

Accrediting Commission for Schools Western Association of Schools and Colleges

FRED VAN LEUVEN, ED.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

533 Airport Boulevard, Suite 200 Burlingame, California 94010
(650) 696-1060 Fax (650) 696-1867
mail@acswasc.org www.acswasc.org

MARILYN S. GEORGE, ED.D.
ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



INITIAL VISIT SCHOOL DESCRIPTION — CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Part I: Identifying Data

Today's Date: December 31, 2017

School:	<u>Intellectual Virtues Academy, A Long Beach Public High School</u>		
Address:	<u>1637 Long Beach Blvd.</u>		
	<u>Long Beach, CA</u>	<u>90813</u>	
	Number and Street	City and State	Zip Code
Mailing Address (if different):	<u> </u>		
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Number and Street	City and State	Zip Code
Telephone #:	<u>562-283-4456</u>	Fax #:	<u> </u>
Email Address:	<u>info@academylongbeach.org</u>		
Chief Administrator:	<u>James McGrath</u>		
School District:	<u>Long Beach USD (LACOE Authorized)</u>		
Enrollment:	<u>59</u>	Current Grade Span to be Reviewed:	<u>9-12</u>
County:	<u>Los Angeles</u>		

Check any of the following that apply to your school:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive | <input type="checkbox"/> Community School | <input type="checkbox"/> Day Alternative Education/Continuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independent Study
Online Distance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charter School | <input type="checkbox"/> Home Study |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Explain: | |

If any portion of your school's curriculum is delivered online, please indicate what percentage of your coursework is offered online 0 %, and the percentage of students utilizing the online delivery system 0 %.

Briefly describe:

Note: If more space is needed on the following pages, please append additional sheets.

Part II



School Profile

Part II: School Profile

Introduction to School

Imagine a high school where students are asked to care about how their mind works, to wonder together; where students are excited to learn, feel safe, and belong to a caring community. What if this place encouraged students to reflect on how they learn, and viewed perseverance through struggle as an opportunity for growth?

The Intellectual Virtues Academy, a Long Beach Public High School (Academy), is the high school that focuses on intellectual virtues, enables deep understanding, and prepares students for the 21st century. Located near downtown Long Beach, the Academy opened its doors in the 2016-17 school year to what will be its first graduating class, the Class of 2020. The Academy serves a diverse community of learners from diverse backgrounds. The establishment of the high school was the outcome of the overwhelming demand from the community, based on the success of the Intellectual Virtues Academy middle school (IVAMS).

The goal of an intellectual virtues educational model is to foster meaningful growth in the personal qualities of a good thinker or learner: curiosity, wonder, attentiveness, open-mindedness, creativity, intellectual tenacity, and related traits. Intellectual virtues are sometimes referred to as “habits of mind,” “thinking dispositions,” or “non-cognitive skills,” and include grit and persistence.

Teaching for intellectual virtues is not an alternative to teaching rigorous academic content. Rather, rigorous content provides an opportunity for teachers to foster intellectual character growth. The Academy's curriculum is closely aligned with the recently adopted Common Core State Standards. Our teachers approach the curriculum thoughtfully and reflectively so that students may develop a deep understanding of the material and practice good thinking, while mastering the standards.

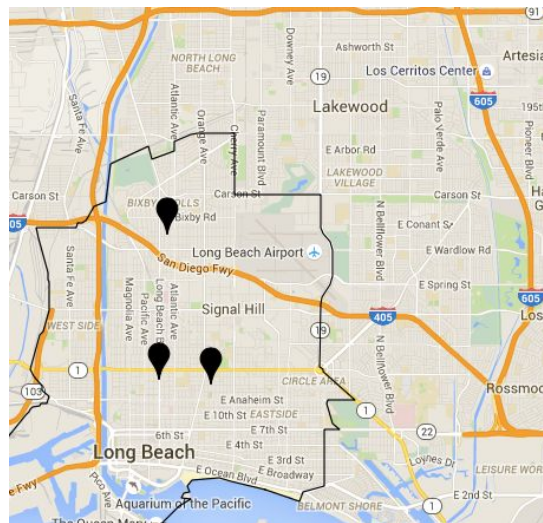
The Academy's focus on intellectual character transforms the typical teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction, and even teacher-teacher interaction. Our model encourages discussion, argument, deep conceptual understanding, and metacognition - the ability to decide when and how to use a particular problem-solving strategy.

Description of the School

Location of the School

With its unique focus, the Academy is well-positioned to embrace the rich diversity of the student population in Long Beach, with its first 9th grade class in the 2016-2017 school year. Three potential school sites were originally identified, of which Option C was chosen.

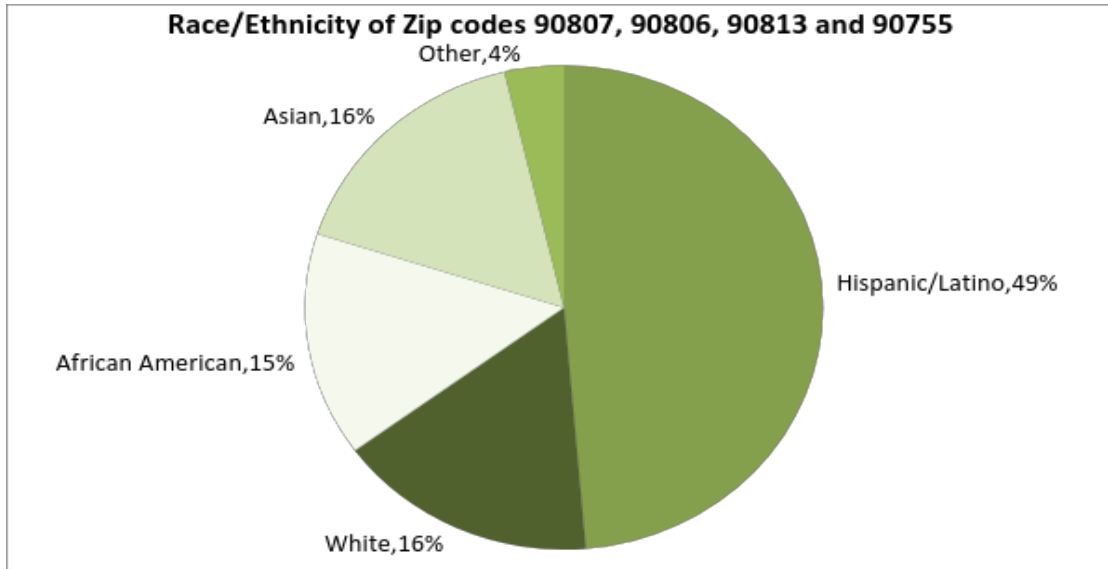
- *Option A: 1535 Gundry Ave., Long Beach 90813.* This property is zoned for educational use and is owned by the 3,000 member Antioch Church of Long Beach. The Church's leadership has expressed interest in not only immediately leasing facilities to the Academy, but also in helping build the Academy a permanent home.
- *Option B: 3601 Linden Ave., Long Beach 90807* (option furthest north). This is the current home of IVA. The current landlord expressed interest in expanding the lease at this facility to include the Academy.
- *Option C: 1637 Long Beach Blvd, Long Beach 90813.* This sixteen classroom facility, zoned for education, is previously owned by a charter school and went through foreclosure proceedings.



The area defined in the map above by the black outline includes four zip codes: 90807, 90806, 90813 and 90755.

The Community

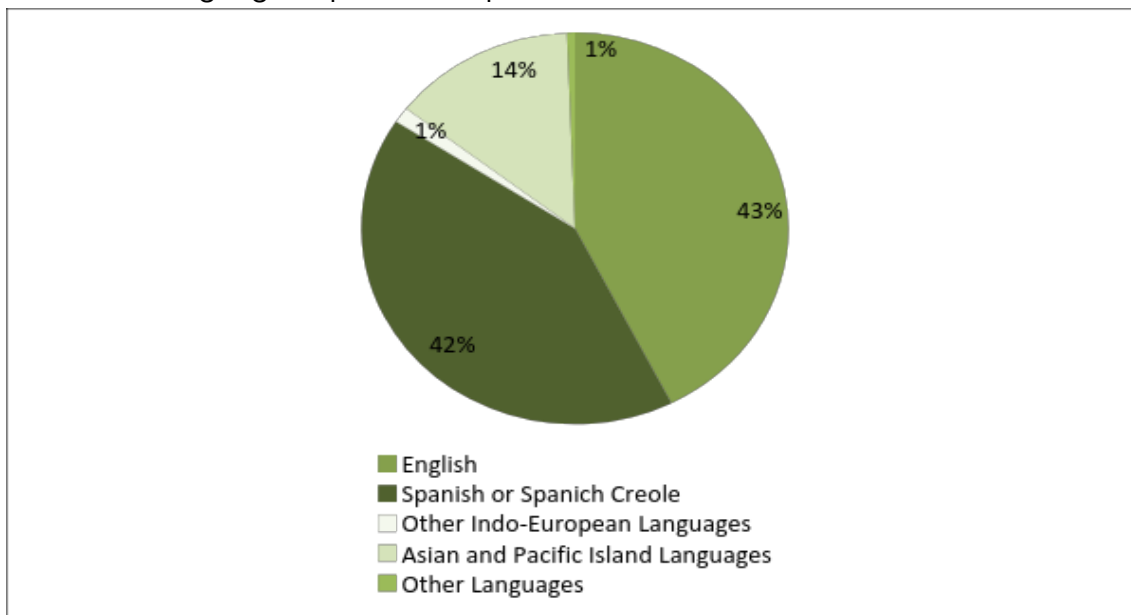
The densely populated community located within the black boundary in the map above is quite diverse, with a mix of race/ethnicity and socio-economic diversity:



Source: *factfinder.census.gov* (2010 Census General Population Characteristics).

An equal amount of families in this community speak Spanish at home as speak English (42% each), with another 14% speaking Asian/Pacific Islander languages, predominantly Khmer and Vietnamese.

Languages Spoken in Zip Codes 90807, 90806, 90813 and 90755

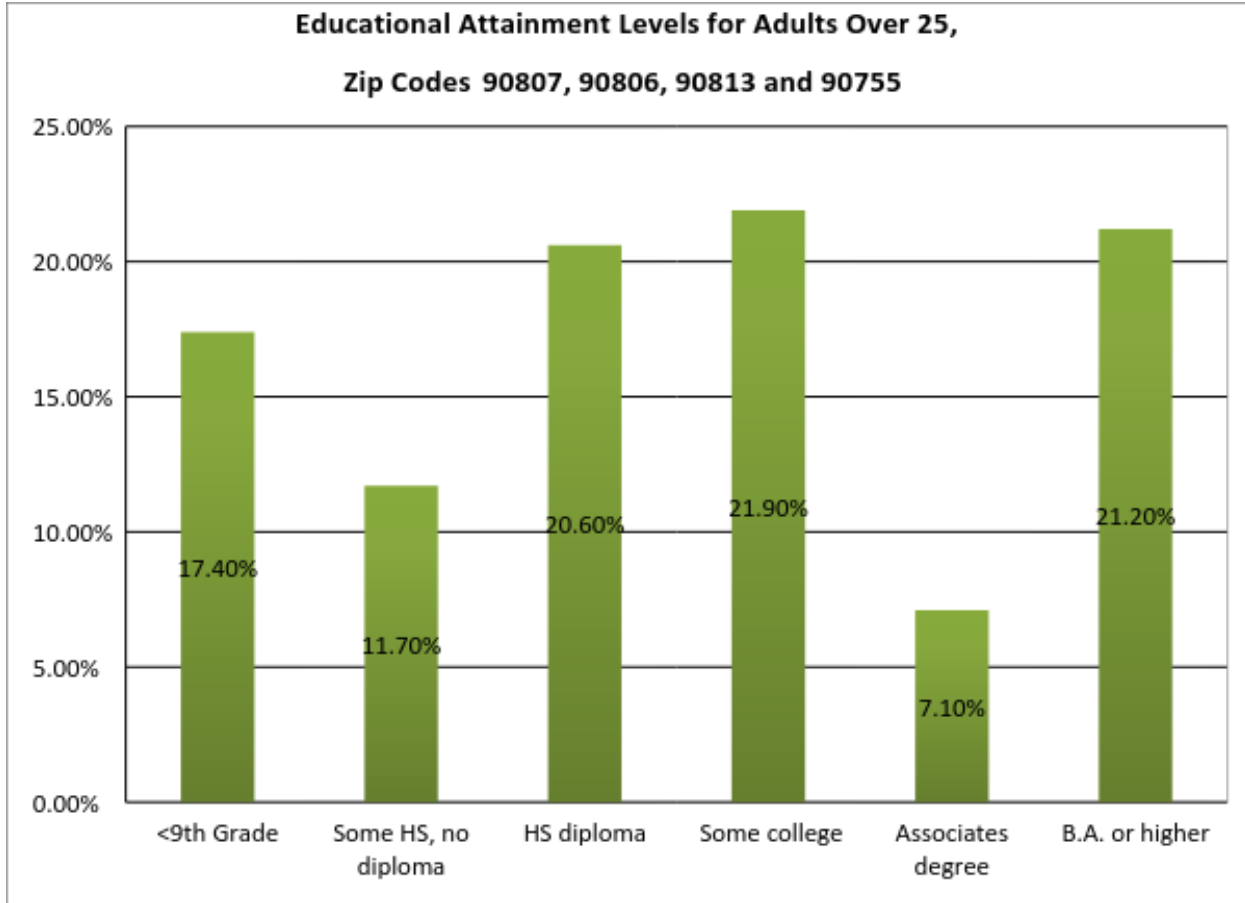




Sources: factfinder.census.gov (2010 Census Selected Economic Characteristics).

