environment for parents to feel comfortable participating in the LIFE Academy community and safe enough to make their request and needs known so that we can best support them.

Attachments

Section 11: Parent and Community Involvement

11.1	Attachment 11e	Debnam, Kia, 11/20/19 5:02 AM	PDF / 474.574 KB
11.2	Attachment 11d	Debnam, Kia, 11/20/19 5:02 AM	PDF / 485.502 KB
11.3	Attachment 11c	Debnam, Kia, 11/20/19 5:02 AM	PDF / 470.518 KB
11.4	Attachment 11b	Debnam, Kia, 11/20/19 5:02 AM	PDF / 475.425 KB

12. Educational Program Capacity

Kia Debnam is the Founder and School Principal of Life Academy. She brings with her individual and collective knowledge of the following organizations: The Freedom Fellows Institute, New Schools for Alabama School Founders Program, Transcend Education, 4th Sector Solutions, and an academic consultant affiliated with Freedom Preparatory Academy in Memphis, TN.

During the design phase (year 0), the foundational support team is the Freedom Fellows Institute. The school leader is one of six school leaders of color nationally chosen to found a high quality charter school that supports underserved students within an innovative school model. The Institute offers a year long, comprehensive program focused on six mission critical areas: school design, curriculum evaluation, instructional leadership, organizational leadership, operations and finance, and board development. Fellows meet for a least two weeks out of every month. In this time, the mission critical areas are addressed within research, attendance to conferences, observations of high performing charters around the nation, and exposure to experts in the fields. To date, Kia Debnam has received over 600 hours of development with the Freedom Fellows Institute.

The school leader is also in the inaugural cohort of the New Schools for Alabama School Founders Program. As one of two school leaders chosen and supported in starting a public charter in Alabama, she receives expert training on Alabama compliance and research-based skills aligned with leadership competencies. New Schools for Alabama uses its platform to expose the school leader to community-based organizations such as Black Alabamians for Education and LIFE Inc.

Transcend Education offers support in the re-imagination of school design and stretches the thinking of leaders to review systems and operations that support 21st century students for the demands of today's society.

4th Sector Solutions is helping the school leader to meet LIFE Academy's operational, financial, and organizational goals more efficiently by providing backroom HR and financial management. In addition, 4th Sector bridges LIFE Academy to local businesses in Montgomery to provide contracted services, and nationally known providers like Arthur J Gallagher & Co for insurances.

Lars Nelson, the former Head of Schools and Chief Academic Officer, and current Executive Director of Schools for Freedom Preparatory Academy, consults the school leader on academics and curriculum. Aligned with further school leadership training, Kia has worked with Mr. Nelson on multiple occasions since the start of the fellowship.

Leadership Team Responsibilities

In addition to the Head of School, the Leadership Team at LIFE Academy is comprised of the Dean of Operations, Deans of Students and Dean of Curriculum.

Deans of Students at LIFE Academy are charged with building, driving and maintaining student and parent culture. The table below iterates the key areas of responsibility for LIFE Academy Deans of Students.

Key Areas of Responsibility	Dean of Students Core Actions
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Setting Culture	<p>Set a compelling vision for setting culture within the first month of school, invest all staff members in the goals and build out a strategic plan. As part of readiness, this work includes creating/refining a well-documented common picture amongst the school staff of how the school staff will know LIFE Academy school culture is set after the first month of school.</p>
	<p>Build the capacity of the entire teaching staff through practice-based PD, real time coaching and various teacher interventions (e.g. video-viewing protocols, practice protocols, lesson rehearsal).</p>
	<p>Monitor progress through a rigorous weekly data collection, analysis and action planning process. Hold all school leadership team members accountable to action steps and adjust course as needed in order to win on the first month of school goals. Report back to teachers on data trends and progress they are making towards goals.</p>
	<p>Maintain a strong culture foundation post-Labor Day by conducting strategic walkthroughs, action planning based on data and capacity building of all staff that still necessitate core culture skill building.</p>
Coaching and PD (20%)	<p>In addition to the Dean of Students' consistent coaching load, identify the school's most struggling classroom managers throughout the year and coach them to proficiency via real time coaching and other recommended strategies (video-viewing protocols, culture club, lesson rehearsal, etc.)</p>
	<p>Reset struggling classrooms and/or school-wide routines when they do not meet the common picture of strong LIFE Academy culture.</p>
	<p>Design and deliver high impact practice-based professional development for teachers- delivered during Friday Afternoon Professional Development, Professional Development Days and Coaching Meetings.</p>
	<p>Create and oversee a school-wide behavior management</p>

<p>Behavior Management and Struggling Student Support (40%)</p>	<p>system that includes daily incentives and logical consequences. The system should be predictable and consistent across all classrooms.</p>
	<p>Design and oversee a removal/reentry from class process that includes student practice, reparative conversations and logical consequences. Manage team members towards these outcomes.</p>
	<p>Collect, analyze, and communicate widely on data trends (removals, suspensions, special education, relationship between behavioral struggle and academic struggle, etc.) and proactively problem solve ways to better serve all students, collaborating frequently with Instructional Leaders and Special Populations Team Lead.</p>
<p>Family Partnership (15%)</p>	<p>Oversee a powerful onboarding process for all families that invests them in school policy/practice and sets the tone for authentic collaboration, including a 1-on-1 family meeting prior to the first day of school for all students who are new to LIFE Academy.</p>
	<p>Reflect weekly on culture data (attendance, uniforms, homework, etc.) to identify the root causes for families that aren't meeting policy expectations and partner with them to ensure success. Train front office manager to be a strong manager of attendance calls: role-play conversation, build insisting and problem solving skills on getting kids into school, and problem solve.</p>
	<p>Proactively partner with families of struggling students to learn about their children, share updates and strategize on supports.</p>
	<p>Oversee family events that foster collaboration, trust and community; leverage Operations team members as critical partners in events.</p>
	<p>Set and enforce a vision for teacher communication with families.</p>
	<p>Create airtight systems (attendance, homework, behavior policy, etc.) with clear goals, incentives and monitoring</p>

<p>Systems and Policy Oversight (10%)</p>	<p>processes.</p> <p>Create monitoring mechanisms (data strategy, observation of systems, systems inventory, etc.) to ensure systems run smoothly across the year. Reflect on data weekly to identify bright spots and pain points.</p>
<p>Ritual/Tradition and School Event Oversight (15%)</p>	<p>Oversee the planning and implementation of rituals, traditions and events that foster community and increased sense of belonging.</p> <p>Design and implement a calendar of joyful, engaging events for students and parents; regularly review the calendar and ensure strong execution of all events</p> <p>Monitor rituals, traditions and events to ensure they align with LIFE Academy norms, expectations and core values. Adjust plans accordingly.</p>
<p>Other (5%)</p>	<p>Includes the following plus any additional responsibilities, regular or irregular, as approved or requested by Head of School:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitute teach • Cover school-day and after-school duty posts • Train student ambassadors to lead tours to guests in the building as well as to greet guests who enter LIFE Academy classrooms

Instructional Leader is a term applied at LIFE Academy to both the Dean of Curriculum and Instructional Coaches. LIFE Academy aims to maintain a 1:12 coach to teacher ratio, such that all LIFE Academy teachers receive the strong support & accountability required to ensure all LIFE Academy students are academically prepared to excel in college and in life. At full-growth, LIFE Academy will have one Dean of Curriculum who manages a caseload of teachers directly and also manages two Instructional Coaches, who directly manages the remaining teachers.

<p>Key Areas of Responsibility</p>	<p>Dean of Curriculum/Instructional Coach Core Actions</p>

<p>Observation/ Feedback & Practice and Real Time Coaching (40%)</p>	<p>Observe teachers regularly and use in the moment coaching strategies to adjust instruction. During the first weeks of school, it is expected that coaching focuses significantly on foundational culture and engagement teaching skills aligned to ensuring all LIFE Academy classrooms have strong baseline culture by Labor Day. Following that time period, Deans of Students and Deans of Academics should collaborate to support teachers with weak classroom management.</p>
	<p>Working with a portfolio of 8-12 teachers, observe each teacher for at least 20 minutes each week and provide weekly/bi-weekly feedback.</p>
	<p>Coordinate with Special Populations Team Lead to provide co-teachers with feedback specifically around co-teaching implementation.</p>
<p>Intellectual Engagement and Preparation at Unit and Lesson Level (15%)</p>	<p>Facilitate or prepare other teachers to facilitate Unit Unpacking protocols at least two weeks prior to the start of each unit. In cases where units will be unpacked centrally, ensure teachers have done the necessary pre-work at top quality in order to engage in the protocol.</p>
	<p>Facilitate or prepare other teachers to facilitate Intellectual Preparation Protocol at the lesson level; over the course of the year, the protocol should shift time allocation so that there is sufficient time left for practice of the execution moves the teacher will employ for that lesson. These can be done one-on-one or in small subject or grade specific groups.</p>
	<p>Facilitate or prepare other teachers to facilitate Looking at Student Work Protocol or another data analysis protocol to analyze and plan from data. These can be done one-on-one or in small subject or grade specific groups.</p>
	<p>Review teacher lesson plans within your cohort weekly and provide targeted feedback.</p>
	<p>Design and deliver high impact professional development (department or school-wide) for teachers- delivered</p>

<p>Preparation and Execution of Professional Development Sessions (10%)</p>	<p>during Friday Afternoon Professional Development, Network-Wide Professional Development Days, Department Meetings and Planning Periods</p>
	<p>Manage Department Chairs to facilitate strong Department meetings</p>
	<p>After PD, assess uptake of PD by collecting and sharing data and teacher practices that indicate successful or unsuccessful implementation, creating follow-up plans when unsuccessful</p>
	<p>Lead and support data analysis and data-driven plans (in relation to weekly quizzes as well as Interim Assessments & STEP Rounds).</p>
<p>Monitoring Student Achievement and Working with Struggling Students (10%)</p>	<p>Monitor ongoing achievement data at the weekly, unit, and IA/STEP level to ensure all students, including students with IEPs, make ambitious academic progress each year. Use this data to make programmatic, structural, and intervention decisions.</p>
	<p>In collaboration with the Special Populations Team Lead and families, create Tier 2 support plans and implement for scholars who are not making progress in Tier 1 instruction.</p>
	<p>In collaboration with the Special Populations Team Lead, Principal and families, create Tier 3 only if Tier 2 has been implemented with fidelity and is no longer working.</p>
<p>Family Partnership (5%)</p>	<p>Manage communication around academic progress, particularly through progress reports and report cards. Ensure teachers are prepared to clearly articulate student progress and next steps for growth with families.</p>
	<p>Have courageous, mission-aligned conversations with families of students who are struggling academically, including students who are at risk of not being promoted to the next grade. Proactively partner with families of struggling students to learn about their children, develop</p>

	direct relationships with these students, share updates and strategize on supports.
Talent Pipeline (10%)	<p>Tend to own professional development by attending and fully engaging in network PD, observing strong teachers and instructional leaders, visiting strong schools internally and externally, reading about promising practices, attending external PD.</p> <p>Actively work to prepare strong teachers for instructional leadership.</p>
Other (10%)	<p>Includes the following plus any additional responsibilities, regular or irregular, as approved or requested by Head of School:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitute teach • Cover school-day and after-school duty posts • Manage “Promotion in Doubt” process • Plan rituals and traditions related to academics • Manage other academic systems

The Deans of Operations at LIFE Academy is charged with all operational functions of the day-to-day of school operations as well as all compliance and student information systems responsibilities. They are directly responsible for all matters of school administration that do not directly relate to instruction or student behavior. The Dean of Operations blocks and tackles so their Head of School, Dean of Curriculum and Dean of Students can ensure their focus is on the work that most directly impacts students. Deans of Operations manage vendor relationships as well as directly managing the operations support staff for their school.

Key Areas of Responsibility	Dean of Operations Core Actions
	<p>Manage all aspects of day-to-day financial operations in compliance with LIFE Academy’s fiscal policies & procedures through partnership with financial consultant.</p>

<p>Finance</p>	<p>Maintain accurate records of all financial transactions.</p> <p>Ensure school operates on-budget, consulting Head of School as needed while aiming to keep the Head of School from having to get into the weeds of the financial life of the school.</p>
<p>Procurement/ Purchasing (ex. Office Supplies, Textbooks, Furniture)</p>	<p>Manage school purchasing process by placing orders with vendors, tracking delivery and maintaining inventory.</p> <p>Establish a clear system for staff to request items and then works to fulfill all standard requests in 24-48 hours. Regularly used supplies are identified and replenished without staff request; essential supplies are never missing.</p> <p>Each year, prepare the campus for start-up/new school year by ordering furniture, equipment, and classroom supplies as well as ensuring that school services (i.e., student food services, student transportation services) are lined up and ready for action.</p>
<p>School Safety (ex. safety drills, exit maps, emergency plans)</p>	<p>Ensures that the school meets safety requirements while at the same time works equally aggressively to minimize school safety related disruptions to instructional time.</p> <p>Ensures that every room has an exit plan and emergency binder with student class lists, that the school has an exit route for drills, and that the school has a reliable safety plan documented.</p> <p>Ensures that staff is aware of relevant emergency protocols, that an appropriate number of staff members are trained in safety procedures (i.e. CPR) and that reports are filed for any accidents/incidents.</p> <p>Owns coordination of all fire drills and other related emergency drill preparations (ex. lockdown)</p>

<p>Transportation (ex. Daily, Field Lessons)</p>	<p>Responsible for transportation and implementing systems that safely get scholars to and from home and school each day (entry and dismissal protocols).</p> <p>In addition to meeting a school's daily student transportation needs, team ops can & should be working aggressively to do the heavy lifting around transporting scholars & staff to and from both local field lessons as well as to more distant locations.</p> <p>When and if transportation hiccups are negatively impacting instructional time or posing safety concerns, team ops is there to own the behind the scenes problem solving with our external service providers and to communicate proactively with parents so that they can rest easy knowing their children are in good hands with LIFE Academy.</p>
<p>Food Services (ex. FRL forms, Daily, Field Lessons)</p>	<p>Makes food service as seamless as possible for our students, parents and school staff by coordinating daily food service.</p> <p>Adequately document the free and reduced lunch (FRL) status of 100% of our students, even though lunch is free to all students.</p> <p>Coordinating food service so that it does not interfere with instructional time.</p> <p>Proactively plan with staff to meet the food services needs of scholars for field lessons.</p>
<p>Health Services (ex. nursing services)</p>	<p>Coordinates with nurse to ensure that school is compliant with state law on medication administration, mandatory physicals and screenings, immunizations, and athletic participation.</p> <p>Coordinates with nursing staff to ensure that they have the</p>

	<p>training and resources they need to care for student health needs whether in class or on field lessons, in a manner that provides assurance to students and families, and reduces staff stress.and anxiety.</p>
<p>Main Office & Equipment (ex. Copy Machines, Fax, Phones, Postage Meter)</p>	<p>Operate a main office that not only optimizes the running of an efficient school but at the same time creates a warm and welcoming environment for parents, students, staff and other visitors.</p> <p>Ensure that copy machines, fax, phones and postage meters are always in working order, that clear instructions for operating this equipment (particularly copy machines) are readily available and that mechanical problems are dealt with immediately when/if they arise.</p> <p>From a warmth standpoint, team ops should ensure that the space is adequately decorated (student art, core values, plants, seasonally appropriate décor, etc.) and that visitors are welcomed, asked to sign our visitor log and that adequate seating & water are made available.</p>
<p>Student Testing</p>	<p>Ops manages the logistics of student test administration, including distribution of materials to the classroom, and (depending on the test) the collection and aggregation of test results.</p> <p>Serve as Building Test Coordinator for state-testing, ensuring the school manages the state-testing window in compliance with 100% of regulations 100% of the time.</p>
<p>Facility Management & Appearance (ex. classroom set-up, janitorial, bulletin boards, banners, etc.)</p>	<p>Strives to create facilities that have a bright and inviting educational atmosphere which communicate excellence and professionalism, and inspire learning and achievement, both in common spaces and inside of classrooms.</p> <p>Other tasks might include creating a system whereby bulletin boards are regularly refreshed with current/high-quality student work, updating bulletin boards</p>

	<p>with school-wide data, providing teachers or grade level teams with data for boards or soliciting student work for display.</p>
<p>Field Lessons (ex. End of year trips, hotels, busses, itineraries, etc.)</p>	<p>With guidance from their leadership team on priorities and non-negotiables, ops team can own from beginning to end the logistics of all off-site field lessons (local and out of state), including scheduling transportation, lodging, extracurricular activities, meals, etc.</p> <p>Create staffing plan, itineraries and handle non-instructional aspects of field lessons. Ops works with trip leaders to create contingency plans for when/if things should go awry.</p> <p>The ops team will also work with trip leaders to ensure that all fiscal policies are adhered to during field trips and lessons (cash & credit cards).</p>
<p>Progress Reports, Report Cards, Transcripts, Promotion in Doubt</p>	<p>Ops teams should ensure that school leaders, teachers and faculty, parents and students have timely access to the accurate information they need on student performance to engage in informed and constructive conversations that promote student engagement and achievement.</p> <p>Ops teams owns the printing and distributing of progress reports and report cards.</p>
<p>Information Technology (ex. computers, phones)</p>	<p>Ops team manages external service providers for technical issues related to computers, phones, VPU's, doc cams, etc.</p> <p>With support from IT consultant, Ops team can trouble shoots basic technology problems & provide useful tips to staff on common technology use. Whenever possible, Ops notifies IT of new staff 2 weeks in advance so that equipment is available for day one.</p> <p>Ops team will manage and distribute the spare laptops kept on site so that staff can pick up a spare as needed.</p>

	<p>school year.</p>
<p>Attendance System (ex. Staff Attendance, Student Attendance, Withdrawal Info)</p>	<p>Ops should be well-versed in and have reliable systems for tracking staff and student attendance and should be able to provide leadership teams with a snapshot of student attendance by school, grade, advisory, reason code, etc. as well as for staff attendance by staff member.</p> <p>Moreover, the ops team serves as front line of communication with parents regarding student tardiness and absences, firmly communicating with students and families the importance of attendance to student success. This is a crossover responsibility jointly held with the Dean of Students, who serves as a manager of the front office staff only as pertains to this aspect of their role.</p>
<p>School Readiness/End of Year Close-Out</p>	<p>With a strength in forward planning for complicated projects, ops should be very involved in not only planning for the End of Year (EOY) close out but also school readiness planning for the coming year.</p> <p><u>School Readiness:</u> Not only creates a detailed plan for accomplishing core ops projects based around school readiness but also works closely with the leadership team on integrating ops specific readiness planning with the school's larger readiness efforts.</p> <p><u>End of Year Close-Out:</u> With appropriate air cover & messaging to staff from Heads of School, ops can develop the plan for and own the logistics around the ending of one school year and the beginning of another school year, including but not limited to: EOY close out of classrooms, execution of facilities maintenance/upgrade projects, purchasing, etc.</p>
	<p>Oversees all Student Information System related functions of the school, including attendance, grading, scheduling and any other vital SIS functions, coordinating with all necessary parties at authorizing district & state department of education.</p>

<p>Student Information System</p>	<p>Trains all staff on any ways they need to use Student Information System.</p> <p>Follows up as needed with teachers and other staff when grades and attendance are not entered in a timely manner.</p>
<p>Other</p>	<p>Includes the following plus any additional responsibilities, regular or irregular, as approved or requested by the School Principal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitute teach • Cover school-day and after-school duty posts

Attachments

Section 12: Educational Program Capacity

12.1	Attachment 12	Debnam, Kia, 11/16/19 9:52 PM	DOCX / 204.958 KB
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OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

1. Legal Status and Governing Documents

LIFE Academy is currently in the process of attaining a 501(c)3, with LIFE Inc as its sponsor. LIFE Academy is recognized as its own entity by the Alabama Secretary of State.