According to the 2010 Census, 21% of families in this area with children under 18 were living below the federal poverty line, which in 2010 was just \$22,050 for a family of four. (<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hhs-poverty-guidelines-remainder-2010>.) The cost of living in Long Beach of course exceeds national norms, thus these families characteristically experience housing and food instability.

Not surprisingly, based on the income diversity, there is also a broad range of educational attainment levels for adults over 25 – more than 17% have less than a 9th grade education and another 12% have some high school, but did not earn a diploma or equivalency. Approximately 50% of the adult residents in this area have never enrolled in college.



Source: factfinder.census.gov (2013 American Community Survey Educational Attainment).

Currently, in the area, there are three large, traditional public high schools: Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo High School (“Cabrillo”) with more than 2,700 students; Long Beach Polytechnic High School (“Poly”) with more than 4,400 students; and Woodrow Wilson Classical High School (“Wilson”) with almost 4,000 students. In addition, Renaissance High School for the Arts (“Renaissance”) is a visual and performing arts magnet school that serves approximately 500 students. These schools enroll a very diverse group of students:

Surrounding High Schools	Total Enrollment	% FRPL	% EL + RFEP	% SpEd	% Af. Am.	% Hispanic /Latino	% Asian Pacific Islander	% White	% Two or More/ Other
Cabrillo	2,768	85%	62%	11%	14%	70%	6%	1%	0%
Poly	4,464	61%	40%	9%	24%	34%	22%	10%	1%
Renaissance	490	57%	28%	4%	30%	43%	2%	17%	3%
Wilson	3,944	57%	41%	8%	13%	49%	10%	25%	1%
District	79,709	67%	43%	10%	16%	54%	10%	15%	1%

Source: dq.cde.ca.gov/Dataquest/ (School Level Reports).

While most of the high schools in the community are achieving student academic outcomes – including graduation rates – that exceed state and county averages, there is room for improvement.

Surrounding High Schools	3 Year Weighted API 2011-13	2013 API Score	2013 State Rank	2013 Similar Schools Rank	2013 % Prof. ELA	2013 % Prof. Math	Cohort Grad. Rate 2013-14	A-G Completion Rate 2013-14	CAHSEE 10 th grade ELA/Math Pass Rate 2014-15
Cabrillo	648	657	2	2	31%	12%	86%	30%	72%/77%
Poly	753	764	6	6	55%	35%	86%	60%	82%/88%
Renaissance	809	825	8	10	72%	63%	93%	49%	92%/95%
Wilson	759	771	6	4	61%	60%	90%	53%	87%/88%

Source: dq.cde.ca.gov/Dataquest/ (School Level Reports).

While graduation rates at these schools are relatively strong, A-G completion rates show significant room for improvement (a fact that is true across the State, which has a 42% A-G completion rate). At the Academy, replicating the “best practices” of some of the highest performing charter high schools in the state, all students will be expected to complete A-G in order to graduate. Each student will be personally supported in our small school setting to ensure he/she completes the credits needed and graduates on time, well-prepared for post-secondary school and meaningful careers.

We believe that families in this community should have another option for a small high school that offers personalized attention, differentiated instruction, and a unique curriculum that is well-suited help to prepare all students, regardless of family income level, race/ethnicity, language learner status or other “risk” factors to succeed in college and a 21st century economy.

History of the School

Our story begins with the opening of Intellectual Virtues Academy middle school (IVA) in 2013-14. IVA is a successful non-profit authorized by the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) in 2012. This school was founded by Dr. Jason Baehr, a professor at Loyola Marymount University, and leading expert in intellectual virtue epistemology, and Dr. Steve Porter, an associate professor at Biola University’s Rosemead Graduate School of Psychology, whose research focuses on the dynamics of personal character formation and change. Both schools (IVA and the Academy) have been designed to implement an intellectual virtues model as a dynamic demonstration of 21st century education, based on cutting edge research and the “best thinking” in education, psychology, neuroscience, and more.

In 2015, Founding Director James McGrath, Dr. Baehr, and Board Chairman Dr. Eric Churchill secured a generous \$2 million grant from the John Templeton Foundation, whose goal was to

expand the success of the middle school into a new Long Beach public high school. The Academy was designed to leverage numerous university partnerships – including researchers from Harvard, Calvin College, Loyola, Boston University, and Biola – to provide a comprehensive college preparatory curriculum to equip students beginning in ninth grade with the skills, judgment, knowledge, and dispositions needed to be successful for college. This approach seeks to foster intellectual character growth in all of our students, closing the achievement gap for our high school students. The Academy was chartered by Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) in the spring of 2016.

In 2016, the Academy opened its doors to its first ninth grade class, the Class of 2020. The Academy is closely connected to cutting-edge educational research on intellectual character education. Founder and board member Dr. Jason Baehr is director of the Intellectual Virtues and Education Project at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles. The Academy and IVA's curriculum and teaching model make significant use of Harvard's Project Zero research, especially the work of Ron Ritchhart and his colleagues.

The Academy and IVA was founded by a group of parents, educators, and community members who love Long Beach and are passionate about public education. Founders and board members include public school teachers, a charter school administrator and social worker, four university professors, a scientist, a university administrator, a marketing and advertising expert, a graphic designer, a human resources expert, a corporate VP, a finance and real estate expert, and an attorney.

Demographic and Achievement Information

Grade Level Enrollment

<i>Year (est. 2016)</i>	<i># of Students</i>		
2016 - 2017	Grade 9: 44 students		
2017 - 2018	Grade 9: 22 students	Grade 10: 37 students	Total: 59

Demographic Information

Variable	Grade 9	Grade 10	% or Total #
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0	0.0%
Asian	1	1	3.4%
African American	9	15	41.4%
Filipino	1	0	1.7%
Hispanic or Latino	3	15	31.0%
Pacific Islander	1	1	3.4%
White, not hispanic	6	5	19.0%
EL	1	8	9
504	0	1	1
IEP	10	14	24
Gender	M:12 F:10	M:18 F:19	M: 30 F:29

Demographics of Charter School & Comparison Schools

Demographic Variable	Academy	LBUSD	Cabrillo	Jordan	Millikan	POLY	Wilson
E African American	25%	13.3%	12.7%	17.3%	9.3%	18.9%	11.2%
t Am.Indian/ Alaska Native	0%	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
n Asian	4.5%	7.4%	3.3%	3.9%	4.1%	17.5%	7.0%
i Filipino	0%	3.2%	8.6%	1.1%	3.1%	5.2%	1.7%
c Hispanic or Latino	47.7%	56.5%	70.7%	72.2%	48.6%	42.8%	56.7%
t Pacific Islander	0%	1.5%	2.1%	2.8%	0.8%	1.8%	0.7%
y White	20.5%	13.2%	1.6%	1.6%	30.4%	11.0%	19.3%
& Two or More Races	2.3%	2.7%	0.4%	0.3%	1.3%	1.3%	1.0%
R Not Reported	0.0%	2.0%	0.2%	0.6%	2.4%	1.5%	2.2%
a							
c							
e							
Other Demographics							
Free/Reduced Price Lunch	56.8%	70.7%	87.5%	87.4%	46.6%	67.4%	67.3%
English Language Learners	18.2%	20.6%	19.6%	20.4%	5.4%	10.9%	10.8%
Students with Disabilities	22.7%	11.3%	11.9%	13.9%	10.7%	8.9%	9.7%
Foster Youth	2.3%	0.7%	0.6%	0.8%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%

Source: Ethnicity & Race retrieved from CDE DataQuest Enrollment Report and retrieved from CDE Ed-Data

Student Achievement

As reported in the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), because we have only been in operation for one year, there is limited data to present to demonstrate our students’ academic growth. What limited data we have has shown significant growth – well above average – in student learning this past year. Research has demonstrated that well-crafted student and parent surveys are almost as reliable as testing in understanding the quality of learning. (Measures of Effective Teaching 2010). Based on our student surveys, they report that their courses are challenging at higher rates than both their national private and public school peers:

Table 1

Survey Question	Public Schools	Private Schools	Academy ¹
The academic program is challenging.	50%	70%	77%

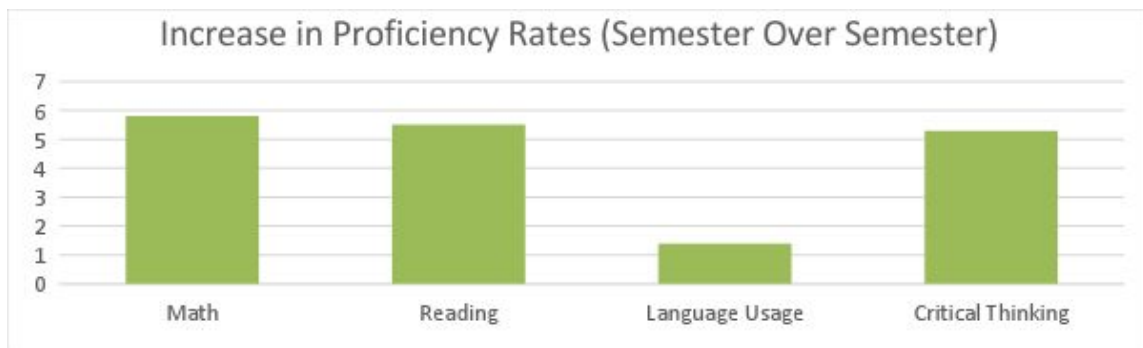
This is consistent with parent and student surveys of the overall quality of Academy teachers:

Table 2

Survey Question	Public Schools	Private Schools	Academy ²
My (child’s) teachers are high quality.	51%	62%	89%/92%

NWEA and CCTST (critical thinking) testing supports these findings. On the critical year-over-year growth, Academy students demonstrated an increase in their percentile ranking 90% of the time on all three NWEA tests (math, reading, language usage) compared with a 50% national average. The sample size was small since not everyone took the NWEA test in their 8th grade year³, but even fall semester to spring semester proficiency growth was significant:

Table 3



¹ Comparative data is based on student survey responses from a national polling by the Art & Science Group. These numbers are supported by similar polls, where, for example, 59% of all high school students report that their classes are “easy” on a five-point scale (Strong American Schools 2008).

² Student survey responses are first; parents’ responses are second; comparative data is based on student survey responses from a national polling by the Art & Science Group.

³ Six students took 20 comparable tests.

For example, in Reading, the rates in proficiency rose from 30.2% in the Fall to 35.7% in the Spring, for an increase of 5.5%.

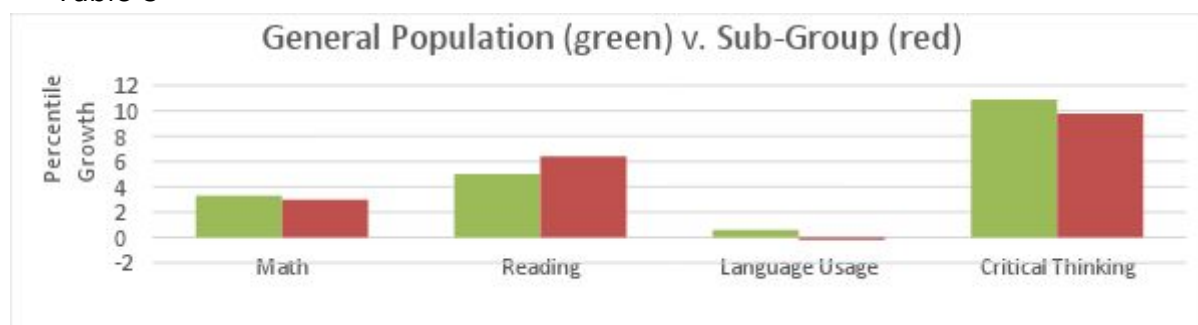
These NWEA increases are fairly consistent across sub-groups. Below compares percentile increases (or decreases) for each significant subgroup (as defined by having 9 or more members) compared to the general population:

Table 4

	Math	Reading	Language Use	Crit. Thinking
Latinx	5.8	4.3	3.3	14.6
African-Am.	2.0	9.2	(4.4)	4.7
ELs	5.0	11.0	1.3	9.3
SPED	1.4	0.1	0.6	10.3
FRLP	2.2	7.0	(1.2)	10.1
General Pop.	3.3	5.0	0.6	10.9

There is a danger in reading into any one particular cell in the above table because the data size is so small.⁴ Accordingly, the better analysis is to compare the sub-groups as a whole versus the general population. Under this analysis, there is little difference in student growth:

Table 5



These NWEA results are used in teacher discussions regarding evaluations, differentiation, scope and sequencing, among other topics. For example, we noticed opposite trends that lower scoring students made more gains in English but less gains in Math to generate conversations, policy, and professional development about effective differentiation.

⁴ For example, African-Americans appear to have scored 4.4 percentiles lower on language usage, but we know that two of them purposefully quit the test early, and removing this data shows that this group showed 4.1 percentile growth. Even including these two students' test scores, the median increase was 2.0 percentiles higher.

In addition, multiple measures of intellectual virtues show that the Academy is fulfilling its mission of equipping students to think creatively, critically, and with a capacity for self-growth. The Academy's central mission is to foster meaningful growth with our students in the intellectual character virtues in a thoughtful, challenging, and supportive academic environment. Last year, we utilized four methods to measure intellectual character growth: critical thinking skills testing, student self-reporting, parent surveys, and a Boston University three-year study.

CCTST. One of the components of each intellectual virtue -- and the one most widely recognized and traditionally focused on -- is skill. The California Critical Thinking Skills Test measures the skills that are the constituents of the critical thinking virtues of attentiveness, carefulness, and thoroughness, with some of the questions targeting the skills underlying open-mindedness.