The by-laws that govern LIFE Academy are below:

BY-LAWS OF

LIFE Academy

ARTICLE 1.

DESIGNATION & ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

(1.1) The Name, Purposes, Limitations and Duration of LIFE Academy, as stated in its Articles of Incorporation as K-12 school.

ARTICLE 2. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

(2.1) Purpose: The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the control and management of the affairs, property, and interests of LIFE Academy, and may exercise all powers of the Corporation, except as otherwise provided by law. Without prejudice to such general powers, but subject to the same limitations, it is hereby expressly declared that the Board of Trustees shall have the following powers, to wit:

1. (a) To select and remove the officers of this school, to prescribe such powers and duties for them as may not be inconsistent with these By Laws, and to employ, discharge, and fix the compensation of school personnel.
2. (b) To conduct, manage, control and establish policies concerning the affairs and business of the school; to determine on an annual or other basis the substantive areas in which the school's activities are to be concentrated; to establish on an annual or other basis the priorities of the school; and to oversee generally the implementation of the school's programs.
3. (c) To borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose of the school, and to cause to be executed and delivered therefore, in the name of the school, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, deeds of trust, mortgages, pledges, hypothecations, or other evidences of debt and securities therefore.

(2.2) Indemnity: LIFE Academy shall indemnify and hold harmless each director and officer now or hereafter serving the school from and against any and all claims and liabilities to which she/he may be or become subject by reason of her/his now or hereafter being or having been a director or officer of LIFE Academy and/or by reason of her/his

alleged acts or omissions as such director or officer, whether or not she/he continues to be such officer or director at the time when any such claim or liability is asserted. LIFE Academy shall

reimburse each such director and officer for all legal and other expenses reasonably incurred in connection with defending any or all such claims or liabilities, including amounts paid or agreed to be paid in connection with reasonable settlements made before final adjudication with the approval of the Board of Trustees, whether or not the officer continues to be such director or officer at the time such expenses are incurred. Provided, however, that no director or officer shall be indemnified against any claim or liability arising out of the officer's own negligence or willful misconduct, nor shall she/he be indemnified against or reimbursed for any expenses incurred in defending any or all such claims or liability or in settling the same unless, in the judgment of the Trustees of LIFE Academy, the director or officer against whom such claim or liability is asserted has not been guilty of negligence or willful misconduct. The foregoing right of indemnification shall not be exclusive of other rights to which a director or officer may be entitled as a matter of law.

(2.3) Compensation. Trustees shall not receive any salaries or fees for their services as Trustees, and shall be further prohibited from serving the school in any other capacity or providing goods and services and receiving compensation thereof. To the extent permitted by law, Trustees may be reimbursed for ordinary and necessary expenses that he or she may incur in transacting business on behalf of the school, but only after securing written approval from the President of the Board prior to incurring such expenses.

(2.4) Term. Trustees terms of office will normally be for three years. The initial board will serve for three full years. There are no term limits.

(2.5) Any and all Trustees can be removed from the board by LIFE Academy board Chairman at any time in an effort to protect the integrity of LIFE Academy.

(2.6) The board of Trustees shall consist of a minimum of 7 members and shall be elected by the board of Trustees. Additionally, 20% of the board shall be made of parents of students enrolled in LIFE Academy.

ARTICLE 3. OFFICERS

(3.1) The officers of LIFE Academy shall be at least a Chairman, Secretary and

Financial Oversight. The Board of Trustees may combine the offices of Secretary and Financial Oversight in a single person, in which case this person shall be referred to as the Secretary/Financial Oversight of LIFE Academy.

(3.2) The officers shall be elected annually by the Board of Trustees at the first meeting following the annual meeting of shareholders. Officers may serve as Trustees and Trustees may serve as officers.

(3.3) The duties of the officers of the Board of Trustees shall be as follows:

(a) The Chairman shall be the President of the Board. She/He shall preside at all meetings of the Trustees and have general and active management of the

business of LIFE Academy.

(b) In the absence of the Chairman, these duties shall devolve upon the

Secretary.

(c) The Secretary shall give notice of and attend all meetings of the Board of Trustees and shall keep minutes of all proceedings and records of all votes. He/she shall have custody of the corporate seal, if any.

(d) The Financial Oversight shall have charge of all funds of LIFE Academy and of its disbursements under the direction of the Board of Trustees and shall keep records of all receipts and disbursements.

(3.4) The Board may appoint such other officers and agents as it shall deem necessary, and fix their terms, duties and powers.

(3.5) The officers of LIFE Academy shall hold office for three-year terms or when their successors are chosen and qualify in their stead. Vacancies (due to removal, resignation, disqualification, death, or otherwise) may be filled for the unexpired portion of the term, or new offices created and filled, at any meeting of the Board of Trustees, by majority vote of the Board of Trustees and approval by the Board Chairman.

(3.6) Any Officer may resign his or her office at any time by notifying the Chairman or Secretary in writing. Such resignation shall take effect on the date of receipt of such notice or at any other time therein specified, and, unless otherwise specified, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. An Officer may be removed at any time, for cause, by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Board of Trustees then serving if in their judgment the best interests of the school would be served thereby.

(3.7) In the event that an officer is absent or disabled for a prolonged period, or for any other reason that the Board may deem sufficient, the Board may by majority vote delegate any of the powers or duties of such office to any other officer or to any director upon approval by Board Chairman.

(3.8) The Chairman may nominate a successor at any time. The nominee shall be confirmed by simple majority vote of the Board of Directors, after the nomination is made.

(3.9) The Chairman shall only be removed by an Accountability board established by the Chairman prior to any problems arising. Should the Chairman be removed by the Accountability Board, the previously approved successor will be eligible for the position of President.

ARTICLE 4. ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

(4.1) There shall be an Accountability Board made up of no less than three (3) persons and no more than five (5). The Accountability Board shall be made up of individuals nominated by the Chairman of LIFE Academy and confirmed by a simple majority of the Board of Directors after careful consideration. The Board of Directors shall consider the nominations and vote to have each nomination appointed.

(4.2) Purpose. The purpose of the Accountability Board is to:

(a) To hear accusations against the Chairman of the corporation

brought to them unanimously by the official Board of Directors excluding any disqualified individuals serving on the Board of Directors and make a determination as to whether the Chairman has committed any of the infractions listed below.

(b) The Board of Directors may call the Accountability Board into session to conduct an investigation and/or dismiss the Chairman if they find him/her guilty of any of the following accusations against the Chairman:

1. (1) Embezzlement
2. (2) Compulsive Lying

3. (3) Sexual Harassment

(4) Conviction of a felony

(4.2) Decision. The Accountability Board will determine if the Chairman is

guilty or innocent and whether to discipline or dismiss him/her from office. The Accountability Board is the only entity that has the authority to dismiss the Chairman from position if, after being called into session in accordance with the provisions of this Article and after considering all accusations against him; they determine that it is the best course of action for the organization. The decision of the Accountability Board is final.

(4.3) Removal/Replacement. Any Member of the Accountability Board may be replaced or removed at any time deemed necessary by request of the Chairman and confirmation of the Board of Directors, provided that it not be after the Accountability Board has been called to officially meet in accordance with Section 3 of this Article.

(4.4) Board Chair. The representative nominated by the Chairman and confirmed by the Board of Directors shall Chair the Accountability Board.

(4.5) Vacancies. Future vacancies shall be nominated by the Chairman and confirmed by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE 5. MEETINGS

(5.1) All annual, regular, special and committee meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held in accordance with Alabama law and education requirements.

(5.2) Regular Meetings: The Board shall attempt to meet monthly, but in no case less than ten (10) times per year at a meeting location to be determined by the Chairman of the Board.

(5.3) Special Meetings: A special meeting of the Board may be called by the Chairman of the Board and shall be called by the Chairman of the Board upon receipt of a written request signed by four (4) members of the Board specifying the purpose of the desired meeting. Notification shall be sent by mail/email to each member of the Board at least five (5) calendar days before the time of the meeting.

(5.4) Quorum: Not less than one-half (1/2) of the Trustees presently serving on

any committee shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any such committee meeting, but in no event shall a quorum consist of fewer than four Trustees. Any or all Trustees may participate in any meeting of the Board of Trustees or any committee of the Board.

(5.5) Rules of Order. When not in conflict with any of the provisions of these Bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order (latest revision) shall constitute the rules of parliamentary procedure applicable to all meetings of the Board.

(5.6) Order of Business. The order of business for regular meetings of the Board

may ordinarily be (a) (b) (c) (d) (e)

(f) (g) (h)

when otherwise ordered by the Board for the consideration of executive matters as prescribed by

law. No final or binding action shall be taken in a closed or executive session. The Chairman of the Board shall prepare and forward to each member of the Board a tentative agenda for the meeting. At his or her discretion, the Chairman of the Board may place a particular item or subject on the agenda upon the request of any member of the Board. Additionally, if 72 hours prior the scheduled meeting, a majority of the Board concurs that a particular item or subject should be placed on the Board's agenda as determined by a poll conducted by the Chairman, the item or subject shall be placed on the agenda. All matters requiring action of the Board, however, may be acted on even though not carried on the agenda, if agreed upon by 2/3 of the Board members present.

(5.8) Public Comment: Citizens or other individuals or delegations who desire to speak on an agenda item before that item is discussed and voted on by the Board may do so by submitting a written request to the Chairman of the Board or Secretary of the Meeting

as follows: Roll call

Approval of minutes from previous meeting

Old business

Reports and recommendations of committees Reports and recommendations of the School Leader New business and Action Items

Remarks from Trustees

Adjournment

(5.7) Open Meetings: All regular meetings of the Board shall be open except

prior to the start of the Board meeting and up until the Roll Call. After Roll Call has begun, any further requests to address the Board may be denied at the Board's discretion. Comments by any speaker shall be strictly limited to the agenda item before the Board. Scheduled and unscheduled comment periods shall be limited to a total of one half-hour (30 minutes) with individual speakers limited to three (3) minutes at the discretion of the Board. Speakers shall refrain from making accusatory or defamatory comments about individuals by name. Speakers who violate this policy may be denied the opportunity to continue to address the Board during that meeting. Each speaker may address the Board only once per meeting.

(5.9) Minutes. The minutes of the meetings of the Board shall record official action taken upon motions or resolutions that are voted upon by the Board, and may contain a summary or report and pertinent discussion. In all cases when the action is not by a unanimous vote, the "yes", "nays", and abstentions of the individual members shall be recorded upon the request of any member of the Board. The minutes of the Board become official only when completed by the Secretary of the Meeting and approved by the Board.

ARTICLE 6. COMMITTEES

(6.1) The Chairman may appoint such committees as she/he deems necessary, subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees.

(6.2) The Chairman of each committee shall make a written report to the Board of Trustees whenever requested by the Board.

(6.3) The Board shall have as a standing committee, a Nominating Committee, consisting of no less than three (3) members. Non-Trustees may serve on the Nominating Committee. The

Nominating Committee shall be responsible for reviewing the applicants for appointment to the Board of Trustees, for making recommendations for appointment to the Board of Trustees for vote by the Board of Trustees.

(6.4) Vacancies occurring among the appointive members of any committees, however arising, shall be filled by the Chairman of the Board for the remainder of the term.

ARTICLE 7. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

(7.1) Tax Returns and Financial Statements: The school shall file timely its annual federal income tax as required by the tax regulations and instructions.

(7.2) Execution of Documents: The Board of Trustees may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, or the Trustee, to enter into any contract or execute any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the school, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized by the Board of Trustees, no officer, agent, or other person shall have any power or authority to bind the school by any contract or engagement or to pledge its credit or to render it liable for any purpose or to any amount.

(7.3) Compliance Public Records Law: The school shall comply with all aspects of the Alabama Public Records.

(7.4) Inspection of By-Laws. The school shall keep in its principal office (once established) a copy of these By Laws, as amended or otherwise altered to date, certified by the Secretary, which shall be open to inspection by the Board of Trustees at all reasonable times during office hours.

(7.5) Fiscal Year. The Fiscal Year of the school shall begin on July 1st and end on June 30th, unless otherwise determined by the Board of Trustees.

(7.6) Accountant and Legal Counsel: The school shall have the right to have an accountant and legal counsel.

(7.7) Policies and Procedures. Any action by the Board establishing policy or methods of procedure, administrative, business, academic or otherwise, not contained in these Bylaws shall be known as "Policies and Procedures of the Board".

(7.8) Policies and Procedures of the Board may be adopted by the Board, or may be amended or repealed, in whole or in part, at any meeting of the Board in accordance with law.

ARTICLE 8. ADOPTION & AMENDMENTS

(8.1) These By-Laws may be adopted by a majority vote of the Trustees of the school.

(8.2) These By-Laws may be altered or amended or repealed by a unanimous vote of the Board.

(8.3) If any term or provision of these By-Laws or any application thereof shall be invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of these By-Laws or any other application of such term or provision shall not be affected thereby.

ARTICLE 9. Structure

(9.1) Members. LIFE Academy shall not be a membership organization and shall have no members.

(9.2) Stock. LIFE Academy shall be organized on a non-stock basis.

ARTICLE 10. SCHOOL LEADER

(10.1) Purpose. She/he is responsible for all day to day functions of LIFE Academy. This includes establishing the mission, vision and academic goals. Such areas shall be reviewed annually and modified as the school leader sees fit to meet charter requirements.

(10.2) Faculty and Staff. The school leader shall create professional development and training opportunities as outlined in the Faculty and Staff Handbook. Further, she/he is responsible for the hiring and termination of faculty and staff as deemed necessary.

(10.3) Strategic Planning. The school leader is expected to exceed district public school average by a minimum of 5% by the end of year 2. Additionally, she/he is responsible for creating a plan to grow to K-12 by the end of year 5.

(10.4) Parent and Student. She/he is responsible for actively engaging the community to meet recruitment and enrollment goals. She/he will also execute plans to involve parents and students in the academic learning environment as outlined in the Family and Student Handbook.

(10.5) Removal/Resignation. The school leader will receive a minimum of 3 evaluations annually by the Board Chairman or a person designated by the Board Chairman. 2 of these evaluations shall be announced, giving a minimum of 72-hour notice and one evaluation will be conducted unannounced. All evaluations for year 1 are for goal setting and acclimation purposes only. Removal of the school leader requires a unanimous vote of trustees and final approval by Chairman. Accusations constituting a felony, intentional misrepresentation of school, or inappropriate relationship with staff and students may lead to immediate removal upon approval by the Board Chairman.

THUS DONE AND ADOPTED this thirteenth day of November 2019.

I certify that the foregoing Bylaws of LIFE Academy were approved and adopted by and on behalf of the Academy by its Board of Trustees on November 13, 2019, and are currently in effect.

LIFE ACADEMY

BY: _____ Board Chairman

BY: _____ Secretary

BY: _____ Financial Oversight

Attachments

Section 1: Legal Status and Governing Documents

1.1	Attachment 15b	Debnam, Kia, 11/27/19 12:33 PM	PDF / 1.237 MB
1.2	Attachment 16	Debnam, Kia, 11/22/19 3:18 AM	PDF / 118.914 KB
1.3	Attachment 15a	Debnam, Kia, 11/15/19 6:11 PM	PDF / 709.872 KB

2. Organization Chart

Attachment 17 outlines the LIFE Academy Organization Chart beginning in the 2021-22 school year and outlines how the Organization Chart and reporting structure shift annually through reaching full capacity, as aligned with the LIFE Academy budget.