Academy students scored beyond what CCTST considers to be "significant" improvement. Proficiency rates went from 13.2% to 18.4% from fall to spring semester. Academy students grew an average 12.6 percentiles. According to CCTST, percentile growth would otherwise remain flat under average learning circumstances.

Student and Parent Surveys. Intellectual character literature supports self-reporting as a valid measure of intellectual character growth. Self-reporting that is augmented by parent (or teacher) observations is more valid. By all measures of student self-reporting and parent observations, our students' intellectual character grew significantly:

Growth Mindset. "Adults at this campus believe I am capable of academic growth."

- 74% agree at LBUSD (but with "academic success")
- 95% students agree at the Academy (no change from first semester)

Autonomy/Tenacity. "I work harder, and challenge myself more, on my class work than I did in 8th grade."

- 78% students agree at Academy second semester (95% first semester)
- 92% parents agree second semester
- Further supported by absenteeism rate dropping from last year 16% v. this year at 5.5%

Engagement (Courage/Curiosity). "Students speak up and share their ideas about class work in this class."

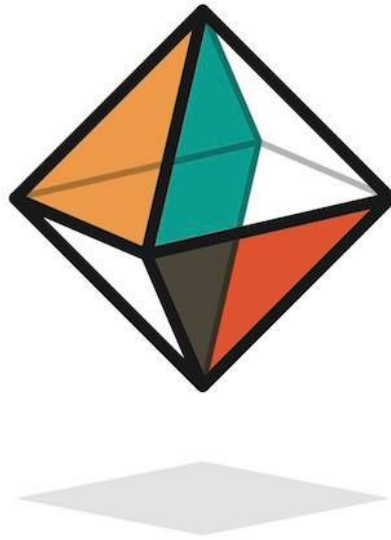
- Research confirms that this is a high value question
- At the public secondary level, the 25th percentile class has 40% student agreement (v. 68% at 75th percentile)
- 92% students agree at the Academy
- 96% parents agree instruction promotes engagement and deep thinking

Carefulness/Thoroughness. "My teachers want me to carefully and thoroughly explain my answers – why I think what I think."

- 95% students agree at Academy
Curiosity/Open-Mindedness. “Class content encourages me to be curious about, and seek to understand, other ideas.”
- 89% students agree at Academy
Metacognition (Humility). “My classes allow me the opportunity to reflect upon my mistakes.”
- 78% students agree at the Academy
All Virtues. “My teachers push me to become a better thinker.”
- 95% students agree at the Academy
- 92% parents state their child “has grown” to be a “better thinker”

Boston University Study. The John Templeton Foundation funded a \$100k 3-year (2-years for the Academy) study to track intellectual character growth. The first year was last year where a baseline was established. Thus, there are no growth results to publish yet.

Part III



The Criteria

Part III: The Criteria

Category A Organization

A1. Vision and Purpose: The school has a clearly stated vision and mission (purpose) based on its student needs, current educational research, the district Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), and the belief that all students can achieve at high academic levels. Supported by the governing board and the district LCAP, the school’s purpose is defined further by schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards.

School Philosophy

The Academy is steadfastly committed to cultivating the potential of each student-scholar in a thoughtful, challenging, and supportive setting which promotes a sense of purpose, a culture of thinking, self-knowledge, openness and respect, and growth mindset. The four-year program graduates students who are disposed toward creativity, critical-thinking, and self-growth.

The school is committed to immersing our students in rigorous, standards-based college-preparatory curricula in a nurturing and supportive environment, fully preparing students for higher education, subsequent professional achievement, and life. The following five “signature features” of the Academy’s educational practice are designed to foster both core content mastery as well as development of intellectual virtues for lifelong learning and success that are the foundation of a 21st Century education.

1. ***Personal Approach.*** The Academy’s mission is to nurture the deep personal qualities essential to being an excellent and lifelong learner. It is therefore part of the “cura personalis” or “education of the whole person” tradition in education (Richards 1980; Huebner 1995; Kirby et al 2006). The Academy’s small size and dialogical pedagogy will ensure that the school is an intimate, friendly, and personal environment. Academy teachers will attend to and nurture the well-being of each student.
2. ***Rigorous.*** Intellectual virtues do not arise in a vacuum; rather, they are the product of rigorous engagement with curricular content. An intellectual virtues approach to education is not an alternative to a rich, standards-based, college- and career-preparatory approach. At the Academy, the curriculum will be closely aligned with Common Core State Standards, and teachers will nurture and inspire a rigorous command of this material.
3. ***Reflective.*** Growth in the intellectual virtues must be pursued in a reflective, intentional manner. Therefore, students and teachers at the Academy will be aware of and attentive to their own intellectual strengths and weaknesses and will use this knowledge to their advantage in the learning process. Students will also be reflective in their engagement

with academic content: their teachers will routinely reflect with them on why they are learning what they are learning; and they will be challenged to “think outside the box,” generate new ideas and solutions, and consider alternative possibilities.

4. **Actively Engaged.** Students do not become excellent thinkers or inquirers by being passive recipients of tidily packaged bits of information. Students at the Academy will be expected to take control of their intellectual growth and development. They will be trained to actively engage ideas, ask good questions, demand evidence, and support and defend their convictions.
5. **Relational.** Character growth occurs most often in the context of relationships. This is a context in which intellectual virtues can be modeled, trust can be built, care can be expressed, and where admiration and emulation are a natural result. Academy teachers will know their students and will actively seek to address their needs. Students will work together in mutually edifying and supportive relationships.

Teachers, support staff, administrators, governing bodies, and parents work cooperatively, facilitating the learning and maturing process of all students, providing them with the support and encouragement needed to become successful learners. The school believes that emphasis on high academic expectations, ethical and social responsibility, caring for one’s physical well-being, and respect for our resources and environment will prepare well-rounded and successful community members in the future.

Technology, and its application in student learning, is an integral part of the Academy’s programs. Computer skills, technology lessons, and knowledge incorporated through the core curriculum, use of the Internet, google classrooms and technologically enhanced classrooms, aim to equip students with the means to function in today’s society. It also equips students with communication and researching skills, giving them the capability to gather information independently and expand their knowledge base in all the subject areas.

Through the arts program, elective courses, clubs, sports and extracurricular activities, students develop their creative talents and cooperative interaction at the same time. We believe students can achieve a genuine sense of accomplishment and self-worth through involvement in a variety of elective classes and organized extra-curricular activities, including sports and athletic competitions, clubs, student leadership, and community service.

School Mission & School Learner Outcomes (SLO)

This school’s Mission is to:

To foster meaningful growth with students, faculty, and staff in the intellectual character virtues in a thoughtful, challenging, and supportive academic environment.

The Academy fosters in our students “intellectual virtues” - character traits that flow from and contribute to a genuine *love of learning* - as they master standards-based content and skills. The following three **Master Virtues (SLOs)** help to shape an individual’s world-view, motivate lifelong learning, and provide tools for success in college, career, and life.

CREATIVITY VIRTUES

Curiosity: a disposition to wonder, ponder, and ask why. A thirst for understanding and a desire to explore. Slogan: *Ask questions!*

Open-Mindedness: an ability to think outside the box. Gives a fair and honest hearing to competing perspectives. Slogan: *Think outside the box!*

Intellectual Courage: a readiness to persist in thinking or communicating in the face of fear, including fear of embarrassment or failure. Slogan: *Take risks!*

CRITICAL THINKING VIRTUES

Intellectual Attentiveness: a readiness to stay focused and on task. Notices and attends to important details. Slogan: *Look and listen!*

Intellectual Carefulness: a sensitivity to the requirements of good thinking. Quick to notice and avoid intellectual pitfalls and mistakes. Slogan: *Avoid errors!*

Intellectual Thoroughness: a willingness to probe for deeper meaning and understanding. Unsatisfied with mere appearances or easy answers. Slogan: *Go deep!*

VIRTUES OF SELF-GROWTH

Intellectual Autonomy: a capacity for active, self-directed thinking. An ability to think and reason for oneself. Slogan: *Think for yourself!*

Intellectual Humility: a willingness to own up to one’s intellectual limitations and mistakes. Unconcerned with intellectual status or prestige. Slogan: *Admit what you don’t know!*

Intellectual Tenacity: a willingness to embrace intellectual challenge and struggle. Keeps its “eyes on the prize” and doesn’t give up. Slogan: *Embrace struggle!*

School Vision

To equip students to engage the world with curiosity and thoughtfulness, to know themselves, and to live well. Our vision contemplates that all Academy graduates will complete a rigorous, college- and career-preparatory education as they acquire the *knowledge*, *abilities/skills*, *judgment*, and *motivation* inherent in the nine Master Intellectual Virtues:

Knowledge:

Conceptual knowledge: Students will be instructed in what intellectual virtues are (i.e. the sort of knowledge, mindsets, and attitudes that comprise these nine Master traits), how intellectual virtues are related to other kinds of virtues, and the importance of intellectual virtues to thinking, learning, and living well.

Self-knowledge: Students will develop a rich and honest grasp of their own intellectual strengths and weaknesses, especially their intellectual character strengths and weaknesses; they will also have a detailed understanding of how these affect their performance as students.

Abilities/Skills:

Intellectually virtuous thinking/reasoning: Each of the Academy's nine Master Virtues has characteristic activities or skills. Students will be given frequent opportunities to practice and cultivate these skills, which include:

- Asking thoughtful and insightful questions (curiosity);
- Becoming aware of and “owning” one’s intellectual limitations and mistakes (intellectual humility);
- Thinking and forming beliefs independently (intellectual autonomy);
- Being “present” in the learning process and attending to important details (attentiveness);
- Avoiding pitfalls and mistakes (intellectual carefulness);
- Probing for deeper understanding (intellectual thoroughness);
- Taking up and giving a fair hearing to foreign or opposed standpoints (open-mindedness);
- Taking intellectual risks (intellectual courage);
- Persisting through intellectual struggle (intellectual tenacity).

Motivation:

“Love” of knowledge and learning: Students will have a felt *appreciation* for the value of learning and knowledge; their desire for knowledge and understanding will occupy a salient role in their psychology. This can be thought of as the *desire* component of intellectual virtue.

Volitional commitment to ongoing intellectual growth: Students will be firmly and volitionally committed to learning and furthering their intellectual growth. This commitment will “kick in” when the demands of learning become difficult and in other moments when the natural desire for or enjoyment of learning wanes. This is the aspect of intellectual virtue that concerns the *will*.

Emotional attunement: Students will routinely experience a range of what Israel Scheffler (1991) and other educational theorists (Wolk 2008; Craig and Deretchin 2010) refer to as “cognitive emotions” and “rational passions.” These include joy in discovery, delight in verification, wonder, intellectual puzzlement, pleasure in understanding, discomfort with ignorance, and confidence in evidence and good reasoning. As such, they will be “emotionally attuned” to critical aspects of the learning process. Such attunement is the *affective* component of intellectual virtue.

Judgment:

Intellectually virtuous judgment: Research (e.g. Tishman 1993) shows that students can have the ability and be motivated to think in an intellectually virtuous manner, but nevertheless fail to do so. This happens when they lack a proper “sensitivity” to or judgment about when to practice the virtues in question. Accordingly, students will be instructed—directly and thorough practice—in the conditions under which it is appropriate to practice each of the Academy’s Master Virtues. They will develop intellectually virtuous judgment.

School Values

1. Sense of purpose: we deliberately align all of our thinking and decision-making with the mission, vision, and values of the school.
2. Culture of thinking: we ask questions, seek understanding, and practice the habits of good thinking.
3. Self-knowledge: believing in the importance of self-knowledge, we practice ongoing self-reflection and self-awareness.
4. Openness and respect: we strive for a strong sense of community marked by collaboration, empowerment, and intentional openness and respect for the thinking of others
5. Growth mindset: being optimistic about the potential for personal growth, we embrace challenges and regard failure as an opportunity to learn and improve.

School Motto

Equip Every Student to Think Well:

*Creatively, Critically, and with a Capacity for Self-Growth***School Logo**

The Academy's logo is an OCTAHEDRON. A octahedron is a geometric symbol of mathematical beauty and symmetry. The great Greek Philosopher, Plato, paired each of the platonic solids with a classical element. He believed that these three dimensional shapes were the building blocks to the creation of everything—in us, around us, and beyond.

This platonic solid is associated with the element "Air", which symbolizes reflection, intellect, and the balance of forces.

The inner shape is also a mirror, symbolic of the role self-reflection plays in personal growth. It also reminds us that we can be mirrors/reflections to each other.

The colors of the Academy:

Emerald = a gem symbolizing growth = Virtues of Self-Growth

Crimson = a color of passion/inspiration = Virtues of Creativity

Gold = of the 4 color personalities, gold is the social personality = symbolizing how social-emotional growth is integral to intellectual virtue formation, i.e., Social Virtues

Iron = hard, steadfast, and buried = Virtues of Critical Thinking

School Mascot

After discussing with dozens of registered students, parents, Academy and IVA employees, prospective students, and marketing experts, we were able to narrow down twelve final mascot candidates to the mascot we were always meant to be. TRITONS.

Long Beach's identity as a beach city as well as home to the largest port in North America makes a mascot associated with the ocean a natural fit. In mythology, Triton was a god of the sea who raised Athena, the goddess of intellectual virtues. The Tritons mascot ties Long Beach to ancient Athens, the birthplace of intellectual virtues and also one of the world's greatest ports.

Alignment with State and LBSD Priorities

The Academy's model, while innovative, aligns directly with the California Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the California Department of Education's Frameworks for each core subject as a foundation. The model also aligns with California's eight state priorities as part of the Local Control Funding Formula, as well as the District's own Academic and Career Success for All Students Initiative and 2011-16 Strategic Plan.

While the Academy's explicit and systematic focus on intellectual character development is unique within Long Beach, it fits extremely well with Long Beach Unified School District's (LBSD) values and initiatives as expressed in LBSD's College and Career Readiness: Graduate Profile (CCRGP) for its students (http://www.lbschools.net/Main_Offices/High_Schools/Linked_Learning/).

- Teaching for the intellectual virtues – developing curiosity, autonomy, courage, etc. – affects students' felt appreciation for the value of learning and knowledge as well as their capacity for active, self-directed learning. Thus, an intellectual virtues model is ideally suited to reach LBSD's goal that students "will grow into life long and self-directed learners" (CCRGP).
- One of the primary methods of developing intellectual virtues is through inquiry-based pedagogy, which properly involves research, thus Academy students will be well-positioned to "become proficient in new areas through research and inquiry" (CCRGP).
- Colleges and employers today are placing increasing value on so-called "soft skills" or "non-cognitive skills" (Schulz 2008). These skills – such as persistence, curiosity, self-control, creativity, and critical thinking – are precisely the qualities that the Academy seeks to instill in its students through authentic workplace problems and projects, even if the Academy refers to these skills as "intellectual virtues." Accordingly, the Academy will develop "college and career-ready scholars" (CCRGP).
- Central to an intellectual virtues pedagogy is the development of creativity virtues and critical thinking skills, which are an essential part of intellectual virtues (Rowles, Morgan, Burns, & Merchant, 2013). The Academy has received grant funding to develop cornerstone humanities courses, which will specifically focus on logical reasoning, analysis, creative and critical thinking through inquiry based methodologies. Accordingly, the Academy is best positioned to develop "critical and innovative problem solvers" (CCRGP).

- The Academy specifically focuses on *intellectual* virtues, which are the character traits of a good thinker or reasoner. This may seemingly differ from a more traditional notion of “character education” which is focused on fostering *civic* virtues. However, because intellectual virtues primarily aim at cognitive ends, such as the acquisition, understanding, and application of important knowledge, intellectual virtues form the bedrock for our students to become good neighbors because it provides a proper way of thinking about what it means to be a good neighbor. Thus, Academy students will be poised to become “adaptable and productive citizens” (CCRGP).
- The Academy will offer several courses that will engage ethical subjects through intellectual virtue pedagogy, which will act to instill ethical virtues (Cornerstone Courses – Humanities). One of these courses is entitled “Introduction to Ethics.” Moreover, intellectual virtues themselves are the buttressing feature to ensure not only our students merely act ethically, but they are motivated to, and competently think through, ethical decisions. Thus, Academy graduates will become “ethical decision makers” (CCRGP).
- Good communication both begins with good thinking or reasoning (PMI 2013), and enhances good thinking or reasoning (Paul 2012). This second relationship is one of the primary reasons that a central pillar to intellectual virtue pedagogy is rooted in classroom discussion. For both of these reasons, Academy graduates shall be “effective communicator[s] and collaborator[s]” (CCRGP).

As the above points out, the CCRGP mirrors the Academy’s emphasis on nine Master Intellectual Virtues to ensure all students become college and career-ready, capable and contributing citizens who have the knowledge, abilities and attitudes to succeed in the 21st century economy.

School’s Learner Outcomes

The Academy is steadfastly committed to cultivating the potential of each student-scholar in a thoughtful, challenging and supportive setting which promotes a sense of purpose, a culture of thinking, self-knowledge, openness and respect, and growth mindset. The four-year program graduates students who are empowered with intellectual virtues to be creative, critical-thinking, and capable of self-growth. The nine ***Master Virtues*** represent our **School’s Learner Outcomes (SLOs)**.

The Academy builds on the highly successful Intellectual Virtues Academy of Long Beach middle school (IVA), authorized by LBUSD in 2012 and opened in 2013-14. The SLOs (Master Virtues) for the middle school were developed by all stakeholders, including the founding

board, community members, parents, students, teachers, staff and administration. The initial list and conception began with founders Dr. Jason Baehr, a professor at Loyola Marymount University and leading expert in intellectual virtue epistemology, and Dr. Steve Porter, an associate professor at Biola University's Rosemead Graduate School of Psychology. The school was designed to implement the SLOs as a dynamic demonstration of 21st century education, based on research and the "best thinking" in education, psychology, neuroscience and more.

Our new high school is designed to respond to an overwhelming number of requests from IVA parents and community members about opening a small, high-quality high school with the intellectual virtues model. Under the leadership of Founding Director, James McGrath, Esq., in coordination with the founders at the middle school and the stakeholders of the high school, the order of the SLOs (Master Virtues) were reimaged to compliment the adolescent development of the high school age group. All stakeholders of the high school, including community members, the board, staff, parents, teachers, staff and administrators collaborated to develop the structure of the SLOs (Master Virtues) for the high school.

We were confident that our new high school would expand and build on the solid foundation already established for an intellectual virtues secondary school model at IVA, which, by virtually every measure, is a success, including:

1. Student Achievement
2. Exceptional school climate
3. Engaged students
4. High quality teachers
5. Intellectual character growth
6. Sound governance, operations and finances with a solid financial reserve

To continue the growth of the understanding in regards to the SLOs (Master Virtues) the Academy continually collaborates and communicates with all stakeholders in the following ways:

- **Summer and Semesterly Academy/Workshops:** every summer we hold a weeklong joint Virtue Academy where all stakeholders join to develop a deeper understanding of the Virtues in both theory and practice. Board members, administrators, teachers and staff unite to share their experiences and learn from each others practice thereof. Students and parents join as necessary to conduct workshops regarding the use of SLOs and thinking routines.
- **Weekly Professional Development:** during the school year both schools hold regular weekly professional development workshops and joint seminars to further our understanding of the SLOs.

- **Weekly Teacher/Admin Meetings and Coaching:** teachers meet weekly with the Director of Instruction and other administrators (based on the topic) to reflect on their practice and growth in the SLOs. These meetings are coupled with ongoing support in the classroom on a weekly basis to maximize learning opportunities and culture.
- **Parent Academy/Workshops:** are held quarterly to review topics in interest of families.
- **Parents Alliance:** volunteer parents meet monthly to discuss their experiences, needs, and understanding.
- **Coffee with Directors:** monthly, all stakeholders are invited to join the three directors to further clarify their questions.
- **Exhibitions of Learning:** each semester students make their thinking visible by creating a opportunity for all stakeholders to visit campus and witness their learning through interactive displays and experiences, socratic seminars, and performances.
- **Student-led Conferences:** each semester students take leadership to reflect on their achievements and growth in the SLOs with their family, teachers, staff, and administrators.
- **Weekly Advisory:** each week students have the opportunity to directly engage in various activities to clarify their understanding and use of SLOs.
- **Community Meeting:** the first friday of each month, all stakeholders gather to celebrate our growth and each other through the SLO Awards (Virtue Awards). In this way students motivate each other and celebrate their growth in the virtues.
- **Newsletter:** on a regular bi-weekly basis we communicate with all stakeholders utilizing our email list to share updates, events, and celebrate.
- **World Wide Web:** information is also shared and disseminated through the school website, Instagram, and Facebook pages.
- **Student Leadership:** students meet weekly to create events and opportunities to practice the SLOs through community involvement and school events.
- **Information Sessions:** student leadership, parent alliance, teachers, staff and administrators hold several information sessions to open the door to the wider community to experience the learning and opportunities at the Academy.

The aforementioned systems that have been put in place to ensure consistency between the school vision, mission, schoolwide learner outcomes, the student learning needs, the school program, and ongoing school improvement process. All stakeholders have regular opportunities to join the discussion, pose questions, make suggestions and be heard through various mediums and events. Reflection is a continuous practice that we engage in as a learning community to grow and best serve our students and all other stakeholders.

Achievements:

- ***Establishment of the school***
- ***Acquirement of the JTF \$2 million grant to support its educational model***
- ***The school and its learner outcomes were embraced by all stakeholders***
- ***Stakeholder buy-in to school mission/vision/motto***
- ***Application of the theories to practice: praxis***
- ***Establishment of a reflective practice as a school community to continually grow***

Areas for Improvement:

- ***Student enrollment***
- ***Expansion of facilities availability as the student population grows***

A2. Governance Criterion:

The governing board: (a) has policies and bylaws that are aligned with the school’s purpose and support the achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes, the academic standards, and the college- and career-readiness standards based on data-driven instructional decisions for the school; (b) delegates implementation of these policies to the professional staff; and (c) monitors results regularly and approves the single schoolwide action plan and its relationship to the LCAP.

The Academy has a highly functioning board, meeting approximately once a month. Board meetings are typified by prepared board members who actively participate by asking deep and often critical questions. They provide advice based on their expertise outside of board meetings, work collaboratively with the leadership teams of the two schools they oversee, including the Academy, and understand the mission/vision of the program well (one, in fact, is a leading expert in intellectual virtue research).

The Board of Directors and IVA lead staff have established a solid organizational foundation for growth at the high school level. Through annual training and adherence to “best practices” in charter school governance, the Board has effectively overseen and monitored all aspects of school performance – academics, financials, staff quality, stakeholder satisfaction, and more.

The Board is composed of experts from a wide-range of fields. They include: law, facilities, financial, charter school administration, intellectual virtue research, marketing, and student services. Our wish list for further board expansion includes community leaders and fundraising.

The Intellectual Virtues Academy of Long Beach **Board of Directors** includes:

Edward D. Castro, J.D., Chair of Facilities Committee, Senior Corporate Counsel and Assistant Secretary for Cushman & Wakefield

Eric Churchill, MBA, Ph.D., Chairman of the Board, Associate Director, Takeda Oncology

Rebecca Irwin, Chair of Marketing and Outreach Committee, freelance online marketing and social media specialist

Evan Hemmersbach, Senior Accountant, Windes, Inc.

Karyn Pace, Ed.M, former Director of Student Life, Concordia University, Irvine

Steve Porter, Ph.D., Vice-Chairman, Professor of Philosophy and Theology, Biola University

Dan Hertzler, M.A., Vice-Principal of middle school at Green Dot charter schools

Darin Earley, Ph.D.; Director of Loyola Marymount University’s School of Education Family of

Schools

Rick Williams, M.B.A., Cluster Business Manager, Green Dot charter schools

Rachel Weitzman, J.D., Associate Attorney, Gordon & Rees LLC

The Academy, along with IVA, is governed by the Board of Directors. In addition to the general and specific powers of the Board defined in the California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation law and included in the Bylaws, the Board is fully responsible for the operation and fiscal affairs of the Academy including but not limited to the following:

Mission & Strategic Direction:

- Determines the organization's mission and purpose and achievement of that mission
- Engages in strategic planning and long-term strategy
- Monitors student achievement to ensure progress toward fulfillment of the mission

Resource Development & Financial Accountability:

- Approves and monitors the Academy's annual budget, budget revisions, and monthly cash flow statements and ensures compliance with all fiscal policies;
- Acts as a fiscal agent. This includes but is not limited to the receipt of funds for the operation of the Academy in accordance with applicable laws and the receipt of grants and donations consistent with the mission of the school;
- Ensures effective financial management
- Oversees fundraising
- Approves contracts over \$15,000
- Contracts with an external independent auditor to produce an annual financial audit according to generally accepted accounting practices;
- Approves annual independent fiscal audit and performance report
- Ensures sound risk management policies

Oversight & Assessment:

- Recruits, hires, evaluates, and if needed, terminates the lead administrator position
- Recruits, selects and provides orientation and training to new Board members
- Approves the schedule of Board meetings
- Organizes itself so that it operates efficiently, including establishing committees as needed
- Approves school policies
- Evaluates student achievement, operations, and compliance
- Submits requests for material revisions as necessary to the District for consideration

- Participates in the dispute resolution procedure and complaint procedures when necessary
- Appoints an administrative panel to take action on recommended student expulsions as needed.

The Board may initiate and carry on any program or activity or may otherwise act in a manner which is not in conflict with any law, the Academy's Charter, or the purposes for which the Academy is established.

The Board may execute any powers delegated by law to it and discharge any duty imposed by law upon it, and may delegate to an employee of the Academy or third party (e.g. person, management company or committee, however composed) any of those duties with the exception of budget approval, and approval of fiscal audits, provided that the activities and affairs shall be managed and all corporate powers shall be exercised, communicated to and remain under, the ultimate direction of the Board. The Board retains ultimate responsibility over the performance of those powers or duties so delegated. Such delegation will:

- Be in writing;
- Specify the entity designated;
- Describe in specific terms the authority of the Board of Directors being delegated, any conditions on the delegated authority or its exercise and the beginning and ending dates of the delegation; and
- Require an affirmative vote of a majority of Board members.

The school's vision, mission and schoolwide learner outcomes are aligned to the board and district policies and bylaws. The central Board members are firm believers in the intellectual virtues model and were directly involved in the research and adoption of the SLOs. They ensure that the SLOs are the driving force of every meeting and regularly connect to the mission, vision, and SLOs during the monthly meetings by choosing school representatives to share their experiences and practice by overtly connecting it to the mission, vision and SLO. They have taken roles in the Summer Virtue Academy Workshops to provide further clarification, praxis and reflection.