The Head of School reports to the LIFE Academy Governing Board.

Attachments

Section 2: Organization Chart

2.1 Attachment 17	Debnam, Kia, 11/22/19 4:43 AM	DOCX / 210.002 KB
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3. Governing Board

The LIFE Academy board currently has seven members, all of whom are local Montgomery residents with long standing service records in the community. The Board Chair, Norma Chism, is a retired U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sergeant with 24 years of military leadership experience; she's an operations executive with the ability to lead diverse teams. Councilwoman Audrey Graham, the Community Liaison, currently represents District 4. District 4 is a predominantly Black district where LIFE Academy will be located (St. Jude's Educational Institute), and to whose families LIFE Academy will serve upon charter approval. Her strengths include community engagement, a background in policy, and political impact. Dr. Beverly Hill is the Board Director and the Director of Academic Curriculum at the Air Force Chaplain Corps College. She is skilled at evaluating and overseeing administrative programs. Evelyn Ward, the Board Secretary, is a retired social worker with a work history in the Federal Direct Student Loan Program. Bettye Hill, the Board Treasurer, is CEO of Bettye Chapman Media. She is a certified professional speaker and trainer whose skills include finance management, training facilitation, and marketing content creation. Earl Taylor, LIFE Academy's Parent Liaison, is a St. Jude alumnus, current coach, and parent in Montgomery. Earl brings to the board insights on St. Jude traditions, community ties, and alumni support. Kevin McDaniel is the Board Arbitrator responsible for conflict resolution. Pastor McDaniels has been the senior pastor of Fresh Rain Church for ten years, and is held up by his congregation to be fair and community oriented.

The governing board will oversee all schools created under LIFE Academy. In the school leader partnering with a pre-existing non-profit, it was agreed that the board for LIFE Inc. would not transfer over as the governing board of LIFE Academy. This decision was made to both honor the work required for LIFE Inc as its own entity, to create a more racially and occupationally diverse governing board, and to avoid conflicts of interest.

The following dates have been allocated for LIFE Academy Board meetings (contingent upon charter approval). Meeting may range in duration from one to two hours. The first 50% of the time duration dedicated to a board meeting, is closed-door convening for confidential discussion. The second half of the meeting is open to the public.

February 11, 2020

March 10, 2020

April 14, 2020

May 12, 2020

June 9, 2020

July 14, 2020

August 11, 2020

September 8, 2020

October 13, 2020

November 10, 2020

December 8, 2020

Board Summary:

Name	Planned Role	Gender (Select from dropdown list)	Race (Select from dropdown list)	Short Bio
Norma Chism	Board Chairperson	Female	Black or African American	Norma J Ladies Ir (LIFE). S "to uncor commun and char is a retire with 24 y experien key advis employe served a Force Fi was resp curriculu institutio experien operatio planning relations
Audrey Graham	Community Liaison	Female	Black or African American	Councilm raised in children. Associat from Tre a Bachel Troy Sta Circuit C since 20 presiden

				Councilo 4 repres 2018.
Beverly Hill	Board Director	Female	Black or African American	Dr. Beve Specialis Enlisted and Staff previous courses known fo developr Master S varied ac educatio
Bettye Chapman	Board Treasurer	Female	Black or African American	Bettye C speaker, of Bettye value the organiza developr marketin in Marke and a Ma Faulkner Sigma R Independ Trainer a Team.
Grace Ward	Board Secretary	Female	Black or African American	Grace (E States A experien relations developr organizir group co of Youth Alabama Counseli Her expe attaining presiden Counseli Society I
Earl Taylor	Parent Liaison	Male	Black or African American	Earl Tayl with the : athletics. alumni o Earl is pa of St. Ju of LIFE / Developi Parish, It

				of coach for the R Prattville Educatio Eric Tayl high rigo self-disci
Kevin McDaniel	Arbitrator Conflict Resolution	Male	White	Pastor "M Senior P was esta 27 years time min strength which is to be in t and mak a differer of the ch the Birmi Karen wi years. H and is kr grandchi

List of Governing Board Members

Norma Chism – Board Chairperson

Beverly Hill – Board Director

Audrey Graham – Community Liaison

Bettye Chapman – Board Treasurer

Grace Ward – Board Secretary

Earl Taylor – Parent Liaison

Kevin McDaniel – Conflict Resolution

Below:

Name

Bio

Full Resume with contact information

NORMA J. CHISM CEO/FOUNDER LIFE INC.

LIFE Academy Board Chair

Email: LifeAI2016@gmail.com Cell number: 334.717.0602

Norma J. Chism is the CEO and Founder of Ladies Influencing Freedom & Excellence Inc (LIFE). She dedicates herself to the mission, “to unconditionally serve vulnerable communities near and far to develop leaders and change the world one life at a time”. She is a retired USAF Senior Master Sergeant with 24 years of military leadership experience. During her service she served as

key advisor to her leadership in the areas of employee safety and welfare. She also served as the director of education at the Air Force First Sergeant Academy where she was responsible for instructor certifications, curriculum development, test evaluation and institution accreditation. She also gained experience in policy and regulation research, operational process analysis, strategic planning, project

management and relationship management.

Norma Chism is a highly experienced operations executive with the ability to lead diverse teams. In her current role she has impressively led her team to mentor 200 underserved youth, provide over 100 backpacks of school supplies/toiletries for low income communities, and bring job fairs and women's health events to over 1,000 women. Internationally, she has provided over 18,000 meals to local nationals, dug wells for 2 villages that had no clean drinking water, distributed over 1,000 pounds of clothes/toiletries/toys and directed leadership seminars to over 100 community leaders of Sri Lanka. Beyond her career, she has a passion to tackle tough issues with the belief, one person can make a difference.

Originally from Lake Charles LA, she and her husband Sam of 26 years, have 4 children and two grandchildren. Norma is heavily involved in her church, organization and community. She is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Organization Leadership at Columbia Southern University, Orange Beach Alabama.

NORMA CHISM

745 Glennbrooke Blvd, Prattville, AL 36066 Home: 334-717-0602 lifeal2016@gmail.com

SUMMARY

Well-qualified curriculum director able to plan and direct student services. Practiced trauma counselor, organizer and manager with exemplary record in field. Ready to dedicate expertise gained over 24-year Air Force career and take on new long-term role. A passionate leader with commitment to supporting clients in all aspects of life. Excellent communication and relationship building skills with diverse audiences. Friendly and engaging with strong team collaboration abilities. Articulate and diplomatic in communicating with people of all backgrounds, ages and cultures. Eager to bring people of community together through well-planned and executed community programs.

SKILLS

- Strategic decision making
- Program oversight
- Business process improvement
- Process development
- Conflict resolution
- Complex problem resolution
- Talented public speaker
- Advanced problem solving abilities

- Critical thinking
- Business systems analysis
- Functional requirements
- Staff training and development

EXPERIENCE

LIFE INC.

Prattville, AL

04/2015 – Current Developed organizational vision, mission and foundational structure to facilitate early

growth. Recruited exceptional job candidates via diverse traditional and digital routes for suitability for key positions. Cultivated and maintained strong relationships and customer partnerships to capitalize on opportunities and maximize business success. Collaborated with partners to build valuable relationships and achieve operational goals. Revitalized business plans and realigned company objectives to increase overall profits. Promoted company public profile by delivering speeches and presenting at conferences as public face of organization. Maintained up-to-date knowledge of all statutory requirements and regulations.

Founder/President Chief Executive Officer

Director of Education

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

Montgomery, AL 05/2012 to 04/2017

Selected, adapted and wrote curricula and lesson plans to meet individual classroom requirements.

Trained and evaluated teachers to support program operations and maintain organization certifications. Developed, administered and updated complete educational program serving more than 1,200 students. Established and updated schedule of classes and activities for program year. Participated in daily meetings and brainstorming sessions to discuss new ideas, client projects and upcoming assignments.

Created and implemented process improvements to reduce workloads and bolster academic efficiency. Researched supplemental materials, including books, regulations and policies for use in classroom discussions. Delegated duties and allocated resources based upon Air Force

accreditation requirements. Supervised divisional teams responding to inquiries and resolving conflicts. Assessed student learning and growth through course evaluations, essays and daily assignments. Drove student engagement through diverse teaching methods using online and face to face methods. Mentored and coached staff members by giving positive feedback and constructive criticism. Facilitated collaboration with other educators to brainstorm ideas and discuss methods to boost student learning.

Human Resources Officer

U.S. AIR FORCE

Columbus , MS 03/1993 to 04/2012

Advised top level managers on strategies for improving policy enforcement and eliminating any concerning behaviors or legal concerns. Supported positive employee attitudes toward organizational objectives through effective orientations and leadership meetings. Mentored over 3,000 staff members in career planning, goal setting and developing problem solving skills. Coordinated staff training and handled logistics and administrative tasks. Managed evaluation system to ensure effectiveness for assigned enlisted members. Directed and monitored member safety and welfare. Projected employment needs and devised strategies to meet targets.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

MONTGOMERY LEADERSHIP

Leadership Montgomery, Montgomery, AL

VETERAN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Veteran's Entrepreneur Program, Chattanooga, TN BACHELOR OF SCIENCE: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT Columbia Southern University, Orange Beach, AL

SENIOR ENLISTED LEADERSHIP

Senior Enlisted Academy, Community College of Air Force

04/2019 08/2018 07/2017 03/2014

Beverly D. Hill, EdD

Board Director

Email: denise3@knology.net Cell number: 334.450.3502

Dr. Beverly D. Hill is an Instructional Systems Specialist with at the Barnes Center for Enlisted Education in the inaugural Faculty and Staff Development Directorate. She previously developed career development courses for enlisted upgrade training, being known for her writing acumen and test development expertise. A retired USAF Chief Master Sergeant, she served 25.5 years in varied administrative, executive, and adult education capacities.

Dr. Hill's expertise is curriculum and professional development where she daily serves as a reliable, committed teammate who goes the distance for the faculty and staff assigned to the Barnes Center and associated units. Beyond her career, she is passionate about bettering the community and families therein, particularly our youth.

Originally from Macon Georgia, she and her husband Wyatt, are Montgomery transplants who are heavily involved in their church and community. Foremost to them is love of family!

BEVERLY D. HILL

3613 Fernway Drive, Montgomery AL 36111-3309

Phone: Work: (334)953-8657/Cell: (334)450-3502 | beverly.hill.2@us.af.mil

Skills Summary:

Strategic thinker who adeptly applies analytical, organizational, curriculum development/academic, leadership, and evaluative skills and experience to advanced educational and other leadership and management rich environments. Experienced in evaluating and

overseeing educational and administrative programs with utmost integrity and accountability, where proven managerial and personal skills served to perpetuate organizations' goals and objectives. Over 30 years of combined military, culminating in attaining the top enlisted rank, and civil service

staff, administrative, instructional, and diplomatic capacities where demonstrated communication, research, leadership, and management skills are essential to success.

Instructional/Educational Experience:

Director of Academic Curriculum, Air Force Chaplain Corps College, Alabama (June 2019 – Present)

Provide curriculum, instructional, evaluative, assessment, and professional development guidance and direction to 10 Air Force chaplaincy personnel in 7 varied programs providing worldwide spiritual support to joint force personnel in peacetime, wartime, and deployed environments.

- Injects student-centric educational best practices in static, instructor-centered lessons per data driven SME & student feedback
- Provides continuous professional development to enhance self-efficacy--lifelong learning, competency-based assessments
- Ensures SMEs meet lesson objectives; reviews critical baseline courses/lessons, collaborated, and recommended improvements
- Reviews, recommends, & implements lesson enhancements based upon student assessment, empirical, and anecdotal data
- Advises commandant on university and organizational guidance affecting educational policies, programs, & procedures
- Mentors and assists in professionally developing 5 chaplains and 4 religious affairs airmen becoming exceptional teachers

Instructional Systems Specialist, Barnes Center Fac. & Staff Dev., Alabama (November 2017 – June 2019)

Provided timely and appropriate professional development and curriculum expertise to 6 distinct levels and programs providing Air Force technical and leadership education and training.

- AETC 1750 Manager-selected as AETC CoP team lead for 2--ISD & learning theories/neuroscience; colleagues
lauded info
- Adeptly written AETC learning professionals' consortium proposal—co-presenter of active learning
strategies/neuroscience
- Selected as 1 of 3 inaugural Barnes' faculty & staff development (FSD) directorate members—expert w/team
orientation
- Personally requested—expertly/thoroughly reviewed 20 EPMEIC courses; recommendations based on new
construct/feedback
- Trusted educator—requested to develop & consult on showcasing PME students' prof.

development learning

continuum

- Excellent coordinator—led effort to construct FSD SharePoint site—commensurate w/others, examining

dissemination

- Skillfully sought & attained HAF & AETC support for widely used 21st century professional development

ePortfolio tool

- Lifelong learner—attained certification/facilitated Kirton's Adaptation-Innovation Theory—50 BCEE members

benefitted

- Advocated for curriculum, initiated, and presented student-centered learning in-service training; generated

enthusiasm

Instructional Systems Specialist AF Career Develop. Acad., Alabama (August 2009 – November 2017)

Assessed and developed over 50 training courses and assessments; performed test analysis and recommended corrective courses of action after reviewing curriculum, questions, and normed responses.

- Expertly assisted appx 26 USAF functional comms. at STRTs/U&TWs in determining distance education &

training need

- Precisely coordinated & oversaw 12 career development courses/SMEs—ensured currency, statistically-based

improvements

- Trained, advised, & assisted 20+ US Air Force course developers with adherence to established educational policies
- Developed AFCDA-wide Comm. Plan—led multi-functional focus group, external customers, harnessed archival information
- One of two branch curriculum subject matter experts requested to attend virtual & on-site multi-command training workshops
- Analyzed career development course manuscripts for instructional soundness and applies distance learning methodology
- Conducted statistical analysis on 24 annual end-of-course examinations and advised writers

on appropriate courses of actions

- Oversaw, maintained, and conducted 40-member organizational professional development program and in- service training
- Developed, researched, scheduled/conducted 100% self-assessments in MICT, ensured compliance & effectiveness
- Led commandant-appt. AFSO 21 cross-functional team; included SWOT analysis & 5 Whys; improvements reduced backlog
- Facilitated 7-member Barnes Center wide/CC-sanctioned professional development Lunch & Learn series--160 attended
- Efficiently developed comprehensive course examinations and converts to E-examination—selected as 1 of 2 in branch
- Thoroughly researched, designed, administered, validated, and thematically coded org. communications data collection tool

Substitute Teacher (Grades 9-12 Montgomery County), Alabama (December 2007 – August 2008)

Regularly and continuously requested for specified and varied teachers who were confident in ability to properly administer discipline while staying on task as well as for IDP students and school testing.

- Promptly reported to over 1,000 student public high schools for school/classroom familiarization, including
evacuations
- Consistently ensured prescribed assignments in subjects as Bus. Ed, Phys. Ed, Science, & Spec. Ed completed
for 100+ daily
- Confidently established authority, maintained direct supervision and accountability--ensured adherence to
proper classroom and school behaviors in accordance with the “Montgomery Public Schools Code of Student Behavior,”—popular substitute
- Appropriately referred errant in compliance with schools’ and teachers’ policy with excellent classroom mgmt.
skills
- Enthusiastically assisted school personnel in overseeing classrooms and activities such as testing and students’
special needs

- Concisely reported/recorded developments, observations, and behavioral dynamics for permanent educator's

follow-up

Substitute Teacher (Grades Pre-K-6 Maxwell Elementary), Alabama (December 2007 – May 2008)

Specifically requested by 6th grade teachers who sought those able to manage classrooms and reliably deliver specific curriculum to students as early as pre-K and requested during co-curricular activities.

- Effectively managed classroom behavior for over 100 students, aged 3 to 13, including special needs students
- Presented instruction in accordance with the primary teachers' established lesson plans, ensuring no lapse in
- Served as role model by mimicking proper behavior while correcting improper behavior; insisted same from
- Teamed with administrators, faculty, and staff members to "do whatever it took" to educate the student

learning

students

body--mission

- Facilitated smooth flowing classrooms and special study areas and days with no mishaps and behavioral issues
- Preferred and by-name requested, as substitute by sixth grade teachers due to effective student management

skills

Air Force Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy Flight Instructor, Alabama (August 1999 – September 2001)

Selective duty as professional military education instructional lead for joint service senior noncommissioned officer in complex leadership and communicative skills.

- Delivered 240 hours of leadership, management, and communication curriculum to 60 joint service senior
- Effectively supervised/mentored diverse students—all services and statuses—enhanced leadership

potential/value

- Assessed and evaluated student performance in complex studies; used such methods guided discussions and case studies
- Analyzed student performance; counseled/advised on leadership, management, and teamwork/team member skills
- Efficaciously instructed community police officers and educators in topics ranging from diversity to leadership styles
- Communicated Air Force and school message during negative radio interview--became a training model
- Precise facilitation; co-conducted auditorium lesson on equal opportunity; emceed graduation parade ceremony

Staff/Leadership & Management Experience:

Operations Coordinator (OPSCO), Kosovo (January 2006 – May 2007)

Trusted military attache and responsible for reporting, vehicles, equipment, and daily operation of a 4-person, multi-service, local national defense office as part of worldwide joint military attache service.