The level of understanding of the role of the Board in relation to the responsibilities of the professional staff is apparent in practice during the monthly board meetings where they reaffirm their purpose and roles. The Board makes it clear that they are there for support, accountability and growth of the school. The Board of Directors is committed to continuous improvement and ongoing training to assist the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities as stewards of the school. To this end, the Board will seek appropriate training and other resources for continuous improvement of performance, both as a full Board and individually, as it has done since the

Board's inception. Such training may include full-Board training sessions with experts familiar with charter school governance, finance, and more. New Board members will go through an initial orientation to their responsibilities as Board members and effective charter school oversight.

The evaluation and monitoring procedures carried out by the governing board in relationship to the LCAP metrics, including the review of student performance toward career- and college-readiness, overall school programs and operations, and the fiscal health of the school shows accountability on all counts. Mutual accountability systems are put in place where the Founding Director regularly informs and updates the Board via email and through monthly meetings. The Board agendas are formed to provide notice to the public and all stakeholders as to upcoming organization business, retain consistency, and provide transparency. The meetings are recorded and the agendas are shared at least 3 days prior to all meetings. The established governing board/school's complaint and conflict resolution procedures are effective in that they address the needs of the school and support the future success of the school.

Achievements:

- ***Commitment of a Board that is true to the mission/vision of the school***
- ***Complete support from the Board***

Areas for Improvement:

- ***Continue to maintain a Board that is committed to the mission/vision of the school***
- ***Enlist Board members to support with creative ways to enroll new students***

A3. Leadership:

Empowerment and Continuous Planning and Monitoring Criterion

Based on student assessment/survey data, the school leadership, parent/community, and staff make decisions and initiate activities that focus on all students achieving the schoolwide learner outcomes, the academic standards, and the college- and career-readiness standards. The school leadership and staff monthly monitors and refines the single schoolwide action plan and make recommendations to modify the LCAP based on analysis of data to ensure alignment with school learner outcomes.

The processes and procedures for involving staff in shared responsibility, actions, and accountability to support student learning throughout all programs is accountable and effective. The Academy has embedded consistent practices on a weekly basis to address and solve possible issues and concerns. The three directors meet in the beginning of the week to identify the major issues that need addressing. Based on the nature of the topic the directors determine the best venue for the topic(s) to be addressed: parent alliance, counseling, RSP, advisory,

community meeting, student leadership, staff meeting, professional development, after school support program, or individual meetings.

Communication

The existing structures for internal communication, planning, and resolving differences effectively address the needs of all stakeholders. The weekly staff meetings provide the space to communicate and plan. The Academy takes proactive measures to resolve differencing by upholding norms that we all agree to utilize. These norms are clearly outlined in the employee handbook, presented through thinking routines during the summer professional development and practiced in the weekly meetings and professional developments. The **Academy Norms** for productive and courageous conversations include:

- **Stay Engaged:** Be present, participate. Listen. Respond.
- **Speak Your Truth with Respect, Humility, and Open-Mindedness:** As you share your truth, consider others' truths.
- **Expect and Accept Non-Closure:** Change is continuous. Consider your areas of growth. Experience discomfort. Be patient with the process.
- **Connect Wholeheartedly:** Use care, compassion, and connection. Respect and accept others. Embrace a collaborative spirit.
- **Pay Attention to Patterns of Participation:** Share air time/leadership.
- **Contextual Confidentiality:** Names and stories stay in the room.
- **Go to the Source:** Follow up if something does not sit right within 72 hours, or let it go.
- **Engage the Virtues:** Practice the Virtues. Reflect. Seek understanding.

The School planning process is broad-based, collaborative, and fosters the commitment of the stakeholders, including the staff, students, parents, and business community. To ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to engage, the school provides various opportunities to all stakeholders:

- Monthly Open Board Meetings: agenda available and posted prior to meetings
- Weekly Faculty/Staff Professional Development Sessions
- Weekly Staff Meetings
- Weekly Directors Meetings
- Regular Parents Alliance Meetings
- Weekly Student Leadership Meetings
- Regular Individual Meetings with Teachers
- Robust Outreach Plan Check-ins at Staff Meetings
- Use of the World Wide Web: school website, Facebook, and Instagram
- Open Meetings

- Educator Book Club

The aforementioned mediums provide a healthy forum for internal communication, external communication, planning, and recognition of common goals to make adjustments in effectively adhering to the SLOs. The staff ensures that the analysis of student achievement of the critical learner needs, SLOs, and academic and career readiness standards impact the development, implementation, and monitoring of the SLOs and the LCAP. The outcomes are shared in various meetings with administration, staff, teachers, students, parents, and the Board. The data is used to reassess the curriculum map and meet student needs whilst meeting the SLOs, school mission/vision, and LCAP goals. The Founding Director collects the information and works with the other directors and staff to ensure the Academy is in line with its mission/vision and LCAP. Various measures are used to assess progress and collect data on SLOs and other student outcomes; including but not limited to, NWEA, internal pre- and post- assessments, engagement rubric, attendance and demographic data, and surveys.

Collaboration

The administration and staff collaborate with all faculty members with the end goal of successfully achieving the SLOs. Teachers are empowered by having the autonomy to incorporate individual teaching styles during instruction, while staying within the framework of the school's curriculum, mission/vision, SLOs, and State/National standards. In addition, during all meetings and workshops, teachers share their success stories and sources of concern to be addressed, the end result being an enhanced teaching/learning climate in the classroom. During weekly professional development sessions and individual teacher meetings, the directors promote collaboration and teamwork amongst the faculty and staff for success of the institution. During these meetings, time is allotted to work collaboratively, build team spirit, and enhance the schoolwide initiatives and activities. Teacher feedback, comments, and suggestions are valued and solicited during all meetings.

Decisions Made In Relation To SLOs

All educational decisions made and implemented by the leadership are directly related to the accomplishment of the SLOs. The school leadership - governing board, administration, teachers, students, and parents - utilizes different decision making models to do needs assessments, allocate resources and evaluate the effectiveness of the programs. Through meetings, surveys and observation, feedback is provided to the school to help in making decisions and establishing policies. The administration visits parent alliance meetings to discuss means of supporting SLOs, thereby disseminating guidelines that direct their current and future activities to involve and educate parents in addition to weekly emails, e-newsletters, text messages and

updates on social media. Student leadership activities focus on aspects of the SLOs to highlight the importance of these purposes in the co-curricular and extra-curricular lives of all students.

Achievements:

- ***Positive working environment builds on trust and mutual respect***
- ***Consistent weekly director meetings for updates and discussion of achievements and growth areas***
- ***Transparency amongst all stakeholders in the attainment of the SLOs***

Areas for Improvement:

- ***Classroom management: consistent application of school policies and practices***
- ***Continued application of Thinking Routines and SLOs in instruction***
- ***New student enrollment strategies and application thereof involving all stakeholders to follow-up with interested families from information sessions and visits***

A4. Staff:

Qualified and Professional Development Criterion: A qualified staff facilitates achievement of the student academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes through a system of preparation, induction, and ongoing professional development. There is a systematic approach to continuous improvement through professional development based on student performance data, student needs, and research.

Hiring Staff

Procedures are in place to ensure all staff members in all programs, based on employment policies and practices, staff background, training, and preparation are qualified for their responsibilities. The Academy was highly successful in recruiting its founding faculty. The Academy received 201 applications for its founding faculty positions. Six candidates were identified as the #1 candidate after final round interviews, and all six accepted offers, resulting in a 2% acceptance rate of our teacher applicants. 89% of students last year rated their teachers as “highly effective” and 92% of parents rated them as “high quality.”

The founding teachers were a mix of experienced teachers and first-/second- year teachers. The Academy found that the more experienced teachers had a more difficult time adjusting to the fluid nature of a new charter school, and, consequently, by the end of the year the three most experienced teachers had all resigned. We recruited highly talented teachers for new positions and to replace the resigning teachers. Recent parent surveys reveal that 97% of parents rate our teachers this year as “high quality”.

Preparation and Induction

There is system used to communicate administrator and faculty written policies that define responsibilities, operational practices, decision-making processes, and relationships of leadership and staff. This includes the contract which defines each person’s roles and responsibilities and the Employee Handbook. Professional development sessions and the beginning of the year workshop provide opportunities to ensure the high degree of clarity and understanding of these by administration and faculty. The Academy norms are used to have these conversations. If they regard general questions that pertain to everyone it is added to the agenda for the weekly professional development session. If it is pertaining to an individual, separate meetings are arranged.

The school’s supervision and evaluation procedures are set in the beginning of the school year individually with the Founding Director, and revisited during the weekly professional

development sessions and teacher coaching meetings with the Director of Instruction.

Professional Development Framework

The Academy has created an engaging process for supporting professional development/learning with time, personnel, material, and fiscal resources to facilitate all students achieving the academic, college, and career readiness standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes. A Google classroom was established to create a database of resources that would be available at all times to the team members. Agendas for all meetings are posted ahead of time and team members can view it to see the amendments and future plans. These weekly professional development sessions help ensure accountability and provide clarity. In this space we hold discussions in regards to student achievements, the SLOs, and best practices.

The current process to determine the measurable effect of professional development on student achievement is centered on the student support list and how many students have successfully moved forward on the list during the various grading periods. Another measure is student engagement based on the engagement rubric and referrals to the office.

Professional development sessions at the Academy allow our team of experts to get together and explore why it is essential for teachers to redesign curriculum for the 21st century given how the world has changed after the recession. The rules of the game have changed and it is important for academic institutions to rethink their approach to prepare the next generation to be successful in this new economy.

The premise of the approach is built on Intellectual Virtues as a Framework for Learning. The Intellectual Virtues model provides the blueprint to creating a more desirable future, and process to take action when faced with a difficult challenge. That kind of optimism is well needed in education. Classrooms and schools across the world are facing design challenges every single day, from teacher feedback systems to daily schedules. And as such, they require new perspectives, new tools, and new approaches.

The driving questions are:

1. What does "reflection" look like?
2. How do we curate learning artifacts in a meaningful way such that we encourage their revisiting?
3. How do we teach students to uncover how they learn, share what they learn, and articulate why they learned it?

At the Academy we are committed to providing quality and meaningful professional

development opportunities for our faculty and staff. Each opportunity is assigned goals and student performance outcomes, the integration of the professional development into the total school operation, providing collaborative problems, defining multiple outcomes for students, including theoretical understandings, providing continuous and on-going experiences, and ensuring comprehension of the growth process.

The professional development serves multiple goals for teachers to affect changes in three major areas: their beliefs and attitudes, their classroom practices, and the learning outcomes of their students (Guskey, 2002). To foster this process we listen to teachers' voices, establish trust for collaborative working conditions, form structures that enhance the culture to promote interaction and learning, and develop the relationship between purposes and processes for change. Our instructors embraced the presented strategies, methodologies and skills and put them directly into practice. We are all eager to continue this new and exciting school year.

Academy Master Schedule

Directors' General Hours

James McGrath	9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Armine Movsisyan	7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (no Wednesdays); 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Tuesdays
Summer Sanders	8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.; Tues. 11 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Supervision Schedule

	Drop-Off 7:30–8:15	Inside 7:45-8:15	Hallway 8:00-8:15	Break 10:52-11	Lunch 12:17- 12:47	Inside 3:25-4:00	Pick Up 3:25-3:45	Backyard 3:45-4:30
M	Armine	Grace	Summer	Armin; D	Armine; John	Michelle	Summer	Cynthia
T	Armine	Grace	Summer	Cynth; D	Daniel; Michell	Michelle	James	Cynthia
W	Dustin	Grace	Summer	Summer; P	Pallavi; Summer	Michelle	Summer	Cynthia
T	Armine	Grace	Summer	James; P	Julie; Pallavi	Michelle 2-2:15	Summer 2-2:15	Cynthia StudyHall
F	Armine	Grace	Summer	Cynth; P	Joseph; Pallavi	Michelle	Summer	Cynthia

Front Office

	8:15 – 9:30	9:30 – 12:17	1:20 – 2:30	2:30 – 3:45
Monday	Grace	Crystal	Crystal	Cynthia
Tuesday	Grace	Cynthia	Cynthia	Cynthia
Wednesday	Grace	Grace (11:10)	Crystal	Cynthia
Thursday	Grace	Grace (11:10)	Crystal	--
Friday	Michelle till 9	Cynthia	Cynthia	Cynthia

Planning Schedule

	Per 1-8:15	Per. 2 – 9:35	Per.3– 11:30	Per.4– 12:50	Per.5-2:10
Monday	Dustin	Joseph	Daniel	Grace	Joseph#
Tuesday	Michelle*	Joseph	Dustin	Daniel	Joseph#
Wednesday	Michelle*	John	Dustin	Daniel	Joseph#
Thursday	Michelle*	John	Joseph	Grace	PD - None
	Per. 1 – 9:05	Per. 2–10:20	Per.3– 11:30	Per.4-1:10	Per.5-2:20

Friday	John	John	Joseph	Dustin#	Michelle
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Cynthia's Schedule

	9:30-12:17	12:17-12:50	12:50-1:20	1:20-2:30	2:30-3:15	3:15-3:45	3:45-5:30
M					Office Clerk	Front Office	Supervision
T	Office Clerk	Supervision	L. Break	Office Clerk	Office Clerk	Front Office	Supervision
W					Office Clerk	Front Office	Supervision
Th					Supervision	Study Hall	Study Hall 4:30
F	Office Clerk	Supervision	L. Break	Office Clerk	Office Clerk	Front Office	Supervision 4:30

Grace's Schedule

	Per 1-8:15	Per. 2 – 9:35	Per. 3– 11:00	Lunch-12:17	Per.4– 12:50	Per.5-2:10	Min. Start/End
M	Office	B3 Spanish	B4 Spanish	Lunch Duty	Planning		7:30 am – 2:20 pm
T	Office*	B3 Spanish	B4 Spanish	Lunch Duty			7:30 am – 12:50 pm
W	Office*	Cove: 10:45	B4 Spanish	Lunch Duty			7:30 am – 12:50 pm
Th	Office*	Cove: 10:45	B3 Spanish	Lunch Duty	Planning	PD	7:30 am – 3:37 pm
	Adv-8:15	Per. 1 – 9:05	Per. 2– 10:20	Per.3– 11:30	Lunch-12:37	Per.4-1:10	Min. Start/End
F	Advisory	Off.: 9:30	Cove: 11:00	B3 Spanish	Lunch Duty	B4 Span.	7:30 am - 2:07 p.m.

*May need to sub for 15 min until Michelle arrives.

Daniel's Schedule

	Per 1-8:15	Per. 2 – 9:35	Per. 3 – 11:00	Lunch-12:17	Per.4– 12:50	Per.5-2:10	Min. Start/End
M	B2 Geo.		Planning			B6 Alg	8:05 am – 3:37 pm
T	B1 Geo.H	Span. Aide	Span. Aide	Supervision	Planning	B6 Alg	8:05 am – 3:37 pm
W	B1 Geo.H	B2 Geo.	Span. Aide	Lunch	Planning	B6 Alg	8:05 am – 3:37 pm
Th	B1 Geo.H	B2 Geo.	Span. Aide	Lunch	B6 Alg	PD	8:05 am – 3:37 pm
	Adv-8:15	Per 1 – 9:05	Per. 2 –10:20	Per.3–11:30	Lunch-12:37	Per.4-1:10	Per.5-2:20
F	Advisory	B1 Geo. H	B2 Geo.				

Joseph's Schedule

	Per 1-8:15	Per. 2 – 9:35	Per. 3–11:00	Lunch-12:17	Per.4– 12:50	Per.5-2:10	Minimum Start/End
M	B2Bio.10H	Planning	B4 Mar. Bio	Lunch	B5 Bio 9	Aide-Alg	8:05 am – 3:37 pm
T	B1 Bio. 10	Planning	B4 Mar. Bio	Lunch	B5 Bio 9	Aide-Alg	8:05 am – 3:37 pm
W	B1 Bio. 10	B2 Bio.10H	B4 Mar. Bio	Lunch	B5 Bio 9	Aide-Alg	8:05 am – 3:37 pm
Th	B1 Bio. 10	B2 Bio.10H	Planning	Lunch	Aide-Alg	PD	8:05 am – 3:37 pm
	Adv-8:15	Per 1 – 9:05	Per. 2 –10:20	Per.3–11:30	Lunch-12:37	Per.4-1:10	Per.5-2:20
F	Advisory	B1 Bio. 10	B2 Bio.10H	Planning	Supervision	B4MarBio	B5 Bio 9

John's Schedule

	Per 1-8:15	Per. 2 – 9:35	Per. 3– 11:00	Lunch-12:17	Per.4– 12:50	Per.5-2:10	Minimum Start/End
M		B3 Eng.9	B4 Eng.9H	Supervision	B5 Eng10H	B6 Eng10	9:25 am – 4:40 pm
T		B3 Eng.9	B4 Eng.9H	Lunch	B5 Eng10H	B6 Eng10	9:25 am – 4:40 pm
W		Planning	B4 Eng.9H	Lunch	B5 Eng10H	B6 Eng10	9:25 am – 4:40 pm
Th		Planning	B3 Eng.9	Lunch	B6 Eng10	PD	9:25 am – 3:37 pm
	Adv-8:15	Per 1 – 9:05	Per. 2 –10:20	Per.3–11:30	Lunch-12:37	Per.4-1:10	Per.5-2:20
F	Advisory	Planning	Planning	B3 Eng.9	Lunch	B4 Eng9H	B5 Eng.10H

Dustin's Schedule

	Per 1-8:15	Per. 2 – 9:35	Per. 3– 11:00	Lunch-12:17	Per.4–12:50	Per.5-2:10	Minimum Start/End
M	Planning	Aide –Span	Aide – Span	Lunch	B5 Hum.	B6 Hum.H	8:05 am – 3:37 pm
T	B1 Hum.9	Writing	Planning	Lunch	B5 Hum.	B6 Hum.H	8:05 am – 3:37 pm
W	B1 Hum9*	Writing	Planning	Lunch	B5 Hum.	B6 Hum.H	7:30 am – 3:37 pm
Th	B1 Hum.9	Writing	Writing	Lunch	B6 Hum.H	PD	8:05 am – 3:37 pm
	Adv-8:15	Per 1 – 9:05	Per. 2 –10:20	Per.3–11:30	Lunch-12:37	Per.4-1:10	Per.5-2:20
F	Advisory	B1 Hum.9	Writing	Aide-Span	Lunch	Aide-Span	B5 Hum.

*Early morning supervision at 7:30 a.m.

Michelle's Schedule

	Per 1-8:15	Per. 2 – 9:35	Per. 3– 11:00	Lunch-12:17	Per.4–12:50	Per.5-2:10	Start/End
M	B2 PE	Operation	Operation	Lunch	Operation	Oper'n	8:05 am – 4:00 pm
T	Ex. Plan	Operation	Operation	Supervision	Operation	Oper'n	7:30 am – 3:30 pm
W	Ex. Plan	B2 PE	Operation	Lunch	Operation	Oper'n	8:30 am – 4:30 pm
Th	Ex. Plan	B2 PE	Operation	Lunch	Operation	Oper'n	8:30 am – 4:00 pm
	Adv-8:15	Per 1 – 9:05	Per. 2 –10:20	Per.3–11:30	Lunch-12:37	Per.4-1:10	Per.5-2:20
F	F. Office	Operation	B2 PE	Operation	Lunch	Oper'n	Planning; end 4:00

Julie's Schedule

	Per 1-8:15	Per. 2 – 9:35	Per. 3– 11:00	Lunch-12:17	Per.4– 12:50	Per.5-2:10	Minimum Start/End
M							IEP mtgs as needed
T	Geometry	RSP	RSP	Lunch	Biology	Philosophy	8:05 am – 3:37 pm
W	Biology	Geometry	RSP	Lunch	Philosophy	English	8:05 am – 3:37 pm
Th	Philosophy	Biology	RSP	Supervision	English	PD	8:05 am – 3:37 pm
F							

All teachers are teaching in their areas of major or minor preparation. Some also function as teacher-aides in the classroom. There is one intern in the counseling department; and we have 0.3 FTE independent contractor who acts as a SPED paraprofessional. As of October 1, the student-teacher ratio is 7:1 (59:8). The following are the Academy faculty and staff:

First Name	Last Name	Title
Cynthia	Angheven	Office Staff
Daniel	Avery	Math Teacher
Crystal	Day	Outreach Coordinator
Michelle	Earley	Operations Officer/PE Teacher
Joseph	Garcia	Science Teacher
Julie	Lee	Special Education Coordinator
James	McGrath	Founding Director

Armine	Movsisyan	Director of Instruction; History Teacher
Grace	Nieto	Spanish Teacher
John	Rodriguez	English Teacher
Summer	Sanders	Director of Student Services
Dustin	Schmidt	Humanities Teacher

Achievements:

- **Clear policies and guidelines have been established, reviewed, and shared with all employees**
- **Weekly meetings are held to share updates, highlights, and upcoming needs/plans**
- **Every individual knows and performs their roles and responsibilities**

Areas for Improvement:

- ***Continue to build staff morale and spirit***

A5. Resources Criterion:

The human, material, physical, and financial resources are sufficient and utilized effectively and appropriately in accordance with the legal intent of the program(s) and LCAP to support students in accomplishing the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

The resources are allocated to meet the school's vision, mission, and student achievement of the critical learner needs, the schoolwide learner outcomes, student needs identified in the LCAP, the academic standards, and the college- and career-readiness standards. The Founding Director in coordination with Business Operations collect data on the requests and needs reported by faculty and staff then create a budget to present to the Board for review. Approximately ten times a year, the estimated versus actual spending is compared and assessed at the Board level. Budgets are adjusted as needed based on updated enrollment data and unexpected needs. Decisions are made based on best practice, prioritizes students needs, and is in line with LCAP.

The leadership and staff are all involved in the resource allocation decisions based on their needs and requests. In the spring, administrators and staff discuss the next year's needs and priorities. Student and parents are surveyed (as well as discussed with parent and student leadership) to incorporate their perspectives.

The process for the allocation of resources has made a positive impact on student learning because it ensures that students needs are met for the 21st century. Our process also ensures that from student to board member (to authorizing agency), all stakeholders are involved in the process in their appropriate capacities.

Budgeting Procedures and Internal Controls

Our resource allocation with respect to budgets, business practices, internal controls, and accounting practices, is compliant with our Memorandum of Understanding with LACOE, as well as with state and federal requirements, and best practices. Our LACOE MOU requires that we submit monthly cash flows, copies of bank statements, General Ledger, Revenue and Expenditure Summary, Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Fund Balance, Year-to-date Budget to Actual Statement, and notes to financial statement. The Academy must also submit for review a preliminary budget on or before July 1, First Interim Report by December 15, Second Interim Report by March 15, Unaudited Actuals Report by September 15. Pursuant to state law, our MOU also requires an annual independent financial audit to be submitted to the State Controller's Office, LACOE, and CDE from an auditor from the list approved by the SCO and approved by LACOE. The Academy has met all these requirements.

Moreover, our Board periodically reviews -- and LACOE has also comprehensively reviewed on two occasions -- our fiscal policies, which includes requirements for internal controls. Our fiscal policies adhere to best practices in K-12 public education. The Academy diligently follows these policies.

Facilities and Classroom Supplies

The Academy's facilities are adequate to meet the school's vision, mission, schoolwide learner outcomes, and educational program; and are safe, functional, and well-maintained. The school facilities are clean and maintained in good repair with daily spot check and Site Inspection Lists with over 98% of items in compliance or good standing. Moreover, 100% of parents report campus is clean; 92% of parents report campus is conducive to learning.

The policies and procedures for acquiring and maintaining adequate instructional materials and equipment are as follows. The Academy undergoes a bi-annual review of classroom materials and supplies. All additional materials and supplies are ordered through the Operations Officer and authorized by the Founding Director. Teachers also can make specific requests to our Operations Officer, which are then approved by the Founding Director before purchasing. 100% of faculty strongly agree that they had access to necessary materials and supplies.

Human Capital

The Academy was highly successful in recruiting its founding faculty. The Academy received 201 applications for its founding faculty positions. Six candidates were identified as the #1 candidate after final round interviews, and all six accepted offers, resulting in a 2% acceptance rate of our teacher applicants. 89% of students last year rated their teachers as "highly effective" and 92% of parents rated them as "high quality."

The founding teachers were a mix of experienced teachers and first-/second- year teachers. The Academy found that the experienced teachers had a more difficult time adjusting to the fluid nature of a new charter school, and, consequently, by the end of the year the three most experienced teachers had all resigned. We recruited highly talented teachers for new positions and to replace the resigning teachers. Recent parent surveys reveal that 97% of parents rate our teachers this year as "high quality".

We have a new Director of Curriculum and Instruction in Dr. Armine Movsisyan. She earned her Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree in Educational Leadership with a focus in Teacher Education from the University of Southern California and received leadership training from Harvard Graduate School of Education. She was a principal for three years at an independent high school prior to joining our team.

Professional Development Calendar

In addition to hiring great talent, the Academy dedicates a lot of resources toward training teachers and staff. All new teachers, relevant staff, and administrators attend at least nine days of initial professional development over the summer, four of which target developing an understanding of the intellectual virtues model run by experts in the field. Returning staff attend one week professional development over the summer. In addition, there are weekly PDs, and at least 3 full-day PD days throughout the year.