- Supervised 6 multi-service junior members, an Air Force member, foreign local staff, and contractor in technical and non-technical tasks at US Embassy; mentored Marines and state department supervisory personnel
- Directly and consistently increased security assistance program by 60% while directing day-to-day activities, including coordination with United Nations Mission in Kosovo and humanitarian assistance programs worth over \$1M
- Concisely administered timely \$570K budget with responsibility for \$2M in equipment and specialized vehicle assets
- #1 OPSCO, per HQs leadership, with all unit measures managing varied computer systems and product status reporting

Command Information Management Inspections Manager, Virginia (December 2003 – January 2006)

Responsible for establishing collaborative, command-wide policy and ensuring compliance while operating an executive and administrative work center.

- Directly supervised four information management personnel and numerous local and total force augmenters
- Managed & operated all aspects of an administrative work center; 70 superiors, peers, subordinates,

augmenters; simultaneously ensured work center produced over 60 reports as inspections work center

coordinator

- Oversaw and managed \$4M annual lodging and vehicle budget expenses ensuring no delays in unit

assessments

- Collaboratively developed relevant ACC AFSC-specific inspection war & peacetime criteria as 10-person SME

team

Director of Resources, Alabama (September 2001 – November 2003)

Oversight of registrar and internal equipment and budgeting while serving as the senior enlisted for personnel and human performance issues.

- Supervised 4-person administrative and technical staff in database, network management, and student registrar functions
- Adroitly managed and executed \$500K budget for newly established 180-student leadership training academy
- Purchased and oversaw installation of \$30K audiovisual and computer equipment—Command Resource

Advisor of Yr.

- Efficiently orchestrated 10 graduation ceremonies for mid-level supervisors, overall 4,000 people attended
- Thoughtfully guided and mentored 220 staff members and students in resolving sensitive personal and

professional issues

Education:

Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership and Management, Capella University, May

2016

Master of Science, Adult Education, Troy University, Montgomery AL, 1999
Bachelor of Science, Business Administration, Georgia State College, Warner Robins GA campus, 1995 Associate of Science, Instructor of Technology and Military Science, Community College of the Air Force, 2000

Additional Qualifications:

Kirton Adaptation-Innovation Certification (December 2017)
Online Career Development Course Writer Course (via Blackboard), 10 January – 9 February 2017 Mindset of Leadership Training, 20-22 September 2016
Air University Academic Instructor E-learning Workshop, 2-11 September 2014
Community College of the Air Force Instructional System Development Certification, December 2011 Proficient in:
Microsoft Office Suite
Management Internal Control Toolset (MICT) self-assessment program
E-examination course examination conversion database
Course Development Student Administration and Registration (CDSAR) System

Accomplishments/Community Involvement:

Air Force Award for Meritorious Civilian Service 2017
Southeast YMCA Volunteer of the Year 2017
Southeast YMCA Togetherhood Chair (January 2017 – Present)
Chair, Southeast YMCA Executive Board (October 2014 – December 2016) Capella University Ambassador (November 2016 – Present)

Chief Operations Officer, Ladies Influencing Freedom and Excellence 501c3 (January 2017 – Present) Co-Author, “Emergence of Organizational Learning through the Development of a Communications Plan”- i- Manager Journal of Educational Technology, September-November 2016
Southeast YMCA “Man {sic} of the Year” Award, 2010 & 2015
President’s List, Capella University (2013 – 2014)
Joint Military Attache School “Country Paper” Award (#1 of 27 students), 2006

BETTYE CHAPMAN, MSM Board Treasurer

Prattville, AL 36066 | (205) 999-8489| bchapman0624@gmail.com |
www.linkedin.com/in/bettyechapman www.bettyechapman.com |
www.johnmaxwellgroup.com/bettyechapman/

Bettye Chapman is a certified professional speaker, coach and trainer. She is the CEO of Bettye Chapman Media, LLC. Bettye adds value that helps individuals, companies and organizations through professional speaking, development coaching, training and creative marketing. Bettye holds a Bachelor’s degree in Marketing from the University of Alabama and a Master’s Degree in Management from Faulkner University. She also has the Six Sigma Red Belt Certification. Bettye is an Independent Certified Coach, Teacher, Trainer and Speaker with The

John Maxwell Team.

Bettye uses her skillset not only in her professional life, but also in her personal life through leadership roles in ministries, civic and service organizations. She is the liaison and mentor for the Elev8 Youth Ministry Ambassador group. Bettye serves as the Director of Marketing for a 501c3 non-profit organization – Ladies Influencing Freedom & Excellence (LIFE), Incorporated. She is a

member of the service organization Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated and serves on various committees.

CORE STRENGTHS

Training Facilitation | Instructional Design/ Content Curation and Design | Marketing Content Creation Project Management | Process Improvement/Performance Improvement | Cross-Functional Team Leadership

Team Coaching/Mentoring | Process and Procedural Creation/Implementation | Customer Service Delivery

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Camtasia Software Suite | Microsoft Office Suite/PowerPoint/Excel/OneNote | Adobe Suite/Photoshop

BETTYE CHAPMAN

751 Glennbrooke Blvd., Prattville, AL 36066 | (205) 999-8489| bchapman0624@gmail.com

www.linkedin.com/in/bettyechapman www.bettyechapman.com

<https://www.johnmaxwellgroup.com/bettyechapman/>

Certified Speaker, Trainer/Coach and Chief Executive Officer with a strong background in performance-based training and development solutions, facilitation, marketing, mentoring, content curation and design. Expertise in research, problem solving and project management. Sought out to handle tough, challenging projects that require strong customer connection and relationship-building skills and creativity in bringing projects in on time and under budget. Strong technical and negotiation skills. Knowledgeable about business process improvement methodology.

Technical Skills

Camtasia Software Suite | Microsoft Office Suite/PowerPoint/Excel/OneNote | Adobe Suite/Photoshop

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The John Maxwell Team, West Palm Beach, FLThe John Maxwell Team is a group of Maxwell certified Coaches, Trainers, Speakers and Professionals, offering workshops, seminars, keynote speaking, and coaching to aid in personal and professional growth to individuals, organizations and companies worldwide.

Independent Certified Speaker, Coach and Trainer August 2019 – Present Speak, coach and train others using content, resources and materials from the #1 Leadership Expert in the world,

Dr. John C. Maxwell.

- Conduct leadership workshops and seminars
- Deliver keynote speaking to organizations and companies
- Facilitate training to support in personal and professional growth Bettye Chapman Media, LLC, Prattville, ALWith a strategic approach combined with an outside-the-box perspective, Bettye

Chapman Media, LLC helps people break through barriers and challenges, overcome doubts and take a large stride towards achieving their goals. Chief Executive Officer July 2016 – Present
Design creative strategies and marketing materials to help business partners tell a story and strengthen their brand. Speak, coach and train individuals and organizations to help them reach their full personal and professional potential.

- Serve as development advisor to clients
- Develop and lead marketing plans as Creative Director for business partners
- Facilitate performance-based training programs

STATE FARM INSURANCE COMPANIES®, Bloomington, IL
State Farm is a large group of insurance and financial services companies throughout the United States with corporate headquarters in Bloomington, Illinois.

Learning and Development Analyst, Leadership Development December 2011 – August 2018
Deliver performance-based professional development solutions remotely for 9000+ leaders and employees throughout the enterprise. Lead projects from inception to completion, managing scope, resources, time and budget.

- Drive effective implementation and delivery of a wide variety of performance-based solutions, resulting in increased job performance and knowledge
- Manage multiple cross-functional, complex leadership development projects over a twelve month period
- Serve as departmental resource and subject matter expert, sought-out by multiple levels of leadership
- Lead efforts that have broad enterprise impact
- Possess high level of expertise in gathering, analyzing, and synthesizing data to ensure sound business decisions; create action plans for resolution
- Provide training, mentoring and guidance to other analysts
- Function as a team lead and use highly specialized knowledge of key learning measurement concepts to serve as a resource to business partners and peers
- Utilize graphic design, concept development and problem-solving skills to complete assignments
- Develop and apply concept and creative strategy to assignments
- Turn abstract concepts and messages into compelling visual storytelling
- Reduced new to role first line managers' time to readiness by 33%
- Reduced travel cost by 58% in last two years
- Led new mobile application efforts for leadership development team

Learning and Development Specialist, State Farm University August 2008 – December 2011
Led marketing efforts to design and promote internal online learning portal for leaders and employees throughout the enterprise.

- Developed ideas for creative marketing campaigns

- Vetted market research about learning portal user requirements, habits and trends • Demonstrated expertise in content development, organization and design
- Collaborated with brand department and designed State Farm University identifier Highlights:
- Increased intranet web downloads by 52% over three years Increased intranet web page views by 37% over three years

Learning and Development Specialist, Employee Development June 2004 – August 2008 Served as the main employee development point of contact for business areas and project team members.

- Created project charters, project plans and status reports
- Communicated project tasks and timelines to team members and sponsors and monitored

progress

- Delegated tasks, coordinated subject matter experts and reallocated resources as needed Highlights: Created pre-leadership program for non-supervisory employees Decreased pre-leadership employees' readiness for supervisory positions by 50%
- Catastrophe Claim Representative, State Farm Catastrophe Services April 1999 – June 2004 Traveled at a moment's notice to various field locations throughout the United States, assessed damage, prepared estimates and settled fire claims when catastrophe losses occurred.

- Communicated effectively with all parties involved in a claim
- Developed and analyzed data with regard to the insurance contract
- Interpreted, evaluated, and prepared damage repair estimates
- Investigated coverage questions and claims
- Negotiated settlements with policyholders, claimants, or their representatives

Highlights:

- Settled catastrophe claims during major Hurricanes Floyd, Isabel, Ivan and Frances
 - Settled catastrophe claims 200+ days per year in various locations throughout the U.S.
- EDUCATION

Master of Science in Management, Faulkner University, Montgomery, AL Bachelor of Science in Marketing, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL

EVELYN "GRACE" WARD Board Secretary

Email: gracewardlife@gmail.com 334.717.0602

Grace Ward is the Executive Secretary of Leaders Influencing Freedom & Excellence Inc. (LIFE). She has dedicated herself to the mission of (LIFE), "to unconditionally serve vulnerable communities near and far to develop global leaders and change the world one life at a time". She is a customer-oriented, strategic-thinking business professional with over 37 years of experience which includes early retirement from the Air Force. She is highly experienced in building

relationships, cultivating partnerships, retaining top performers and growing profit channels. Grace Ward is an expert in multi-tasking and is a self-motivated leader with expertise in expanding network connections.

As a manager, she fostered a strong history of leading high- performance teams to meet or exceed operational objectives and as a passionate leader with the Federal Direct Student Loan Program with a commitment to supporting students from different socio-economic statuses to achieve their

educational pursues from all aspects of educational processes.

Friendly and engaging with strong team collaboration abilities Grace Ward served as an empathetic Case Worker with the Department of Human Resources to identify child abuse and neglect of individuals to help facilitate growth and change. She is skilled in assessment, diagnosis, and development of care plans to treat emotional, behavioral and psychological disorders.

Additionally, Grace Ward is on the board of (LIFE) an organization that gifted a home to an economically challenged elderly man. Internationally, she serves on the board in which has provided over 18,000 meals to local nationals, dug wells for 2 villages that had no clean drinking water, distributed over 1,000 pounds of clothes, toiletries, and toys to Sri Lanka. Currently Grace is support the pursuit to opening the doors of Life Charter Academy as its Secretary in Montgomery AL and supporting the CEO in standing up her own Tea Plantation in Sri Lanka that will empower vulnerable women through employment. The profits for Tea 4 will be used to build widow shelters, orphanages, soup kitchens and schools. Beyond her retirement, she has a passion to live a full, meaningful, and thriving life by staying inspired and empowered by connecting with others, using her character strengths, and following her passions to change the world one life at a time.

Evelyn Ward

1375 Tullahoma Drive Prattville, AL 36066

Cell Phone (334) 300-5433 e-mail: evelynward50@icloud.com

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RESULTS

- Assisted with opening, training and monitored quality for Federal Direct Loan Consolidation Call Center in London

Kentucky which staffed over 126 agents.

- Counseling and intervention focused MS-educated professional with successful strategic leadership,
customer relationship management and counseling experience.
- Experience includes diverse customer relationship skills in communication, growth development
initiative, leadership, and organizing.
- Provided individual and group counseling to youth at Department of Youth Services for HIT Program,
Autauga, Alabama and to adults at New Life Counseling Center.

- Experienced in planning, organizing and attaining organizational goals as president-elect for the local

chapter of the Counseling Academic & Professional Honor Society International.

EDUCATION

Argosy University, Northern VA, Doctor of Education in Counseling Psychology, Fall 2014, In Progress
Troy University, Montgomery AL, Masters of Science Counseling and Psychology, Spring 2009, Major: Community Counseling

Troy State University Montgomery, Montgomery, AL, Bachelor of Science Psychology, Fall 2005, Major: Psychology, Minor in Business Administration

Community College of the Air Force, Maxwell AFB, AL (1989-1992) Business Major
U.S. Air Force, New Mexico, Leadership Training, Fall 1989

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Case Manager/Social Worker, Department of Human Resources, Birmingham, AL 05/14 – 5/15

Performed duties as an

Plan, coordinate, manage and implement support packages to help clients deal with difficulties and

overcome dependencies.

Interview service users and assess their current condition, needs, strengths and weaknesses

Address each case as a unit and set tailored measurable goals.

Monitor and evaluate clients' progress and modify treatment plans accordingly

emotionally intelligent Case Worker to act as advocate and help families

foster their capacities and coping mechanisms in order to improve and better their daily lives and experiences, within the specified standards and timescales.

Assess child abuse and neglect and develop social service plans for children who are at risk of abuse

or neglect.

- Offer information and counseling on the best course of action during assessment sessions.
- Maintain accurate records and report on clients' status.
- Attend case conferences and provide evidence in court.
- Act as a key-worker and cooperate with multidisciplinary teams.
- Maintained a working knowledge of social and psychology theories, and practices.

- Exercised social perceptiveness and empathy.
- Established and maintained professional helping relationships and communicate with diverse population and groups.
- Willingly submitted and passed a background checks
Quality Assurance/Loan Consolidation, Federal Direct Student Loan Program, Montgomery, AL 09/06 – 5/14
- Accurately Complete QA Call Monitoring Work Code Report daily.
- Updated and maintained QA Master Call Monitoring Excel Spreadsheet for QA monitors.
- Created internal Step Action Chart and procedures for call center agents to track repeat monitoring offensive.
- Performed the duties of a Team Leader to include monitoring adherence to contractual requirements.
- Assisted with training over 275 agents for the Loan Consolidation contract.
- Complete bi-weekly status report and monitor 250 calls per month and 31 Customer Satisfaction Surveys.
- Submitted Recommendations for improvement each month to improve LC account and productivity.
- Assisted with opening, training and monitored quality for Federal Direct Loan Consolidation Call Center in London, Kentucky which staffed over 126 agents.
Reconciliation Accountant/Loan Origination, Federal Direct Student Loan Program, Montgomery, AL 11/02 – 08/06
- Provided Federal Direct Loan Consolidation training and monitored quality of Call Center staff.
- Review, prepare, and analyze financial, statistical and analytical reports.
- Communicate with the Department of Education regarding financial status of 161 colleges and universities.

- Analyze data and make sound business recommendations to reconcile billions in student loans.
- Effectively counsel students and parent borrowers on the consolidation application process.
- Act as a liaison between Federal Family Education Lenders and The Department of Education to facilitate a cohesive consolidation process.
- Process appeal packages for schools that were in dispute of their program ending cash balance.
- Managed relationship with Direct Loan activities for 161 colleges and universities.
- Monitor and reconciled over 8.9 billion in drawdowns and over 9 billion in disbursement activities.
- Assist colleges and universities with research and resolution of unaccounted funds and missing transactions.

Business Representative, Federal Direct Student Loan Program, Montgomery, AL
01/97 - 10/02

- Served as a School Relations Consultant.
- Assisted in defining, identifying, and documenting customer needs in program changes.
- Liaison for communicating program and system requirements.
- Analyzed customers' information technology requirements.
- Assisted in Reconciling over \$150 Million in Federal Government funding during year-end Closeout.
- Produced various reports for account leadership and the Department of Education.
- Analyzed Financial Aid data and made sound business decisions.
- Assisted the Federal Direct Student Loan Program and EDS in achieving contractual goals.
- Provided oral and written documentation for Direct Loans Case Management Program.
- Provided direct support for the School Relations Manager and managed special projects.
- Designer, Reporter and edited articles for EDS newsletter (The News On Five).
- Prepared and conducted workshop on "Setting and Achieving Goals".

Office Management/Courier, Advance Medical Imaging Center, Montgomery, AL 02/94 -
01/97

- Developed and managed exit counseling and billing program
- Provided Public Relations services between the Corporation and more-than 200 Doctors and staff.
- Counseled and trained office staff on insurance claims
- Collected and deposited payments on insurance claims.
- Organized and posted accounts receivable files and posted cash disbursements.
- Resolved current and outstanding claim disputes.

Personnel Resources Management, United States Air Force, 05/83 - 07/92

- Managed a corporate-wide staffing program.
- Distributed, set suspensions, and monitored training requirements for 1500 employees.
- Monitored employee's progress.
- Provided feedback on performance improvements.
- Recommended employees for recognition and compensation.
- Monitored employee's daily activities and annual performance review program.
- Conducted one-on-one interviews and developed action plans for employee career changes.
- Insured compliance with operational procedures.
- Implemented new operational procedures.
- Determined employee placement and future staffing.
- Supervised orientation program for new employees.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- American Counseling Association (ACA)
- Counseling Academic & Professional Honor Society International (Chi Sigma Iota)

COUNCILWOMAN AUDREY BILLUPS GRAHAM Board Community Liaison

(334) 833-2079

Email: audreybgraham05@yahoo.com

Mrs. Audrey Graham is a native of Montgomery, Alabama. She is the oldest of four children. She received her GED from Trenholm State Technical College, where she also earned an associate degree

in Office Administration and a bachelor's degree from Troy University Montgomery in Psychology. For the past thirteen years, Mrs. Graham has been employed with the Circuit Clerks office where she is a supervisor of Domestic Relations division. Mrs. Graham is also an ordained minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and a lover of family.