The professional development is anchored in our mission of creating a challenging, supportive, safe, and thoughtful learning community that equips our students to think creatively, critically, and with a capacity of self-growth. The following is a table of sample topics from our PDs for the 2016-17 school year:

Professional Development Opportunities				
Date	Title/Topic	Presenter/s	Attendees	Rationale
8/1-8/5	Intellectual Virtue Theory and Practice	Jason Baehr; Steve Porter; Jacquie Bryant	Teachers, Directors, Staff	Directly supports school mission
8/22	Mission/Vision	James McGrath	Teachers, Directors, Staff	Directly supports school mission
8/22	Cultural Norms	Summer Sanders	Teachers, Directors; Staff	How to handle conflicts is an inherent part of any professional environment
8/22	Syllabus Policies	Mickie Tubbs	Teachers, Directors	Structuring a learning environment through grading, homework, assessments, lesson planning
8/22	Classroom Management	Summer Sanders	Teachers, Directors	Required for effective learning
8/23	Curriculum Mapping	Mickie Tubbs	Teachers, Directors	Essential questions, scope/sequencing part of long-term planning
8/23	Student Supports	Mickie Tubbs	Teachers, Directors	Supports required for EL and SPED populations

8/24	Advisory	Summer Sanders	Teachers, Directors	Social/emotional learning supports intellectual virtues
8/24	Mandated Reporter	Summer Sanders	Teachers, Directors	Required by law
8/25	Student Orientation	Summer Sanders	Teachers, Directors; Staff	Starting off school on the right foot allows for learning to begin right away
8/25	Health/Safety	James McGrath	Teachers, Directors; Staff	Promoting safe environment
9/1	Student Supports	Summer Sanders; Mickie Tubbs	Teachers, Directors	How to support SPED students through advisory
9/8	Positive Experiences	Summer Sanders	Teachers, Directors	Social emotional support through positive communications and instruction
9/15 9/22	Empowering Language	Summer Sanders	Teachers, Directors	Directing, redirecting, reminding, and reflecting language supports classroom management
9/23	Developmental Designs Behavior Management	Summer Sanders	Teachers, Directors	How we are developing social contracts since they have been shown to increase student behavior
9/29	Signature Features of Academy's Practice	James McGrath	Teachers, Directors	21 st Century instructional practices are at the heart of essential techniques of intellectual virtue development
10/6	Classroom Engagement	James McGrath	Teachers, Directors	Engaging classrooms bolsters student motivation
10/13	Classroom Management	Summer Sanders	Teachers, Directors	Utilizing specific techniques to management classrooms
10/20	Theory to Practice	James McGrath	Teachers, Directors	Intellectual virtues training directly supports our mission
10/27	Making Thinking Visible	Summer Sanders; Mickie Tubbs	Teachers, Directors	Classroom environment is a cultural level for learning

11/3	Classroom Culture	Summer Sanders	Teachers, Directors	Drilling down on specific 1-2-3 tool of classroom management to help frame Tier 1 interventions
11/17 11/30	Safety and Environment	James McGrath	Teachers, Directors	Physical confrontation training and lock downs
11/18	Gradebooks	Mickie Tubbs	Teachers, Directors	Understanding the role of grading/assessments in learning
11/30	Visible Thinking in Action	Mickie Tubbs	Teachers, Directors	Achieving student deeper understanding of content and tapping into greater motivational well
12/8	Modeling	Summer Sanders	Teachers, Directors	Modeling intellectual virtues is a cultural lever for supporting learning IV
12/15	Peer Observations	Mickie Tubbs	Teachers, Directors	Collaborative work environments supports co-worker development
12/22	Academic Intervention Plans	Mickie Tubbs	Teachers, Directors	Academic supports for failing students
1/6	Growth Mindset	James McGrath	Teachers, Directors	Growth mindset provides understanding into how IV develops, how professionals develop, and how a school grows
1/6	Instructional Planning	Mickie Tubbs	Teachers, Directors	How warm-ups and lesson planning supports student learning
1/12	Teaching for Understanding	James McGrath	Teachers, Directors	In depth learning is composed of 8 elements
1/19	Finals	Mickie Tubbs	Teachers, Directors	The role of final assessments in the learning cycle
1/26	Growth Mindset and Grades	James McGrath	Teachers, Directors	Exploring if student growth should be a factor in grades
2/2	Technology Corner	Outside Vendor	Teachers, Directors	How to use smartboards for in classroom learning
2/9	Supporting Scholars	Mickie Tubbs	Teachers, Directors	How can we support student learning for those in danger of failing

2/16 2/23	Special Education	Mickie Tubbs	Teachers, Directors	Providing support/accommodations for SPED students to increase learning
3/2 3/9	Data Review	Mickie Tubbs	Teachers, Directors	Using data to modify instruction and assessment
3/13	Thinking Routines	Ron Ritchhart; guest expert	Teachers, Directors	All day PD on developing best practices on thinking routines for deeper understanding
3/16 3/23 4/6	Integrated ELD; EL Passports	Mickie Tubbs	Teachers, Directors	How to support through instruction ELs for academic success
4/25	Thinking Routines Observations	Ron Ritchhart; guest expert	Teachers, Directors	Classroom observations by IV expert on how to engage best urban high school youth
5/4	Passports	Derrick Allums; Julie Lee	Teachers, Directors	How passports can be used as guides to support IEP and EL students
5/11 5/18	Report Card Comments	Mickie Tubbs; Summer Sanders	Teachers, Directors	How personalized intellectual virtues-centric comments on report cards reinforce student learning
6/1	Finals	Julie Lee; Adam Rodriguez	Teachers, Directors	How effective parent communications can help prepare students for finals

Achievements:

- **All professionals on campus are committed to continuous reflection and growth**
- **Faculty and staff look forward to weekly professional development sessions**
- **School leadership strongly supports professional development with time, personnel and fiscal resources based upon a written professional development plan**
- **There is an safe, healthy, and nurturing environment that is in line with the school's mission and SLOs**

Areas for Improvement:

- **Provide more transparency on how resources are allocated and its process**

A6. Resources Criterion *[Charter Schools Only]:*

The governing authority and the school leadership execute responsible resource planning for the future. The school has developed policies, procedures, and internal controls for managing the financial operations that meet state laws, generally accepted practices, and ethical standards. The school is fiscally solvent and uses sound and ethical accounting practices (budgeting/monitoring, internal controls, audits, fiscal health, and reporting).

Planning for the Future

During the development of the Academy's charter, the vision, mission, and schoolwide learner outcomes from the Academy's affiliated middle school (IVA) were reviewed for the appropriateness of serving high school aged students as discussed in Section A1. Once the Academy's doors were opened and we learned better who were the students we served, we discussed as a faculty and organization (Chairman, administrators from both schools, and founder Jason Baehr) whether our mission, vision, and SLOs may need to adopt. Out of these meetings came: (1) a recognition to the extent social/emotional needs must be addressed, and (2) how certain "starter" virtues should be emphasized, at least in the first two years. Also, just like IVA, the Academy will develop a strategic plan after year 3 or 4 of its existence.

Each staff and teacher are asked which areas they wish to advise for future planning purposes: facilities, hiring, or budgeting and staffing. For example, a couple of teachers and administrators conduct the final interviews for open teacher positions (while students are asked their opinion on the sample lesson); students, parents, board members, founders, teachers, and administrators are involved in administrator hiring. Final authority on hiring decisions rests with the Founding Director and authorized by the Board.

The Academy has robust procedures to develop its budget to ensure transparency. Each year, parent and student surveys are given (and focus groups organized) to help prioritize needs in order to develop the budget. Teachers, staff, and administrators are consulted on the following year needs. All of these results are synthesized with enrollment projections into a budget by May with EdTec for review by the Board by June. Ongoing monitoring of budget to actuals is performed by the Board on a monthly basis. A comprehensive financial package is submitted monthly to LACOE for further review.

Fiscal Policies and Internal Controls

The Academy has effective processes for developing, reviewing, revising, and adopting written fiscal policies and internal controls. The fiscal policies and internal controls were originally adopted in 2013 for the needs of IVA after its development in conjunction with its back office service provider EdTec, insurance carrier Charterworks, administrators, and Finance Committee

of the Board. The Academy, the Academy's back-office service provider at the time (ExEd), and LACOE reviewed these policies and controls as part of the charter authorization process and made some changes. A year into operations, the Academy reviewed these policies and controls, and made further changes in full consultation with LACOE, EdTec, IVA administrators, and the Board. Our auditor also reviewed our fiscal policies and procedures for internal controls.

The School currently contracts with a business services provider (EdTec) with expertise in supporting charter schools for back-office support with, among other things, effectively maintaining best of practice fiscal policies and internal controls.

The Academy has effective accountability measures that ensures personnel follows the fiscal policies and procedures. All purchasing requests are made through our Operations Officer after authorization is provided by the Founding Director. Both the Operations Officer and Founding Director regularly review fiscal policies and procedures. Check and credit card registries are then created by EdTec and reviewed monthly by the Board, and made available to LACOE. Bank reconciliations and registries are also monthly reviewed by the Founding Director. Our auditor also reviews whether internal controls have been followed.

All contracts are executed, checks are written, and release of institutional funds are authorized by the Founding Director. Payroll data is developed by our Operations Officer, organized by our third party payroll provider (PP), and then sent from PP to the Founding Director for authorization. All deposits are put together by our Operations Officer, and deposited into our bank by the Founding Director. On a monthly basis, bank reconciliations are performed by EdTec monthly, reviewed by the Founding Director, and sent to LACOE for review. The policies and procedures for credit card use were developed by ExEd and Founding Director, and reviewed by the Board and LACOE. A year into operations, the Academy reviewed these credit card policies and procedures, and made further changes in full consultation with LACOE, EdTec, IVA administrators, and the Board. Our auditor reviewed our internal controls and issued no findings.

The Academy has clearly defined regular accounting and external audit procedures that meet, and go beyond, generally accepted principles of accounting and audits. These procedures are thoroughly defined in our fiscal policies and charter; periodically reviewed by appropriate Academy staff, Board, and LAOCE; and reviewed by our auditor (with no findings in our last audit report).

Annual Audit

The Academy's Board of Directors is responsible for contracting and overseeing the annual independent audit. Our audit policies require that the audit is conducted in compliance with the

California Education Code 47605(b)(5)(I), in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the school, and pursuant to applicable sections of the “standards and procedures for audits of California K–12 local educational agencies.” To the extent required under applicable federal laws for audits of the major federal programs, the audit scope will expand to be in compliance with the requirements described in the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-133, audits of states, local governments, and nonprofit organizations.

Our auditor is certified by the State of California and approved by the State Controller on its published list as an educational audit provider. The audit verifies the accuracy of the school’s financial statements, attendance and enrollment accounting practices, internal controls, and other key compliance matters. The audit is then filed by the auditor with LACOE and the state as required by our MOU and state law.

We timely filed our first audit report. It was a clean report with no findings.

Compensation and Reserves

The Academy prioritizes teacher compensation to reflect the best research on the value of effective teachers. Initial five-year budgets had teacher compensation above local averages. However, at current enrollment at this early stage of growth, compensation across the board is currently about 10%-15% below local district and charter school averages. On the flip side, our student-to-faculty ratio is lower than local district and charter school averages. This in part reflects the needs of a growing school, and in part due to lack of economies of scale that will be captured in later years.

The Board regularly has reviewed 3-year budgets that are reflective of the most updated enrollment projections to ensure the reasonable accumulation of reserves. Our last finalized 3-year budget from last summer demonstrates that the Academy will meet its MOU requirement of 3% reserve.

The Academy regularly analyzes its fiscal positions to ensure the adequacy of reserve funds for both short- and long-term needs. Budgets are reviewed against actuals by Edtec, Founding Director, and Operations Officer on a monthly basis. Currently, we show reserves that approximate 10% of expenditures. These reviews are then used to periodically develop 3-year budgets to ensure adequate reserves and cash flow needs in the future. As of the drafting of this report, we are in the middle of a 3-year budget development that will help inform the 2018-19 budget development. This 3-year budget will be used to analyze reserve and cash flow adequacy. It will be presented in April to the Board along with updated enrollment projections for the incoming class.

All current budgets adequately fund the academic program generally, and SLOs outcomes and critical learner needs of students specifically. In fact, we still have budget room to cut what we consider non-essential after-school programming and staffing, and marketing. However, our reserves are projected to be just above the minimum required by LACOE and we are still in the growth phase. This is expected to cause some cash flow issues in Year 4 of operations if we are unable to secure grant monies or a line of credit.

Beyond our robust fiscal practices described above regarding fiscal policy development, accounting practices, budget development, and internal controls procedures and policies in which parents, students, staff and administrators, Board, LACOE, EdTec, and our auditors are all involved, there are no separate efforts to inform “the public and appropriate governmental authorities” about our financial needs (unless we are misunderstanding the prompt). We are open to how this would be a good and appropriate use of our limited resources.

Marketing

The Academy has a very robust marketing/outreach program that helps to support the implementation of the developmental program. We have hired a full-time outreach coordinator who is supported directly by the Director of Student Services, as well as various other staff, parents, and students who help with outreach efforts. Our marketing consists of several parts: online (website and social media), community events and partnerships, direct middle school outreach, internal marketing, mass marketing, and tending to the applicant to enrollment (to showing up the first day) pipeline.

In terms of our online presence, we have a content-rich, updated, and well-designed website; Facebook ad exposure is 16k; and we have 882 impressions on Instagram. We attended 50 community events last year. We made 70 middle school visits to meet parents and students after school. We sent out a mailer to 3,000 addresses; published a couple of ads, and send a bi-weekly newsletter to over 1,000 contacts. We doubt there exists a more extensive outreach program given our size anywhere in the state.

Achievements:

- ***Faculty and staff are equipped with all resources to meet all students needs***
- ***School leadership and staff are well-qualified for their assigned responsibilities as evidenced by their college degrees, specific credentials, experience in the field of education, and parent/student survey data***
- ***Clean first audit report***
- ***Reserves that met LACOE requirements***

Areas for Improvement:

- ***Provide more transparency to staff on how resources are allocated and its process***
- ***Written policies that define operational practices, decision-making processes, define responsibilities and relationships of leadership and staff***
- ***Marketing efforts lead to sustainable recruitment of new students***
- ***With reserves that just met requirements during our growth phase, protect against cash flow issues that may crop up in year 4 of operations***

Category B

Standards-based Student Learning: Curriculum

B1. Rigorous and Relevant Standards-based Curriculum Criterion:

All students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent standards-based curriculum that supports the achievement of the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes. Through standards-based learning (what is taught and how it is taught), these are accomplished.

The school's educational philosophy and framework for instructional design is based on a rigorous, college- and career- preparatory standards-aligned curriculum across core subjects. The written and taught curriculum results in student achievement of the academic and college/career standards for each subject area, course and program, and where applicable, expectations within the courses that meet the UC "a-g" requirements are articulated into the four year program. All Academy courses will be CCSS-aligned, utilizing both the state content standards and frameworks as guides for curriculum and assessments. All students will be expected to complete the UC/CSU A-G requirements as a condition of graduation. As students learn *how* to learn and develop the skills and attributes of the intellectual virtues, all students are capable of success in our rigorous program.

All curriculum and instruction will exceed the academic content standards of the CA CCSS, Next Generation Science Standards, and CA standards in History/Social Science. The curriculum will include courses and hours that meet the University of California/California State University A-G requirements. All students will be required to successfully complete 200 credits for graduation. Teachers will utilize Understanding by Design to conduct backwards planning of curriculum and the formation of essential questions to guide the core curriculum. Elective courses for credit and access to community college classes via concurrent enrollment will provide students a comprehensive and authentic college preparatory learning experience.