Mrs. Graham is no stranger to hard work, she served as her neighborhood president and she believes in building up communities. She works hard to ensure her community stays abreast on current issues and she is a voice for the voiceless. In October, she was elected as District 4 City Councilwoman. She strives to change her district by altering the mindset of the people in the community and giving them hope. She also strives to help children develop and gain a vision for the future. Most importantly, she believes that the vital part in continued growth of Montgomery is a solid foundation in education.

AUDREY BILLUPS GRAHAM

2548 Lark Drive. Montgomery, AL 36108

OBJECTIVE

(334) 833-2079

Email: audreybgraham05@yahoo.com

- Obtain a part time position with a company where I can work with within my parameters to fullest of my ability.

EXPERIENCE

July 09 to Present: Administrative Office of Courts (AOC)

- Supervise: Family Court Division of the Montgomery County Circuit Clerk Office. (09/2016)
- Collect and process: Daily deposits and supervise clerks petty cash. (09/2016)
- Organizing/Filing Court Data: Duties include ensuring case files, complaints, warrants, pleadings, orders and other court documents are properly filed and maintained in chronologically order.
- Court Docket Preparation: Duties include posting of sheriff returns for witnesses, subpoenas, summons, and executions for case action summary.
- Handling Paperwork for Filing of New Law Suits: Duties include accepting and processing paperwork for garnishments, executions, income withholding orders, and notice of appeals; ensuring paperwork is complete and in proper order and ensuring accuracy of filing fees.
- Data Entry: Duties include entering data on a variety of legal forms, i.e., case action summaries, fee sheets, summons, subpoenas, notices, cost bills, and other non legal reports.
- Document Preparation: Duties include preparing documents, pulling files and case action summary sheets, assisting judges with documents and making notations on case action

summary sheet.

- Point of Contact: Duties include notifying all parties of upcoming court actions, court orders, court hearing and upcoming trial dates along with Issuing aliases, subpoenas, warrants, writs of arrest, and garnishments.

July 05 to April 07: Montgomery County Juvenile Court (AOC)

- Juvenile Court Assistant: Duties are as follows:
 - Entering data into a computer database for the compilation and processing of documents.
 - Researched and retrieved information, from forms, records, reports and other sources for the Juvenile Court
 - Performed general clerical duties and provided support for Juvenile Court Judges.
 - Organized and recorded data; maintained court records regarding case activities; ensured security and timely access to office files and records.
- Performed customer service/receptionist duties as needed to assist the public and court officials.
- Assisted the Department Supervisor by providing a variety of secretarial and administrative duties.
- Prepared, edited and processed outgoing information, i.e., correspondence, reports, and other documents.
- Performed technical and departmental duties to provide service and programs to internal and external customers.
- Processed and distributed incoming and outgoing mail to ensure mail.
- Handled schedule for juvenile criminal charges for the court
- Prepared orders of probation, restitution, and other fees individuals were required to pay by the court; notification to government officials regarding guns or drugs on school property.
- Notified the proper authorities regarding the picking up of parties on individuals who failed to show for scheduled court date.
- Canceled pick up orders and attachments and notified Sheriff and Police Department regarding order.

- Notified all parties of changes in court cases through the use of official court documentation.
- Ran the court docket for the Judge and distributed copies of the docket along with copies of the petitions for the cases/charges involved and work directly with all of the government officials.
- Receptionist in clerks' office; assisted with call-ins for four judges and routed calls to proper person.

MACHINES/EQUIPMENT

- Switchboard, photo copiers, computers, scanners, printers, fax machines, smart board and various other office equipment.

SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS

- Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Access, Power Point, Microsoft Works, and Corel Word Perfect Suite

EDUCATION

- January 02-August 05: Trenholm State Technical College
A.A.S Degree Applied Technical in Office Administration obtained
- August 08-May 2013: Troy University in Montgomery B.A. Degree College of Education in Psychology obtained

Kevin McDaniel

BOARD ARBITRATOR – CONFLICT RESOLUTION

608 Little Farm Road Prattville, Alabama 36066 Phone: (334) 221-5561 Email:
pastormc@aol.com

OVERVIEW My wife and I have been the Senior Pastors of Fresh Rain Church since it was established in August, 2009. With over 27 years in full time ministry, we've tried to bring strength and spiritual maturity to this ministry which is experiencing great growth.

It's our heartbeat for people to discover the greatness that God has placed inside of them. When your revelation of who you are in Christ

becomes greater than your present environment, you cease to be limited.

We love to be in the community, meeting new people and making a difference in lives both inside and outside of the church walls.

EDUCATION

1979 - 1985 1985 – 1989 1985 – 1990 2000 – 2002 2009

2018

and CREDENTIALS

Graduated Leeds High School, Leeds, AL American Institute of Banking - Finance Jefferson State College, Accounting Berean University –Christian Studies

Ordained - Autauga Association – Alabama Baptist
Certified Speaker, Executive and Life Coach, Trainer – John Maxwell Team

MINISTRY AND EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Fresh Rain Church – Deatsville, Alabama 2009 - Present Senior Pastor

Safe Harbor Assembly of God, Prattville, Alabama 2004 - 2009 Minister of Music Enterprise

Church of God, Enterprise, Alabama 2002 - 2004 Minister of Music

DayStar Assembly of God, Prattville, Alabama 1998 – 2002 Associate Pastor

Auburn First Assembly, Auburn, Alabama 1997 - 1998 Minister of Music

Millbrook Church of God, Millbrook, Alabama 1994 - 1997 Minister of Music and Youth Northport

Church of God, Northport, Alabama 1993 -1994 Minister of Music and Youth LifeWay Church of

God, Leeds Alabama 1992 - 1993 Minister of Music

AmSouth Bank, N.A. Birmingham, Alabama 1985 –1993

Prior to moving into full-time ministry, I worked many years for AmSouth Bank, N.A., in the areas of credit administration, trust operations, and later on to mutual fund trading. While there I reported directly to executive management and attended school for accounting, finance, and banking. People skills and attention to detail was an absolute in this area, with trading of over sixty million dollars daily as a trading specialist.

PERSONAL

I am 58 years old. I grew up in the Birmingham area where I met my wife, Karen. Married for 36 years, I'm a father to four and known as "Pops" to five grandchildren.

EARL TAYLOR

BOARD PARENT LIAISON

8818 Dunlake Drive Montgomery, Alabama 36117 (334)201-4169 earltaylor320@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE: To obtain a position as basketball coach and apply my skills to help athletes' enhance their knowledge and production playing basketball.

QUALIFICATIONS: Motivator of young people with the ability to combine education and athletics.

St. Jude Parish, Inc. Montgomery, AL 2019- Development Coordinator

River Region Generals, Montgomery, AL 2018-2019 Head Men's Coach, ABA professional basketball team

Miles College, Birmingham, AL 2017-2018 Assistant Men's Basketball Coach

Prattville High School, Prattville, AL Head Boys' Varsity Basketball Coach Career Preparedness' Teacher

Saint Jude Educational Institute, Montgomery, AL Head Boys' Varsity Basketball Coach
Physical Education Teacher & Religion Teacher

Stanhope Elmore High School, Millbrook, AL Head Boys' Varsity Basketball Coach Assistant
Varsity Football Cornerback Coach Junior Varsity Football Cornerback Coach Head Track Coach

ATS Teacher

Montgomery Catholic High School, Montgomery, AL Assistant Boys' Varsity Basketball Coach

2014-2017

2009-2014

2009-2001

1994-2001

EDUCATION:

Head Boy's Junior Varsity Basketball Coach Strength and Conditioning Coach
Physical Education Teacher

Auburn University Montgomery, Montgomery, AL 2002-2007 BS: Liberal Arts

John C. Calhoun Community College, Decatur, AL 1980-1982 Major: Business Administration

REFERENCES:

Mr. Anthony McCall Mr. Kim Salter
Mr. James Cooper Mr. Anthony Brock

(334)546-4986 (334)399-3411 (334)421-9029 (334)301-0478

1978-1979 1974-1978

amccall@shorecrest.org ksalt@knology.net jamescooper105@gmail.com

Anthony@valiantcross.org

Southern Benedictine College, Cullman, AL Major: Business Administration

Saint Jude High School, Montgomery, AL Diploma: General Education

In the partnering of the school leader with LIFE Inc., LIFE Inc.'s CEO became the chair person of the LIFE Academy governing board. Norma Chism's leadership in the United States Air Force and LIFE Inc. qualify her for the leadership position of chair. Board members were selected based on community involvement, shared beliefs in the abilities of our children, commitment to education,

and individual experience and areas of strength. For board members to be added to the governing board, they must be referred by a sitting board member or by the school leader. The individual must then attend a panel discussion and be unanimously voted into the board by sitting members.

Currently, the board holds seven members. The board will morph over time as life requirements of current sitting members change. LIFE Academy's governing board requires that any member stepping down, finds a qualified replacement. Additionally, if more board members are agreed upon, they will be brought in, in pairs, to maintain an odd number of members for voting purposes.

Attachments

Section 3: Governing Board

3.1 [Attachment 18](#)

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4. Advisory Bodies

The Board shall have an advisory committee, the Educator Advisory Committee, consisting of no more than three (3) members. Non-Trustees may serve on the Educator Advisory Committee. The Educator Advisory Committee shall be responsible for offering advice from the administrator or educator's perspective from both the public school and public charter school arenas. The Educator Advisory Committee is responsible for making recommendations to the Board of Trustees for vote by the Board of Trustees.

Attachments

Section 4: Advisory Bodies

– No Attachments –

5. Staff Structure

LIFE Academy's School Leadership Team directly oversees the daily operations and personnel of LIFE Academy. All reporting relationships over LIFE Academy's 5-year growth to full capacity are outlined in the Organizational Charts in Attachment 19.

The teacher-student ratio and staff-student ratio for LIFE Academy are included in Attachment 19 and in the table below.

Position/Role & Quantity by Year	Y0	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5

Head of School	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Dean of Students	-	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Dean of Operations	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Dean of Curriculum	-	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Operations Fellow	-	-	-	1.00	1.00	1.00
Front Office	-	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Social Worker	-	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Teachers	-	10.00	17.00	25.00	29.00	33.00
Teaching Fellows	-	6.00	9.00	9.00	9.00	9.00
SPED Teachers	-	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	3.00
Elective Teachers	-	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00
Instructional Coach	-	-	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00
Total Number of Teachers		18.00	28.00	37.00	42.00	48.00
Total Number of Staff		24.00	35.00	47.00	53.00	59.00
Total Number of Students		270	450	630	720	810
Teacher:Student Ratio		1:15	1:16	1:17	1:17	1:17

Staff:Student Ratio	1:11	1:13	1:13	1:14	1:14
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Attachments

Section 5: Staff Structure

5.1	Attachment 19	Debnam, Kia, 11/22/19 5:00 AM	DOCX / 225.097 KB
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6. Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation

Employment Policies

LIFE Academy carefully selects its employees through written applications, certification reviews, personal interviews, sample lessons (when applicable) and reference checks. This selection process helps LIFE Academy find and employ people who are concerned with the success of its students; people who are certified and highly qualified in their job assignments; people who can carry on their work with skill and ability; and people who are comfortable with LIFE Academy and who can work well with our team.

LIFE Academy relies on the accuracy of the information provided in these written applications and personal interviews, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information or data may result in exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, termination of employment.

All LIFE Academy employees will be required to sign an Employment Offer Letter for one year that will specify the terms and conditions of the employee's employment, LIFE Academy's general expectations regarding the employee's performance, and what the employee can expect from LIFE Academy.

LIFE Academy will make every effort to ensure that both the letter and spirit of the laws prohibiting discrimination are fully implemented in all of its working relationships. LIFE Academy actively seeks diversity in its student/parent body, faculty, staff and administration and is committed to equal employment opportunity.

LIFE Academy will take all appropriate steps to verify the information provided on an employment application. These steps may take place before or after commencement of employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications or omissions of any information or date on an employment application may result in your exclusion from further consideration for employment and/or termination of employment. Like all charter schools, LIFE Academy is required to fingerprint prospective employees for purposes of determining whether or not the prospective employee has a criminal history.

An employee's relationship with LIFE Academy is an employment "at will". This employee Handbook does not constitute a contract for employment between LIFE Academy and its employees. Employees of LIFE Academy are considered "at will", and therefore either the employee or LIFE Academy may terminate the employment relationship under the policies set forth in this document. In the absence of a specific policy the employment relationship may be terminated at any time without notice, with or without cause. No person other than the Head of School has authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period of time and any such agreement must be in writing.

LIFE Academy is firmly committed to equal employment opportunity. LIFE Academy does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices for all qualified persons on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, age, disability (including AIDS), marital status, military status, citizenship status, predisposing genetic characteristics, or any other characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law. Employment decisions at LIFE Academy will be made in a non-discriminatory manner and are based on qualifications, abilities, and merit. This policy governs all aspects of employment at this school including recruitment, hiring, assignments, training, promotion, upgrading, demotion, downgrading, transfer, lay-off and termination, compensation, employee benefits, discipline, and other terms and conditions of employment. If employees have any questions or concerns about any type of discrimination, they should bring these issues to the attention of their supervisor or Human Resources. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

LIFE Academy complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and all applicable state and local laws prohibiting discrimination in employment against qualified individuals with disabilities. We will also provide reasonable accommodation for such individuals in accordance with these laws. It is our policy to: manner in the pre-employment process and that employees with disabilities are treated in a nondiscriminatory manner in all terms, conditions, and privileges of employment; except where it would create an undue hardship for LIFE Academy; and notify individuals with disabilities that we provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities by including this policy in our personnel handbook and by posting the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's poster on discrimination throughout our premises.

A qualified employee with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation by communicating this request to LIFE Academy. Upon receiving the request, LIFE Academy will meet with the employee to identify the precise limitations resulting from the disability and the potential accommodation that LIFE Academy might make. LIFE Academy reserves the right to request additional medical documentation. The Board of Directors will make the final decision regarding any accommodation dispute.

Benefits and Incentives

LIFE Academy's annual school salaries range from \$30,000 to \$65,000. Incentives and compensation systems in place include:

Opportunities for employees to assume leadership roles.

Teachers who show leadership abilities can rise to become stipend coaches (raising salary to \$52,000) or grow into a dean of students role.

LIFE Academy employees receive a 2.5% annual raise.

All full time employees are provided \$6,100 in health care benefits (with the assumption that on average 80% of employees file as single, 10-15% have a dependent or family, and 5% have a significant other).

LIFE Academy is also a part of the Retirement System and allows those currently investing in retirement, to continue. LIFE Academy puts 12.5% towards the state retirement system .

Assurance Regarding Act 2015-3, Section 9 (e)(1)

LIFE Academy hereby assures that LIFE Academy will comply with applicable federal laws, rules

and regulations regarding the qualification of teachers and other instructional staff. In accordance with subsection (a), LIFE Academy acknowledges notification that teachers in public charter schools shall be exempt from state teacher certification requirements.

Hiring School Personnel

LIFE Academy carefully selects its employees through written applications, certification reviews, personal interviews, sample lessons and reference checks. This selection process helps LIFE Academy find and employ people who are concerned with the success of its students; people who are highly qualified in their job assignments; people who can carry on their work with skill and ability; and people who are comfortable with LIFE Academy and who can work well with the LIFE Academy team, students and families. The list below indicates the LIFE Academy hiring process. The hiring manager for all teacher positions is the Head of School.

1. Resume Review & Application Review
2. Phone Interview
3. In-Person Interview & Sample Lesson
4. Reference Checks & Follow Up Tasks (at the discretion of Head of School)

LIFE Academy looks for the following attributes in candidates above all else:

1. Learns Quickly
2. Receives Feedback with Humility & Adjusts Quickly
3. Ability to Think Critically
4. Social-Justice Orientation
5. Strength as Classroom Teacher *or* High-Likelihood of Strength after 4 weeks of training

During the in-person interview, the candidate teaches a sample lesson to LIFE Academy students that they have planned in response to a specific standard or objective provided to the candidate. In hiring for the 2021-22 school year, given there will not yet be any LIFE Academy students, teaching candidates will be asked to teach a sample lesson to the founding leadership team and submit a video of themselves teaching their current students, for candidates who are current teachers at the time. Following the sample lesson, feedback is given. If there is concern about the candidate's ability to learn quickly or receive feedback & adjust, the candidate is given a short amount of time to process the feedback and then teaches the sample lesson again to another group of students. If there is concern about the candidate's likelihood to build trusting, academically focused relationships with students or likelihood to garner student engagement, student feedback will be sought by the Head of School.

LIFE Academy relies on the accuracy of the information provided in these written applications and personal interviews, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information or data may result in exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, termination of employment.

Dismissing School Personnel

Leaders and teachers who, for an extended period of time, have struggled to meet the expectations of their At-Will employment due to under performance, attendance, or misconduct and first placed on an improvement plan. If expectations go unmet or behaviors are egregious, LIFE Academy may choose to terminate the employee under the following procedures:

Employees who leave the service of LIFE Academy before the end of the school year for any reason will be entitled to all pay that may be due to them with the following qualifications:

- Unused sick days will be forfeited.
- Employees will be advised of their rights under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (COBRA) of their right to continue health care coverage for themselves and their dependents at group rates, but at their own expense, for up to 18 months.
- Any employee who is terminated or who resigns must return all office property, materials and supplies in such employee's possession to their supervisor before they receive their final payout.
- No information or copies of information, including, but not limited to files, memos, computer-stored items, lists or other similar information may be taken by such employee without the express permission of their supervisor.
- The final date of employment is the final date on which the employee serves his or her duties at LIFE Academy. It should not be construed as the date upon which the employee receives his or her final pay.

LIFE Academy will pay all employees through their last day of employment, unless they are on a leave of absence. Employees will receive pay for any accrued, but unused vacation time. Employees will not receive pay for any unused sick days. Employees will receive their final pay according to the normal payroll processing cycle, or in accordance with applicable wage laws.

Assurance Regarding Act 2015-3, Section 9 (d)(1)

LIFE Academy hereby assures that LIFE Academy will comply with Act 2015-3, Section 9 (d)(1). The Dean of Operations will ensure all candidates conduct background checks and fingerprinting through Gemaldo Cogent, or any other service required by Montgomery Public Schools and the State of Alabama, prior to the beginning of their employment with LIFE Academy.

Leader Support and Evaluation

All members of LIFE Academy leadership team will receive weekly coaching from the Head of School in the form of a weekly check-in. This check-in includes data dashboard review, deep diving on off track areas through co-observation and co-investigation, action planning for the next week and looking ahead to the next month. On a semesterly basis, the Head of School will evaluate all members of the school leadership team utilizing a leader evaluation tool developed by Freedom Prep Charter Schools, included as Attachment 21.

Additionally, each LIFE Academy leadership team member will attend external training experiences aligned to their specific role, including training programs through Relay Graduate School of Education, Teach Like a Champion and school visits to Freedom Prep Charter Schools, Achievement First and Uncommon Schools.

The Head of School will maintain a relationship with the Freedom Fellows Institute, which will provide monthly coaching and quarterly in-person visits to support the Head of School in the establishment and constant improvement of LIFE Academy. The Head of School will conduct an annual 360 survey and engage in an annual review process as determined by the LIFE Academy Board of Directors.

Educator Support and Evaluation

LIFE Academy provides a highly supportive high expectations environment for all teachers. Each LIFE Academy teacher will receive bi-weekly observation and feedback, with all new teachers and struggling teachers receiving observation and feedback as frequently as daily. Each LIFE Academy teacher is working towards mastery of action steps that are in service of their

development and in service of their students achievement, developed in partnership with the Dean of Curriculum and Instructional Coaches.

Each LIFE Academy teacher receives a semesterly evaluation on the chosen LIFE Academy teacher evaluation rubric, which, like the leader evaluation model, has been developed by Freedom Prep Charter Schools. Freedom Prep Charter Schools developed this rubric out of the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching. This rubric is included as Attachment 22.

Leader Non-Performance

LIFE Academy maintains the same positive outlook about the potential of Educators and Leaders as we do our students; therefore, as described above, significant amounts of support and training will be provided to all LIFE Academy leaders, just as with LIFE Academy teachers. However, leaders and teachers who, for an extended period of time, have struggled to meet the expectations of their At-Will employment due to under performance, attendance, or misconduct are first placed on an improvement plan. If expectations go unmet or behaviors are egregious, LIFE Academy may choose to terminate the employee. Another option LIFE Academy plans to pursue is offering underperforming leaders the opportunity to step into the classroom as an educator in situations where the stresses and expectations of leadership are beyond the capacity of the individual but they would be a strong fit and strong value-add for a classroom teacher position or other non-leadership role on the LIFE Academy team.

Educator and Leader Turnover

Staff turnover is inevitable in any organization, institution or place of work, and the high stress associated with leading and teaching in high-expectations schools in low-income communities suggest that success looks like 10-20% of staff will elect to leave the team or not be asked to return. On top of replacing those staff members, each year until 2025-26 the LIFE Academy team will be expanding by design. Therefore, effectively managing staff turnover will be essential to maintaining the quality of LIFE Academy and maintaining trust with students and families. Staff culture and family culture both must be grounded in trust, and community building rituals with staff and families to welcome new team members into the LIFE Academy family will be key to the annual life of LIFE Academy.

Attachments

Section 6: Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation

6.1	Attachment 20	Debnam, Kia, 11/26/19 1:51 AM	PDF / 513.053 KB
6.2	Attachment 22	Debnam, Kia, 11/23/19 9:19 PM	DOCX / 118.756 KB
6.3	Attachment 21	Debnam, Kia, 11/23/19 8:57 PM	DOCX / 183.584 KB

7. Professional Development

LIFE prioritizes professional development for all adult faculty and staff at LIFE Academy. A proportionate segment of the annual budget is designated for professional development, including but not limited to school visits with Freedom Preparatory Academy Charter Schools in Memphis, TN, Uncommon Schools in Newark, New Jersey, and Van Ness Elementary School in the District of Columbia; schools that offer high quality instruction, rigorous curriculum, and trauma informed practices. We understand that student academic success is wholly contingent upon staff

preparedness and ongoing development. Therefore, we prioritize adult development with 4 weeks of professional development and teacher preparation before the first day of school, 6 data days following assessments, and 2 hours for professional development 3 times a month. This allows every LIFE teachers to receive 180 annual hours of enrichment. All professional developments are aligned to all students reaching and surpassing district, state, and federal academic growth goals [1].

The amount of time dedicated to teacher leadership development is five times that of district counterparts. Every other Friday, students are afforded early dismissal to ensure LIFE staff have sufficient ongoing, 2 hour high quality development each week. LIFE views Friday afternoon teacher development as sacred time for collaborative data review, unit unpacking, and instructional modeling. Every 8th Friday is committed to the work life balance and mental health of teachers, therefore the teacher day ends at student dismissal. As teacher practice benefits from the ongoing exposure to development, LIFE is also thoughtful about allowing teachers the time to rest and reset, and maintain a balance that promotes higher teacher retention.

The calendar for the pre-academic and academic school year includes the comprehensive summer orientation and professional development where staff participate in practice-based professional development. LIFE firmly believes that teachers should not be asked to perform strategies in front of students that they have not yet practiced in front of staff. A large majority of PD time before students arrive is spent in practice based professional development where teachers not only have the opportunity to learn instructional strategies and the theories that inform those strategies, but also the opportunity to practice in front of teammates for feedback. Practicing teacher voice and explicit student centered instructions are as critical to student success as content delivery. Staff will also spend a large amount of time unpacking unit plans and receiving or internalizing lesson plans. This protocol insures that teachers are following comparable pacing, utilizing the same vocabulary, and developing student critical thinking skills.

Outside of professional development, LIFE leaderships support teachers in both the planning and implementation stages. The process of teachers submitting lesson plans and receiving feedback, along with leaders observing class and providing feedback through lesson debriefs, are key strategies to insuring that students are receiving the highest quality of instruction and achieving their academic goals. (May re-word)

Teachers receive regular informal observations called "culture walks". Culture walks are apart of LIFE teacher culture to improve instructional practice. Real time feedback is central in our model of developing teachers and improving practice.

LIFE Academy believes student academic excellence relies heavily on procedures and operational fluidity. The policies and practices in both classrooms and in the entire school provide the context for teacher-student interactions around instruction [1] which in turn effects student learning and student academic outcomes. To ensure that these routines, rituals, and interactions are occurring, LIFE Academy completes Culture Walks.

Classroom Culture Observation Tool

Focus Question: Is this classroom academically focused, joyful, and rigorous?	
Scholar Actions	Teacher Actions

- Almost all students engaged with instructional tasks
- Almost all students follow behavioral expectations and directions
- Routines (material distribution and submission, engaged body language, and voice level) are executed in an orderly, and efficient manner.
- Habits of discussion, students speak audibly and in complete sentences, limited teacher talk
- Almost all students are happy and engaged/focused on the academic work in the class.
- Almost all students engage in productive struggle as they cultivate reasoning.
- Almost all students attempt to explain their thinking about the concepts of the lesson. Students share their thinking beyond just stating answers.
- All students treat each other with respect.

- Casts a warm and strict demeanor
- Speaks to every scholar with respect, 100% of the time
- Exudes confidence through body language and tone
- Sets behavioral and academic expectations that are grade-level appropriate and rigorous
- Delivers precise directions
- Common Blackboard Configuration (CBC) on the board
- Creates and maintains a safe learning environment
- Uses radar and scanning to notice all student behaviors occurring in the room
- Addresses misbehavior 100% of the time in a calm, assertive, and trauma sensitive way
- Circulates actively to promote feedback, urgency, and improve quality of work. The teacher circulates to monitor student work quality and completion, and creates accountability by using student work to drive discussion.
- Builds/maintains relationships through teaching
- Implements efficient routines and procedures
- Classroom is well-organized and free of clutter. Classroom is print rich, visually stimulating, and reflects student needs and identities. The classroom has various print up wall. i.e. word wall, anchor charts
- Classroom libraries are neat, organized, with a comfortable seating
- Classroom routines are posted with pictures of what students within that routine should look like
- Creates an environment such that students of all backgrounds, experiences, and identities are valued and can excel
- Uses growth mindset messages and tactics to encourage all students, and scaffolding is aligned and reactive
- Provides multiple opportunities for students to explain their thinking about the concepts of the lesson
- Create the conditions and opportunities where students are encouraged to talk to one another about their thinking
- Provides multiple opportunities to cultivate reasoning by allowing students to

	productively struggle
Observation Notes	
Grows	Glows

[1] <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/102109/chapters/Policies-and-Practices-Affecting-Students.>

This model of teacher development and coaching insures that teachers receive adequate supports and are prepared to uphold school culture, deliver high quality instruction, improve student mastery of grade level standards.

Week 1 PD goal: Staff will internalize the mission statement, learn more about one another as a team, and ground themselves in school culture [2] rooted in trauma-invested practice.

Summer orientation and PD will focus heavily on learning and establishing school culture. Teachers and staff will learn and internalize the school mission and vision, as well as share their “why” of working in education. Correspondingly, staff will read and analyze a piece of literature while connecting it to our mission. To ground teachers in working with students of color, in particular Black and Latino students, teachers will investigate the history and current climate of students of color in pre-existing educational institutions. The first week will end with embracing a culture of practice to support high quality instruction, and learning to create a shared culture within classrooms.

Week 2 PD goal: Staff will analyze research and be introduced to and begin practicing culturally teaching strategies .

Staff will use foundations created in week 1, to fully engage and learn more about the necessity and validity of culturally relevant teaching as well as the science behind language acquisition. LIFE’s dedication to students of color, including ELLs and SPED populations, requires the staff to have a broad understanding of cognition and how a new language like academic English, is learned. This is research also serves as groundwork to classroom management and RTI. The second week ends with the start of formal practicing of teaching techniques including “teacher voice” and classroom facilitation methods.

Week 3 PD Goal: Staff will begin to work with curriculum, investigate common core standards, and become aligned on week 1 student orientation.

Staff is exposed to curriculum and explores common core standards aligned with curriculum. Staff is introduced to their curriculum cohorts, is exposed to unit unpacking, and begin grasping the year's scope. Staff continues internalizing teaching techniques through practice-based development. Staff reviews school wide procedures and begins to co-plan student orientation, which has a duration two evenings. RTI and school-wide discipline program are analyzed.

Week 4 PD Goal: Teachers will create physical spaces in classrooms and prepare instructional week 1 lesson plans.

Staff will work to create lesson plans for the first five instructional days of the school year. Each lesson plan will include the following which will be placed on the white board in the classroom: objective of the day in student friendly language, an agenda, the core value found in the lesson, homework, and any other updates to be communicated.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Focus: Culture, Mission, Vision	Focus: Research, strategies	Focus: Classroom management, procedures,	Focus: Lesson Plans and classroom setup
Overview: "Your WHY" History/Current climate Professionalism Culture of servant leadership, practice, and feedback	Overview: Language acquisition Serving diverse student populations Trauma and Trauma Sensitivity Live Teaching Federal, State, and District academic goals	Overview: Practice based development Clear directions Navigating classroom space Student behavior Student Orientation Common Core Unit Unpacking Protocol	Overview: Complete first five lesson plans Internalize lesson plans Plan physical spaces of classroom Create anchor charts

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1:	Schedule:	Schedule:	Schedule:	Schedule:	

<p>Overview: “Your WHY”</p> <p>History/Current climate</p> <p>Professionalism</p> <p>Culture of servant leadership, practice, and feedback</p> <p>3 rules – staff creates 3 mission aligned rules to remind them of their purpose in this work</p>	<p>9:00 am – Introduction Activity</p> <p>9:30 am - Mission and Vision Analysis</p> <p>10:30 am - Your “Why”</p> <p>12 – 1pm – LUNCH</p> <p>1:00 pm – SOC Research Debrief</p> <p>2:00 pm – Team Builder Reading</p> <p>3:00 pm – Dismissal</p>	<p>9:00 am – Introduction Activity</p> <p>9:30 am – Professionalism overview</p> <p>10:00 am – Culture of servant leadership</p> <p>11:30 am – “3 rules”</p> <p>12 – 1pm – LUNCH</p> <p>1:00 pm – Culture of excellence</p> <p>2:30 pm – Reading</p> <p>3:00 pm - Dismissal</p>	<p>9:00 am – Introduction Activity</p> <p>9:30 am – SOC Research</p> <p>10: 30 am – Trauma Sensitive Schools Pt.1</p> <p>12 – 1pm – LUNCH</p> <p>1:00 pm – Elements of building trust and student relationships</p> <p>2:30 pm - Reading</p> <p>3:00 pm - Dismissal</p>	<p>9:00 am – Introduction Activity</p> <p>9:30 am – Culture of Feedback</p> <p>10:30 am – Finding your “Teacher voice”</p> <p>11:30 am - Debrief</p> <p>12 – 1pm – LUNCH</p> <p>1:00 pm – Student-centered directions</p> <p>2:00 pm – Directions Practice</p> <p>3:00 pm - Dismissal</p>	<p>Schedule:</p> <p>9:00 am – Introduction Activity</p> <p>9:30 am –HR Overview</p> <p>10:30 am – Trauma Pt 2</p> <p>11:30 am – 1pm – TEAM LUNCH</p> <p>1:00 pm – Finish Reading Activity</p> <p>2:30 pm -Debrief</p> <p>3:00 pm - Dismissal</p>
<p>Week 2</p> <p>Overview: Language acquisition</p> <p>Serving diverse student populations</p> <p>Live Teaching</p> <p>Federal, State, and District academic goals</p>	<p>Schedule:</p> <p>9:00 am – Introduction Activity</p> <p>9:30 am – Statistics of populations</p> <p>10:30 am – Language Acquisition Theory</p> <p>12 – 1pm – LUNCH</p>	<p>Schedule:</p> <p>9:00 am – Introduction Activity</p> <p>9:30 am – Culturally Relevant Teaching</p> <p>11 am – Moving from a cycle of Socialization to Liberation</p> <p>11:30 am - Debrief</p>	<p>Schedule:</p> <p>9:00 am – Introduction Activity</p> <p>9:30 am – District Goals</p> <p>10:30 am – Implications of these goals on instruction</p> <p>11:30 am - Debrief</p> <p>12 – 1pm – LUNCH</p>	<p>Schedule:</p> <p>9:00 am – Introduction Activity</p> <p>9:30 am – History of Latino and Caribbean Countries</p> <p>10:30 am – Group Session on planning implication</p> <p>11:30 am – Intro to immersion model</p>	<p>Schedule:</p> <p>9:00 am – Introduction Activity</p> <p>9:30 am – D.E.I of LGBTQ and undoc. students</p> <p>11 am – Inclusive Classroom design-</p> <p>12 – 1pm – LUNCH</p> <p>1:00 pm –</p>

	<p>1:00 pm – What does language reveal?</p> <p>2:00 pm – Language and Literacy</p> <p>3:00 pm - Dismissal</p>	<p>12 – 1pm – LUNCH</p> <p>1:00 pm – Federal and State Goals</p> <p>2:00 pm – Common Core Intro</p> <p>3:00 pm - Dismissal</p>	<p>1:00 pm – Setting culture in your classroom</p> <p>2:00 pm – Culture of praise</p> <p>3:00 pm - Dismissal</p>	<p>12 – 1pm – LUNCH</p> <p>1:00 pm – Spanish Emersion in school</p> <p>2:00 pm -</p> <p>3:00 pm - Dismissal</p>	<p>Redirection and De-escalation techniques</p> <p>2:00 pm – Maneuver Classroom</p> <p>Space</p> <p>3:00 pm - Dismissal</p>
<p>Week 3</p> <p>Overview: Practice based development</p> <p>Clear directions</p> <p>Navigating classroom space</p> <p>Student behavior</p> <p>Student Orientation</p>	<p>Schedule:</p> <p>9:00 am – Introduction Activity</p> <p>9:30 am – Curric. Intro</p> <p>10:30 am - Common Core Breakout</p> <p>12 – 1pm – LUNCH</p> <p>1:00 pm - IEP and ELL Accom.</p> <p>2:00 pm – Unit Unpacking Protocol Intro and setting norms</p> <p>3:00 pm - Dismissal</p>	<p>Schedule:</p> <p>9:00 am – Introduction Activity</p> <p>9:30 am – Teaching Literacy in Every Subject</p> <p>10:30 am – Applied Unit Unpacking</p> <p>12 – 1pm – LUNCH</p> <p>1:00 pm – Anticipating and Interpreting Student Misunder.</p> <p>2:30 pm - Debrief</p> <p>3:00 pm - Dismissal</p>	<p>Schedule:</p> <p>9:00 am – Introduction Activity</p> <p>9:30 am – Common Core and the Scope of the year</p> <p>11 am – Unit Planning</p> <p>12 – 1pm – LUNCH</p> <p>1:00 pm – Backwards Planning</p> <p>2:00 pm -Orientation planning</p> <p>3:00 pm - Dismissal</p>	<p>Schedule:</p> <p>9:00 am – Introduction Activity</p> <p>9:30 am –RTI overview</p> <p>10:30 am – Affirmative based Discipline - Practice Point system</p> <p>12 – 1pm – LUNCH</p> <p>1:00 pm – Practice redirecting Classroom behaviors</p> <p>2:00 pm – Restorative Conversation</p> <p>3:00 pm - Dismissal</p>	<p>Schedule:</p> <p>9:00 am – Introduction Activity</p> <p>9:30 am – Student Orientation Planning – Teacher Breakouts</p> <p>11:30 am – Finalize Orientation</p> <p>12 – 1pm – LUNCH</p> <p>1:00 pm – LP for Orientation Teacher Breakout</p> <p>2:00 pm – Practice Directions and TV for Orientation</p> <p>3:00 pm - Dismissal</p>

	Schedule:	Schedule:	Schedule:		Schedule:
	9:00 am – Introduction Activity	9:00 am – Introduction Activity	9:00 am – Introduction Activity	Schedule:	9:00 am – Introduction Activity
	9:30 am – Lesson Planning Templates	9:30 am – White board set-up	9:30 am – Fill in Obj and CCS for Unit 2 (25 Lps)	9:00 am – Introduction Activity	9:30 am – Culture Refresher
	10:00 am – Fill in Obj and CCS for Unit 1 (Skill building)	10:00 am – Unit Unpacking Protocol and LP alignment	11:30 am – Submit list of materials - Finalize and submit Unit 1 LP	9:30 am – Tour of school grounds	11: 00 am – Open Floor
Week 4	12 – 1pm – LUNCH	12 – 1pm – LUNCH	12 – 1pm – LUNCH	10:30 am – Cohort Common planning	12 – 1pm – TEAM LUNCH
Overview: Complete first five lesson plans Internalize lesson plans	1:00 pm – Lesson planning for first week of instruction	1:00 pm - Continued LP development with Cohort	1:00 pm – Peer practice introduction to first 3 LPs	12 – 1pm – LUNCH	1:00 pm – Classroom Set-up, anchor charter creation -
	3:00 pm - Dismissal	3:00 pm - Dismissal	3:00 pm - Dismissal	1:00 pm – Classroom Setup	3:00 pm - Dismissal
				3:00 pm - Dismissal	

New schools do not universally struggle in their early years; in fact, a surprising proportion in each grade span produce strong academic progress from the start.^[1] To ensure that LIFE Academy produces strong academic progress, LIFE commits to three key elements for a successful day one. These key elements are succinct focal points for staff, faculty, community, and students to establish and foster a culture of practice, a culture of genuine relationships, and a culture of maximization of learning.

The first key element to ensure day one success is Summer Professional Development. In the month before students arrive, teachers will undergo four weeks of professional development that cover topics from classroom management strategies and the science behind language acquisition to unit unpacking protocols and co-teaching techniques. Within this development, staff and faculty focus heavily on practice. By practicing procedures, transitions, student redirection, and clear concise directions, teachers and staff can model and rollout the aforementioned for students on day one. Student academic excellence relies heavily on procedures and operational fluidity. The policies and practices in both classrooms and in the entire school provide the context for teacher-student interactions around instruction ^[2] which in turn effects student learning and student academic outcomes.

The second key element to ensure day one success is establishing a culture of building genuine relationships. This assurance begins during summer professional development within

guardian/student orientation. It is important to note that orientation is termed guardian/student orientation because according to recent data, only 25% and 48% of Black and Latino students respectfully, are raised by birth parents married or cohabiting[3]. Guardian/student orientation will consist of two half days. One half day will focus on ice breakers and a group reading with families. The other will incorporate a mock “day in the life of a student” in which parents and students receive the student’s actual schedule, and maneuver through the school from clad to class for 10-15 min micro-class periods. The orientation brings family and school communities together on one accord so that students are wholly supported[4]. On day one, students will receive name tags at the front door so that all school staff can refer to them by name. As students walk in, they will walk down a red carpet for a “Fresh Freshman” tread where pictures are taken and they are welcomed and celebrated for showing up. Genuine relationships building is a key element because when students experience a sense of belonging at school and supportive relationships with teachers and classmates, they are motivated to participate actively and appropriately in the life of the classroom.[5] The standard is excellence, and LIFE works with the community to support students in delivering this standard.

The third key element is the maximization of learning. Student exposure to academic content will begin on day one. With students receiving their schedule and practicing their autonomous transitions from one class to the next during guardian/student orientation, it alleviates faculty and staff from utilizing a disproportionate amount of time on such demanding procedures. School staff and faculty create and practice day one roll-out intentionally to maximize student learning time. By establishing strong rituals and routines prior to student arrival, staff and teachers are more confident. LIFE knows that through enlightenment and empowerment, students are given the tools to create their own desired results; at LIFE teachers are as well. Teachers are enlightened during professional development, empowered by the school community, families, and students, and therefore they develop the efficacy to create desired results in their classrooms; teacher efficacy is strongly correlated with student achievement.[6]

[1] <https://credo.stanford.edu/pdfs/CGAR%20Growth%20Volume%20I.pdf>

[2] <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/102109/chapters/Policies-and-Practices-Affecting-Students.>

[3] Zill & Wilcox Analysis of 2016 National Household Ed. Survey, U.S. National Center of Ed. Statistics, 2018

[4] <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/c1f9/fbe896e420f246b5ddbc9a83f73c02936b80.pdf>

[5] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2140005/>

[6] <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED499254.pdf>

[1] <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED521219.pdf>

[2] <https://credo.stanford.edu/pdfs/CGAR%20Growth%20Volume%20I.pdf>

Attachments

Section 7: Professional Development

– No Attachments –

8. Performance Management

Evaluation based on student achievement data is far more effective than evaluation based on theoretical research or anecdote. Therefore, LIFE Academy uses data to drive instruction throughout its education program. LIFE Academy administers the following assessments to measure academic progress and outcomes, as outlined in Educational Program Design and Capacity, Section 2 (Curriculum and Instruction Design) : Alabama state assessments, a criterion-based measure of proficiency to measure absolute achievement regarding state academic standards compared to students across Montgomery Public Schools and the State of Alabama; the STEP Assessment, a rigorous reading assessment designed by the University of Chicago; interim standards-based assessments (internally created from instructional material developed by the PARCC Consortium, Achievement First and other high-quality item banks) for grades 3-8 ; Unit tests given in 2-to-5-week cycles; and “Show What You Know” quizzes administered bi-weekly.

Long-Term Academic Achievement Goals

LIFE Academy's academic achievement goals are inspired by a deep belief in the potential of our students to excel academically at the same level as their most privileged peers. We also acknowledge our students’ average academic starting point will be multiple years below grade level, and so we know they will have additional rigors on their academic journey. Our academic goals take into account both of these realities – our students can excel academically at the same levels as the most privileged children in America, even though their average academic starting point is multiple years below grade level. The goals in the table below guide our path towards that ambition:

Goal Category	Goals
Student growth – MAP nationally normed assessment	80% of students will achieve their NWEA MAP growth goal annually, with the lowest achieving 10% of students all achieving 2.0x their NWEA MAP growth goal
Student growth – state	LIFE Academy's annual increase in proficiency will rank in the top

assessment (all grades, all subjects)	10% in the State of Alabama
Absolute Achievement for School Success Measure – Grades 3-8	LIFE Academy will perform in the top 10% in the State of Alabama for state test proficiency by the 2025-26 school year. LIFE Academy 3rd graders will perform in the top 10% of the State of Alabama in the 2024-25 school year. 2024-25 is the year the 2021-22 Founding Kindergarteners will matriculate to 3rd grade.
Reading Proficiency - Grades K-2	Each year, 80% of students in Grades K-2 will read on grade-level at the end of the year, as measured by the STEP Assessment. Kindergarteners will achieve STEP 4, 1st Graders will achieve STEP 7 and 2nd Graders will achieve STEP 9.

Setting Annual Goals & Monitoring Annual Academic Progress

LIFE Academy recognizes the mountain to college is not a 1-year attempt to be accomplished with a single effort but is traversed over a duration of time and achieved through an accumulation of small steps. Likewise, LIFE Academy will establish annual academic goals that work towards our long-term measures of success through accomplishing annual targets as indicators of success. The goals below represent the 2021-22 academic goals for LIFE Academy as an example of how annual goals will align to long-term goals.

Category	Goals
Are we making maximum annual growth with our students? Student growth – MAP nationally normed assessment	80% of students in Grades K-1 & 6 will achieve their NWEA MAP growth goal in Math and Reading, with the lowest achieving 10% of students all achieving 2.0x their NWEA MAP growth goal
Student growth – state	The difference between LIFE Academy's 2021-22 6th grade

assessment (all grades, all subjects)	proficiency rate and the 2020-21 neighborhood average for 6th grade proficiency will exceed 10% in both Math and Reading.
Absolute Achievement for School Success Measure – Grades 3-8	LIFE Academy will perform 5% above the Montgomery Public Schools average in Grade 6 for Math and Reading.
Reading Proficiency - Grades K-2	80% of Kindergarteners will achieve STEP 4

Evaluating Academic Progress

LIFE Academy has a set of clear, aggressive academic goals for its students to ensure that they are prepared to enter and excel in college and in life, starting in Kindergarten. The goals are aligned to the Common Core & Alabama standards and will be central to all LIFE Academy academic efforts establish a strong college-preparatory school options for families in Montgomery. The measurement and tracking of daily, monthly, annual, and year-over-year (cohort tracking) academic growth is integral to the stated efforts. Our annual academic goals measure the degree to which we are making double-digit gains on an annual basis with our students.

Accountability begins at the top of LIFE Academy. The Board of Directors reviews progress towards measures in the accountability plan. The Head of School evaluates the most current performance data of each school through weekly meetings with the Dean of Curriculum who leads the academic vision of LIFE Academy and ensures standards-aligned instruction in every LIFE Academy classroom from Kindergarten to Grade 8. The Dean of Curriculum tracks assessment data and publicly shares academic performance school-wide in a weekly dashboard.

Major cycles of accountability towards academic data occur during Interim Assessments, STEP Rounds and MAP data cycles, our three most significant types of data cycles at LIFE Academy. All data cycle dates are set forth clearly at the beginning of the year in our LIFE Academy Assessment Calendar. Data analysis by subject, grade-band, and cohort occurs after each assessment and involves members of the school leadership team and teachers. Data meetings look at overall school performance on interims and the STEP assessment, subject-level breakdown for reading and mathematics, performance by coaching cohort to determine the efficacy of our coaching support, and finally cohort level data to determine if each cohort of students is improving year-over-year as well as between interim assessments within an academic year.

Academic Corrective Action

Because students participate in frequent assessments cycles with data tracked in the dashboard, academic shortfalls can be predicted and identified early. If a classroom or grade-levels are not on track to meet annual academic goals, a number of interventions may be put in place, which begins first with data analysis by the school leadership team. Freedom Fellows Institute will support to determine what disparities exist that may be engendering the off-track outcomes; this support is advantageous in informing supports to the struggling school. Academic corrective action strategies to be implemented might include but are not limited to:

- Adjustment of allocated time and enrollment in intervention programming to address students who are not meeting goals: this may include after-school tutoring, Saturday school, and/or adjustments to the daily schedule to afford more time or access to intervention programming held during the school day.
- Increased and targeted professional development for instructional staff.
- Adjustment to schedule to provide more time in a target content area.
- Adjustment to unit plan to integrate target standards across content area lesson planning.
- Application of appropriate strategies to earlier grades or planning to proactively address challenges that may arise in the future.
- Temporarily placing Leadership Team member or Instructional Coach directly into the classroom.

For issues whose challenges are rooted in culture, additional strategies may include:

- Increased support staff allocations.
- Intensive professional development and culture-focused feedback loop for all staff.
- Temporarily placing Leadership Team member or Instructional Coach directly into the classroom.

Should a school or schools not meet annual academic goals for the school year, the Head of School and leadership team will plan intensive summer re-training for staff and students, as well as a coaching plan for the Dean of Curriculum and/or Head of School for the following year that will be more intensive and closely monitored by the Head of School and/or Board of Directors.

Data Analysis and Data Coaching

Maintenance of the weekly data dashboard is a collaborative effort of the Dean of Curriculum and Dean of Operations, under the direct supervision of the Head of School. Training for staff on data analysis and action planning will be conducted by the Dean of Curriculum. The Head of School will receive training from the Freedom Fellows Institute to ensure the data dashboard, data analysis action planning tools, data analysis process and aligned trainings are high-quality and in support of the mission of LIFE Academy. In summer professional development and in Friday professional development the Dean of Curriculum will create structured data analysis and action planning time, which will be followed up with individual data meetings the following week for each teacher. In support of these efforts, LIFE Academy will utilize the STEP Data Management System, an online University of Chicago data analysis tool as well as Illuminate Education, a data analysis system utilized by Freedom Prep Charter Schools and Achievement First.

Attachments

Section 8: Performance Management

– No Attachments –

9. Facilities

Father Harold Purcell began construction of the St Jude School 1940 on the campus of the City of St. Jude for local African Americans. Construction of the brick and steel building was completed and the school opened in 1946. It offered a full college preparatory program as well as basic skills and trade programs at night for adults. The school was designed and built by local African Americans and when completed, consisted of 32 classrooms and staff rooms with facilities for at least 600 students.

Features of the school:

Two story brick and steel building

Terrazzo floors in the hallways

VCT in the classrooms

Storm shelter

Operable windows

Central air conditioning (recently updated duct work)

Closed in 2014 due to declining enrollment

Initial list of contracted work to be addressed In the St. Jude Educational Facility:

As a previous private Catholic school, there are some aesthetic renovations that need to be done to address removal of religious artifacts.

New paint for the entire interior of the building.

All bathrooms redone and updated to support student population.

HVAC updates for wear and tear on units.

LIFE Academy intends to contract with 4th Sector Solutions Inc. (4SS) to provide back-office

services (i.e., financial management, human resources, operations, etc). In addition to back-office services, 4SS has extensive experience in the acquisition, management, and supervision of build-out and/or renovations of school facilities. The 4SS team has experience developing financial models for lenders, supporting the financing process with lenders, conducting requests for qualifications and proposals, architect and contractor selection, support in collaboration with architect of progress monitoring the construction, and conducting stakeholder meetings. 4SS possess 20+ years of experience, 50+ projects, and \$350+ million of experience assisting charter schools design, develop and finance high quality, cost-effective facilities.

The following task list discussed with 4th Sector Solutions, addresses facility needs and updates:

TASKS & STEPS	Team Member(s):	Target Date	CA PR
			Completed
CONSTRUCTION			
Fire Alarm assessed			0
Fire Inspection complete			0
MAINTENANCE			
Conduct facility assessment to determine short and long-term facility needs			5
Communicate long-term facility needs to Board			2
Develop action plan for immediate/urgent short term needs			0
Finalize ongoing maintenance contract or shared service buyback			0
Negotiate with Leasee to resolve any immediate capital needs			0
Contract with service providers to resolve any immediate non-capital needs			0
Complete immediate non-capital needs			3
Facilities			
Bells, alarms working; clocks set			0
Facility work orders submitted with follow up dates			0
Pest control addressed			0
Dumpsters located in appropriate location for waste disposal and pickup			0
Lavatories inspected for operation, cleanliness and supplies			0
Lunchroom inspected for cleanliness and ready for food preparation			0
Graffiti removed from interior and exterior walls			0
Classrooms cleaned, repairs made/scheduled, painting complete			0
Locks: Working Order			0
Exterior doors/locks/panic bolts in working order			0
All doors clear of debris for exit and entrances			0

Grounds needs addressed: lawns, bushes, trash, broken gaers, dumpsters located in safe area away from children		0
PA/ Phone System: check for operation maintain list of contacts for assistance		0

Attachments

Section 9: Facilities

9.1	Attachment 24	Debnam, Kia, 11/28/19 4:34 AM	PDF / 1.185 MB
9.2	Attachment 23	Debnam, Kia, 11/28/19 4:19 AM	PDF / 1.185 MB

10. Start-Up and Ongoing Operations

Transportation and Food Services

LIFE Academy will provide transportation for students. Inspired by models of successful community- based schools nationwide, LIFE Academy will encourage students and families to carpool as much as possible through such means as an online carpool "board" for students and families to connect. LIFE Academy will initiate discussions with the appropriate officials to negotiate transportation options, including transportation for students with special needs. LIFE Academy may also contract with a third-party vendor (i.e., First Student, etc.) to manage daily transportation, field trips, extra-curricular, co curricular activities, and all other significant operational and auxiliary transportation services for all students.

LIFE Academy will offer a food service to its students and anticipates that the majority of students will qualify for free and reduced-price lunch (FRL). The school will provide students with breakfast, snacks, lunch, and dinner/late snacks daily. The school will have its own nutrition and wellness policy. LIFE Academy will work with a Food Service Management Company (FSMC) to provide high-quality meals for breakfast, lunch, and after school snacks that meet or exceed all requirements of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Adherence to the National Free and Reduced Lunch Program Nutritional standards are important to LIFE Academy and the school will use grants and partnerships to provide additional health education and high quality food standards.

We will focus on contracting with a vendor who can delivery menu selections to the students that are diverse and healthy. Within our menu, students will be able to find selections that are sensitive to various dietary restrictions such as gluten and dairy restrictions. LIFE Academy will also implement a nut-free policy due to the seriousness of nut-related allergies. State and national food nutrition guidelines will be followed and reimbursement will be accomplished through programs such as the NSLP. Students who wish to bring a lunch to school will be allowed to do so.

Safety and Security

LIFE Academy requires all guests to use the main entrance to its building. Guests are required to report to the security desk to sign in and receive a visitor badge that must be worn for the duration

of the visit. Guests must follow the directions of security personnel and may not roam the school building. At the completion of the visit, guests must sign out at the security desk. LIFE Academy reserves the right to provide a security escort or bar suspicious or disruptive activity or behavior.

The safety and security of the students and staff are of the utmost importance. To that end, LIFE Academy will use a fully executed crisis and emergency plan and intercom code procedure to handle situations that may arise. Furthermore, LIFE Academy will have monthly fire and emergency plan drills to ensure that all students and staff are aware of proper procedures and safe zones during an emergency. Part of safety at a school site is accounting for the presence and location of each student. LIFE Academy will employ an online attendance system that teachers will check and revise throughout the day. LIFE Academy will employ a strict hall pass policy at the school. Students must have a hall pass with them when leaving a classroom for any reason. Also, hall monitors will be present, especially during bus drop-off, lunch, recess and dismissal. Furthermore, the Dean of Students will be responsible for developing and implementing morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up procedures for students, parents and teachers.

Attachments

Section 10: Start-Up and Ongoing Operations

10.1	Attachment 25	Debnam, Kia, 11/21/19 11:05 PM	XLSX / 34.808 KB
10.2	Attachment 26	Debnam, Kia, 11/21/19 8:36 PM	PDF / 16.793 KB

11. Operations Capacity

The Head of School has a history of training and developing teachers on a schoolwide, districtwide, and organization wide scale. While working as a teacher in Buffalo Public Schools, she was regularly requested to lead professional development for Teach for America members, as well as Buffalo School District teachers. Training varied in content and covered subject areas such as culturally relevant instruction, creating safe spaces for children, cultivating a culture of error, and language acquisition strategies. Teach for America Institute also hired and trained the Head of School to be a Corps Member Advisor in the Philadelphia Institute, a 5-week intense program focused on preparing new Corps members to teach for the first time. She utilized multiple progress monitoring tools aimed at finding the root of classroom management issues. As an Administrative Assistant with the North Carolina Central University Women's Center, the Head of School was given the responsibility of staffing and developing staff members that worked under her supervision. This skill was further developed in her role as a founding teacher and coach with a new charter school in western NY, where she helped conduct interviews and sample-lessons with potential hires.

In addition to the Head of Schools, the Governing Board Chair has an impressive work history in performance management. Norma Chism earned the status of E8 in the United States Air Force. She spent over two decades leading teams such as the Med Group, Ops Group, Air Command, and Space College. In her leadership role, she assessed performance not only from a quantitative standpoint, but a qualitative one. Mrs. Chism was responsible for anticipating the needs of service men and women, and meeting those needs before they interfered with their abilities to perform. She focused on interpersonal care, safety, and family welfare of her subordinates. Her responsibilities also included subordinate preparation for deployment and combat readiness.

In regards to general operations, LIFE Academy plans to hire a Director of Operations by June of 2020. In the interim, LIFE Academy will contract with 4th Sector Solutions Inc. (4SS) to provide back-office services (i.e., financial management, human resources, operations, etc). In addition to back-office services, 4SS has extensive experience in the acquisition, management, and supervision of build-out and/or renovations of school facilities. The 4SS team has experience developing financial models for lenders, supporting the financing process with lenders, conducting requests for qualifications and proposals, architect and contractor selection, support in collaboration with architect of progress monitoring the construction, and conducting stakeholder meetings. 4SS possess 20+ years of experience, 50+ projects, and \$350+ million of experience assisting charter schools design, develop and finance high quality, cost-effective facilities. Recent projects in Louisiana include (Mentorship, University Preparatory Elementary, Slaughter Community Charter School, Encore Academy, and Lycee Francais de la Nouvelle Orléans).

The following team members serve 4SS' clients. One of 4SS staffing principles is to build in redundancy so that knowledge of any particular client's project cannot walk out the door with one person. This team approach ensures that clients will have stability, and the added benefit of a team that is constantly improving on industry best practices by serving multiple clients.

Joe Keeney

Joe Keeney is the Founder and Chairman of 4th Sector Solutions. He is also Founder of School Food Solutions L3C, which helps charter schools comply with the National School Lunch Program, and of Charter School Tools, a leading online resource for charter school operators. Joe has 20+ years of education industry experience. From 1997-2005 Joe was president of a national network of public charter school, where he built the nation's largest and highest achieving network of public charter schools -- serving approximately 30,000 students in 14 states and DC. Joe's responsibilities included school operations, client development, finance, and real estate design and construction. Joe had previously been a divisional president and chief operating officer of a Fortune 1000 global manufacturer, and a corporate strategy consultant at LEK Consulting Inc. Joe has a BA in economics from Columbia College and an MBA with high distinction from Harvard Business School, where he was elected a Baker Scholar and received the Macy Scholarship and the Uhlmann Award. Joe also earned an EdM in education leadership from Teachers College, Columbia University, and served as a mentor in the Leadership for Educational Entrepreneurship program at Arizona State University. He is the author of several articles and book chapters for American Enterprise Institute publications, as well as several articles for Charter School Insider magazine on facility financing and on building a high performing back office. In 2010, Joe was selected by the U.S. Department of Education to serve as a peer reviewer in the \$4.35 billion Race to the Top grant competition.

Joe Neary

Joe is the Chief Operating Officer of 4th Sector Solutions providing human resources,

operational, and compliance support to 4th Sector's clients. He has twenty years of charter school experience. He was previously the Chief Operating Officer of FirstLine Schools, the oldest Charter Management Organization in New Orleans. At FirstLine Schools, Joe managed a team of five directors leading finance, operations, HR, talent management, student data, technology, and compliance for the organization. Prior to FirstLine he was Chief Operating Officer for Advance Baton Rouge from 2008 to 2012 the first CMO authorized to manage charter schools for the Recovery School District outside of New Orleans. From 1999-2007 Joe was general manager for a national network of public charter schools, managing schools in New York and Pennsylvania along with supporting client development nationally.

Roman Mitchell

Roman is a Senior Operations Manager at 4th Sector Solutions. Since joining 4th Sector in 2015, Roman has managed several successful school startups, school relocations, and facility development projects. In his role, Roman, strives to improve the operational systems, processes and policies in support of each client's mission. Prior to his current role, Roman served as an Operations Manager for 4th Sector Solutions. A native of Nashville, TN, Roman holds a BA from Fisk University and an MS degree Louisiana State University.

Attachments

Section 11: Operations Capacity

– No Attachments –

FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

1. Financial Plan

Describe the systems, policies, and processes the school will use for financial planning, accounting, purchasing, and payroll, including a description of how it will establish and maintain strong internal controls and ensure compliance with all financial reporting.

Financial Planning

Financial planning will be codified via the annual budgeting process. The annual budget for the school will be developed by the Head of School and Dean of Operations, in conjunction with 4th Sector Solutions, the proposed back-office provider. The Head of School will solicit school staff for budget input and engage them in a strategic planning exercise each year to ensure budgeting is aligned to mission and intended outcomes. 4th Sector Solutions will conduct analysis and provide knowledge and expertise around charter school funding, observed spending trends, and other industry benchmarks, as well as prior year and current year financial information. 4th Sector Solutions will help to bring the technical work together of the budget pro forma, along with the relevant supporting schedules.

The budget cycle will start in January with a working draft developed by the Head of School and Dean of Operations with the support of 4th Sector Solutions, and then brought to the Finance Committee of the Governing Board for their review at the February Finance Committee Meeting. The Finance Committee will analyze the budget draft and provide a recommendation to Governing Board for presentation at the March or April Governing Board Meeting, and then approval at the May or June Governing Board Meeting. Throughout the course of the budget development process, staff, 4th Sector Solutions, and the Governing Board will evaluate the budget to ensure LIFE Academy is working towards charter goals and advancing student outcomes. In addition, they will also ensure that all compliance related to restricted grants and budgeting is in place.

As changes to financial circumstances occur, the Finance Committee, along with the Head of School, Dean of Operations, and 4th Sector Solutions will be tasked with developing updated projections and propose amendments to the budget when meaningful variances occur. The financial model represented herein is solely for the operation of LIFE Academy and will not include LIFE Inc funds.

Accounting

All financial activity will be recorded in an accounting system, most likely QuickBooks, aligned with a chart of accounts that ensures that LIFE Academy can report its various restricted and unrestricted activity to its authorizer and any other relevant entities. As the proposed back-office provider, 4th Sector Solutions will be in charge of recording the financial activity to the accounting system. Activity will be recording in compliance with GAAP, as well as any other accounting requirements as required by the authorizer and Alabama Department of Education. Bank accounts will be reconciled on a monthly basis by someone at 4th Sector that does not have disbursement access on behalf of LIFE Academy. The fiscal year will be from July 1 through June 30, and the financial statements will be prepared on a full accrual basis.

Purchasing

The Head of School and Dean of Operations will oversee all purchasing on behalf of LIFE Academy. All purchasing will be done in the spirit of the approved budget. Prior to a purchase being made, the Head of School and Dean of Operations will ensure that they have researched the most cost-effective option, securing proposals for purchases larger than \$20K. Contracts will also be required for any services that exceed \$20K or cover multiple years of support. Purchases above \$10,000 or any reimbursements to either staff member will require approval by the Board Treasurer. To the extent that a funding source, such as the Federal CSP grant, has specific bid or purchasing requirements, those policies or requirements will supersede these thresholds.

Payroll

4th Sector Solutions will process all payroll on behalf of LIFE Academy, including managing and tracking employer and employee taxes and deductions including TRS, remitting those funds to the relevant agencies, filing the required quarterly and annual reports, and generating W-2s annually. The Head of School and Dean of Operations will be responsible for collecting timesheets and paid and unpaid leave information and submitting that to 4th Sector Solutions. 4th Sector Solutions will process that information and generate a draft payroll journal for the Head of School and Dean of Operations to approve. Once it is approved, 4th Sector Solutions will process the payroll, processing direct deposits and live checks for the relevant staff.

Internal Controls

Part of establishing a strong set of internal controls is linked to working with 4th Sector Solutions. As the proposed back-office provider, 4th Sector Solutions offers LIFE Academy their experience in implementing a standard set of financial operating policies, procedures, and controls in effect at a number of charter schools throughout the country. Additionally, by outsourcing its back-office and financial management functions to 4th Sector Solutions, LIFE Academy is ensuring a segregation of functions and duties that it would not be able to implement on its own given its limited staff.

Describe the roles and responsibilities of the school's administration and governing board for the school finances and distinguish between each party.

The primary role and responsibility of the school's governing board is to adopt a financial strategic plan, as codified via the annually approved budget, that is aligned with supporting the charter school to meet its mission, goals, and objectives. The primary role and responsibility of the school's administration is to implement the financial strategic plan as adopted by the school's governing board. Both parties also have the role and responsibility of ensuring they are accountable to that plan. Evidence of adhering to that plan will come in the way of the reported financial activity each month, the outcome of the annual audit, and other regulatory compliance reporting.

Describe the school's plans and procedures for conducting an annual audit of the financial

and administrative operations of the school.

LIFE Academy will annually engage a state-approved audit firm with demonstrated experience auditing charter schools in Alabama and will have an annual independent fiscal audit conducted by a certified public accountant or certified public accounting firm licensed in Alabama. The Governing Board, together with the Head of School and Dean of Operations, will solicit proposals for the audit and ultimately the Board will select the audit firm, which will report directly to the school's Governing Board. The audit conducted will meet all federal, state, and local auditing requirements and standards, including those required by public charter schools in Alabama in addition to any conditions required by the authorizer. In addition, LIFE Academy will engage the audit firm for any other required reporting, including but not limited to, CSP agreed upon procedures reporting, A-133 audit, and the filing of its annual 990 with IRS. The expense for the audit and these other supplemental reporting needs is included in the financial plan for each year based on quotes from current audit firms working with charter schools throughout the South. The startup year and Year 1 of financial activity will be audited together, as is customary for a new charter school.

As part of its supported work on behalf of LIFE Academy, 4th Sector Solutions will work with the selected audit firm to provide them with the required financial information and documentation as part of its testing. Should any findings come from the audit, whether material weaknesses or significant deficiencies, 4th Sector Solutions will work with LIFE Academy to address any required changes in policies, procedures, and internal controls.

Describe how the school will ensure financial transparency to the authorizer and the public, including its plans for public adoption of its budget and public dissemination of its annual audit, annual financial report, monthly check register, and monthly financial reports.

As described under Number 1, the annual budget will be adopted through a process open to the public via the Governing Board Meetings. Additionally, following the budget adoption, the budget will be posted on the school's website, filed with the authorizer, and available to members of the public upon request. Following the issuance of the audit and the annual financial reports (the 990), both will be submitted to the authorizer as well as any other required agencies. Additionally, both documents will be posted on the school's website and made available to members of the public upon request.

At monthly Finance Committee meetings, the Head of School, Dean of Operations, and the Board of Trustees will review a set of financial documents prepared by 4th Sector Solutions including but not limited to, a profit and loss statement, a comparison against budget, a balance sheet, a statement of cash flows along with projected cash flow for the remainder of the year, budget projections updated monthly, as well as registers for all outgoing checks and disbursements. Once reviewed, these documents will be distributed to the Governing Board and be included in the monthly board packet. These documents will be posted on the school's website and made available to members of the public upon request.

Describe any services to be contracted, such as business services, payroll, and auditing services, including the anticipated costs and criteria for selecting such services.

LIFE Academy plans to contract for the following services and has budgeted the following

amounts for each year.

Contracted Service	Startup	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Audit & 990	-	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Business Services/Bookkeeping	30,000	68,000	118,000	150,000	175,000	180,250
IT Services	-	24,300	40,500	57,551	66,759	76,230
Food Services		243,000	405,000	575,505	667,586	762,300
Nursing Services	-	9,180	15,300	21,741	25,220	28,798
Transportation	-	102,600	171,000	242,991	281,870	321,860
Janitorial Services		80,000	80,000	81,200	82,418	83,654

The only vendor identified at this time so far has been 4th Sector Solutions to provide LIFE Academy with a full suite of business and bookkeeping services, including accounting, accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, human resources, and student information system reporting. No costs associated with accounting systems, HR systems, payroll service providers are budgeted because these services are included as part of 4th Sector Solutions services.

In the event that the authorizer would like to enter into a MOU to provide services for food service, nursing, and transportation services, LIFE Academy would consider such an arrangement in exchange for retaining those specific categorical funds budgeted.

The two critical pieces of criteria for selecting any vendor for a particular service will be cost and experience, with additional consideration of reputation and familiarity working with charter schools both in Alabama and nationally.

Describe the school’s plans for obtaining liability insurance to indemnify the school, its board, staff, and educators against tort claims.

Upon authorization, LIFE Academy will engage with an insurance broker such as Arthur Gallagher that works with hundreds of charter schools nationally. LIFE Academy will have the insurance broker solicit carrier bids for both liability, directors and officers (D&O), property, and workers’ compensation (WC) insurance based on submitted exposures. LIFE Academy will work with Arthur Gallagher to ensure that the coverages are adequate and in line with the coverage levels required for the size of school, number of staff, and number of students. In the startup year, LIFE Academy has budgeted \$7K to go towards insurance coverage for D&O and WC with property insurance rolled into the project budget assumption. In Years 1 through 5, LIFE Academy has budgeted between \$48K and \$145K annually to cover all of the insurance needs including but not limited to liability, D&O, property, and WC coverage.

Attachments

Section 1: Financial Plan

1.1	Attachment 27b	Debnam, Kia, 11/25/19 12:08 AM	DOCX / 26.277 KB
1.2	Attachment 27a	Debnam, Kia, 11/25/19 12:07 AM	XLSX / 49.365 KB

2. Financial Management Capacity

As part of LIFE Academy’s financial management strategy, it plans to contract with 4th Sector Solutions. 4th Sector Solutions was launched in 2007 to provide back-office services to a number of charter schools throughout the South and East Coast. In addition to providing critical financial management functions, 4th Sector Solutions comes with a variety of experience with facilities management, facilities financing, food services, and student transportation. To date, 4th Sector Solutions has managed over \$100,000,000 in facilities development.

In addition to 4th Sector Solutions, LIFE Academy Governing Board members have a history of fundraising in their respective backgrounds. Some board members are a part of LIFE Inc., a well-known and received non-profit in Montgomery. To date, LIFE Inc has held fundraisers and attained funders to donate monies ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000. The clergy on the Governing Board have continuously met the economic needs of their church through fundraising efforts. The LIFE Academy Governing Board Treasurer has a history of book keeping and internal controls both with her own business, and as the accountant for her spouse's successful trucking company based out of Prattville. The LIFE Academy Governing Board Secretary has worked with the Federal Direct Student Loan Program. As a Reconciliation Accountant and Business Representative, she has assisted in the reconciliation of over 9 billion dollars in Federal Government Funding and created the reports for such.

In addition to the board's work history in financial management, fundraising, and accounting , LIFE Academy leadership has contacted elected officials and obtained \$50,000 in donations upon the

approval of the charter application.

Attachments

Section 2: Financial Management Capacity

– No Attachments –

ATTACHMENTS

1. Requested Attachments

All attachments are titled as requested within each section of the application.

Attachments

Section 1: Requested Attachments

– No Attachments –