A comprehensive intervention program, based on the Rtl model, will help close the achievement gap and support students who are struggling to achieve. As a small school anticipated to have fewer than 500 students at capacity, the array of courses will not be broad, yet the depth and complexity of learning is designed to provide a rigorous college- and career-preparatory curriculum in which each and every student can complete A-G requirements and enroll in the post-secondary school, technical program, or career of his/her choice.

Learning occurs at the point of a committed engagement and challenge. We differentiate for our learners by checking to see that they are being engaged and challenged individually in their learning. Sometimes this means that they are offered different assignments than their peers but often this means that we ask the students to care about the learning of others in the room as well. To develop understanding we accumulate more questions and deeper questions. We

should have more questions and more curiosity at the end of our units than at the beginning. Challenges mixed with curiosity develop grit, which can also be described as tenacity or willingness to continue in the face of a struggle.

Educating for the 21st Century

Being an educated person in the 21st century requires, at a minimum, being *informed*, that is, it requires having a broad base of knowledge as defined in the state standards across several traditional subject areas, including math, science, history/social science, English Language Arts, foreign language, technology, physical education, and visual and performing arts. We believe that cultivating an educated person in the 21st century requires not only a rich standards-based, college- and career-preparatory curriculum, but also opportunities to develop the intellectual virtues that are essential for 21st century success. In an increasingly “flat” world, being an educated person today also involves being knowledgeable about other cultures and societies, the ways in which the decisions and ways of living of the members of one culture or society can affect those of another, and how the actions of all of humanity affect the well-being of the planet that we inhabit.

We believe that a 21st century education is *humanizing*. To have this effect, the person being educated must critically and creatively engage great questions, ideas, and texts. History’s best minds have explored a range of fascinating questions, including: How does nature work? What is the structure of the physical world? Where did we come from? How should we live? How should governments operate? How should society be structured? What is the nature of love? Of justice? One unique feature of the human species is its capacity for actively reflecting on, and critically and creatively analyzing, these questions and on the ways these questions have been answered by generations of scientists, poets, historians, philosophers, and other thinkers across different times, traditions, and cultures. Such activity has a *dignifying* and *ennobling* effect. While not unique to a 21st century education, it is an indispensable component.

An educated person in the 21st century *believes* that knowledge and learning are valuable and worth pursuing. S/he also *desires* to cultivate, inform, and expand her mind. S/he regularly experiences what educational philosopher Israel Scheffler calls “rational passions” or “cognitive emotions,” such as a “love of truth,” a felt “concern for accuracy” and the “joy of verification and surprise” (1991: Ch. 1). This love of learning is the fire that ignites and sustains all of her other intellectual activities.

A 21st century education also fosters *collaboration*. To be collaborative, a person must be able to work as a team, develop interpersonal skills, respect and appreciate other perspectives, and, importantly, communicate effectively. In fact, research reveals that the most crucial success factor for project management in one’s professions is effective communications by all stakeholders (PMI 2013). It is perhaps a truism that effective communication starts with a clear

thought process (id). Less well understood is that the framework of our reasoning process is analogous to how our communications are structured (Paul 2012). Accordingly, the 21st century educated person must not only learn communication skills for their own sake, but also as part of becoming *humanized* or *dignified* as discussed above.

Finally, an educated person in the 21st century knows *how to think*. This is an especially important ability in today's world:

First, with the proliferation of information technology, we are bombarded with information around the clock, some of which is good and accurate, some of which is not. Therefore, to be a truly educated person today, one must be intellectually *discriminating*. One must diligently identify a reliable source from an unreliable source, to ask relevant and incisive questions, and to demand and evaluate reasons and evidence.

Second, today's economy is technologically driven and rapidly changing. As others have noted (Kalantzis and Cope 2005: 33; Smith 2012), many of the vocationally oriented skills and knowledge learned by middle and high school students today will be obsolete by the time these students enter the workforce. Accordingly, it is crucial that today's schools provide students with a range of "*soft skills*," which include "the ability to use knowledge, facts, and data to effectively solve workplace problems" (US Dept. of Labor, www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/softskills.htm). These are among the skills and abilities of an excellent and critical thinker.

Third, today as much as ever, the health and security of democracy across the globe requires, as Martha Nussbaum has said, that all citizens possess the ability to "think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person's suffering and achievements" (2010: 2; 93). It falls to the enterprise of education to ensure that such a capacity is widely fostered in schools nationally and abroad.

Collaboration

Collaborative strategies are used by administrators and teachers to examine curriculum design and student work in order to refine lessons, units, and/or courses or programs. Professional development sessions are used on an ongoing basis for this purpose. In addition, weekly teacher meetings are held with the Director of Instruction to brainstorm ideas, reflect on the lessons and refine the lesson plans for the future. The administrators and teachers use various collaborative strategies to examine curriculum design and student work in order to refine lessons, units and/or courses. During weekly faculty and teacher meetings, teachers meet either with their colleagues or directors to collaborate, share ideas, conduct interdisciplinary lesson planning and align grading scales in academic and elective courses. Due to the nature of the open office system, frequent meetings take place in the 'Cove' to collaborate and discuss

current curricular issues and assess teacher procedures in order to maximize the effectiveness of lessons and assessments. Informal inter-discipline collaboration also takes place in order to better understand each student's strengths and learning styles. In addition, various teachers participate in interdisciplinary collaboration to improve vertical educational strategies focused on project based learning and intellectual virtues to create habits of thinking and make thinking visible. Student information is also shared among all teachers via the student information system (Illuminate), helping to provide consistent and effective feedback (and feedforward) as well as track trends in behavior and develop strategies for success.

Curricular Review, Revision, and Evaluation

The Academy implements a regular cycle of curriculum review and evaluation that leads to further curriculum development and revision for the purpose of improving learning and teaching. The current and planned processes for curricular review and evaluation processes are based on a coaching model. During the beginning of the year professional development, teachers created the Curriculum Map for each course. During the school year, teachers weekly update the curriculum development document as they reflect on their practice and SLOs. Each week teachers meet with the Director of Curriculum and provide updates. Teachers plan their content and curriculum by creating curriculum maps and benchmark assessments. These help guide their lesson planning and student achievement expectations. Class content is guided by curriculum that is adjusted based on the learning needs of each class.

The evaluation process includes two formal evaluation during the school year (one each semester) and frequent informal coaching observations. Teachers have pre-observations conferences where they discuss their goals and lesson plans. After the observation, there will be a post observation conference.

In the future, teachers will continue to enhance the curriculum through practice during professional development days. Teachers will collaborate within and across subject areas to develop pacing guides and update the Curriculum Map and Development Chart annually for all subject areas based on state standards and SLOs. The development of the Advanced Placement courses will be based on AP College Board Curriculum requirements. At the end of each academic year, teachers will review the textbooks and pacing guides of each course offered in their discipline and make necessary adjustments to their pacing guides utilizing strategies presented at the professional developments. All major activities and projects will be re-evaluated and, if need be, modified to better suit the SLOs and the standards-based curriculum.

Graduation Requirements

The Academy students are expected to carry a minimum of six regular courses during each semester for the first year. The requirement for the the Academy diploma is the equivalent of 27 full year courses, which must include the 15 courses meeting the minimum requirements for entry to the University of California system. Beyond the UC-prescribed courses, the Academy students must take a full year of Introduction to Logic, Introduction to Ethics, Introduction to Philosophy, and Physical Education. Participation in an advisory class is also required. Additional Academy credits may be earned through any combination of full year courses, arts, and electives.

Academy v. A-G Requirements

	Subject	Academy Course Requirements	UC/CSU Course Requirements
A	History/Social Science	3 years (30 credits)	2 years
B	English Language Arts	4 years (40 credits)	4 years
C	Mathematics	3 years (30 credits)	3 years (4 recommended)
D	Laboratory Science	2 years (20 credits)	2 years (3 recommended)
E	World Language	2 years (20 credits)	2 years (3 recommended)
F	Visual and Performing Arts	1 year (10 credits)	1 year
G	College Preparatory Electives	1 years (10 credits)	1 year
	Physical Education	2 years (20 credits)	
	Cornerstone Humanities Courses	3 years (30 credits)	
	Electives	3 years (30 credits)	
		TOTAL Credits: <i>minimum 240</i>	

Academy Advanced Studies Program

AASP Honors Courses	AASP Advanced Placement Courses
Honors English (9 & 10) Honors Geometry (10) Honors Biology (10) Honors Introduction to Philosophy (10) Honors Spanish II H (11) Honors Trig/Pre-Calculus (11)	AP English Literature (11 & 12) AP American History (11) AP Macro Econ (12) AP Calculus AB (12) AP Chemistry (11) AP Spanish (12)

Policies: Rigorous, Relevant, and Coherent Curriculum

Academy teachers collaborate together to think through and agree on common grading and student interaction processes in class. In all of our thinking and decision-making, we ask questions, seek understanding, and practice the habits of good thinking. If you have questions about these practices, please ask and we will bring back the questions or suggestions as a team to make a school-wide decision. We deliberately align all of our thinking and decision-making with the mission, vision, and values of the school.

Grading is a form of assessment that we carefully approach to make sure that as we make decisions about *what* we grade. We don't want to grade 'work' but a demonstration of understanding. We want our students to learn, not just work or ensure compliance. As teachers at the Academy, we want to use assessments primarily to understand the learner and give students an opportunity for thinking rather than only grade and evaluate.

Home learning is also a formative assessment, an assessment that teachers use to form the next steps of the learning plan. The point of assignments that we send home is to prepare for the class, to extend thinking, to consider new ideas, and also to practice. In the case of excused absence, students are responsible for asking for missed assignments and can talk to the teacher to find out what they missed. *Rationale:* Opportunities for learning at home allow students the chance to practice, read independently, process learning in a different environment, and to extend their learning that might have begun in class. The assignment or learning sent home should extend learning. At the Academy, "being smart" comes in 9 versions – we want our students to practice the virtues at home. If they are growing in curiosity, or growing in intellectual thoroughness, for example, then they are achieving our goal of home learning.

The Academy uses letter grades. Our assignments are rigorous, based on the standards, and graded. We are thoughtful about the assignments we give as opportunities to learn and assess

learning. At the Academy, our instructional decisions are continuously made in response to our mission and vision.

Articulation

The school provides a comprehensive and sequential documented curriculum that is articulated within and across grade levels for the improvement of programs, learning, and teaching. Vertical articulation takes place within each discipline and with feeder schools where weaknesses and strengths that have been identified in incoming freshmen are discussed. During these meetings, various topics are addressed such as the need to better hone the writing and critical thinking skills of junior high school students in order to prepare them for high school. The data that we receive for each student provides an understanding of their prior knowledge and what we need to do to meet our students where they are and serve them to improve their skills and be prepared for the transition from high school to college.

Teachers differentiate instruction, address learning styles/intelligences, and utilize various strategies such as the universal design for learning to ensure that all students are involved in the learning process. All teachers are developing a comprehensive and sequential documented curriculum that is articulated within and across grade levels. In addition, teachers use current educational research to inform instruction of intellectual virtues, making any needed modification to the curriculum upon completion of each school year.

Possible Future Course Offerings

Graduation Requirements	English	Social Studies	Mathematics	Science	World Languages	Arts	Physical Health	Humanities & Advisory
	4 years	3 years	3 years	2 years	2 years	1 year	2 years	3 years
9th	English 9 OR Honors English 9		Sequence I Algebra I Sequence II Algebra II	Conceptual Physics		Arts I	Physical Education	Intro to Logic: Engaging the Intellectual Virtues
10th	English 10 OR Honors English 10	World History OR AP World History	Sequence I Algebra II Sequence II Geometry (CP/Honors)	Biology OR AP Biology	World Language I (Spanish*)		Physical Education	Intro to Philosophy
11th	English 11 OR AP English Literature	U.S. History OR AP U.S. History	Sequence I Geometry Sequence II Trig/Pre Calculus (CP/Honors)	Chemistry OR AP Chemistry	World Language II (Spanish*)	Arts II*		Intro to Ethics
12th	English 12 OR AP English Literature	U.S. Gov't OR AP Gov't AND Economics OR AP Macro-Econ	Sequence I TRIG/Pre Calculus* Sequence II AP Calculus*	Physics* OR AP Physics*	World Language III (Spanish*)	Arts III*		

Achievements:

- *The school offers a college-preparatory curriculum that is aligned with the school mission and SLOs, as well as the CCSS, NGSS, and other pertinent standards*
- *The school employs a wide variety of instructional strategies to ensure that all students are engaged in the learning process.*
- *The necessary supports and resources have been put into place to develop the curriculum*
- *The teachers have the opportunity to work one-on-one with their instructional coach to develop the curriculum map*
- *Faculty/staff work collaboratively on planning and refining curriculum and instruction to ensure that students are achieving the SLOs*
- *The school offers the faculty/staff ongoing professional development and training in instruction strategies and pedagogy.*
- *Professional development sessions are utilized to provide clarifications and ensure consistency in development and practice*
- *All teachers provide a positive, nurturing environment with individualized attention that enhances learning*
- *All teachers follow a standards-based curriculum and use standards to develop the curriculum map*
- *Commitment to the intellectual virtues, and growth mindset*

Areas for Improvement:

- *Continue to focus on standards*
- *Continue to foster growth in SLOs*
- *Continue to enhance existing resources available through the school for instructional purposes both in digital and print form*
- *Provide more instructional tools and lesson planning techniques to support teachers in classroom management and ensure all students' needs are met*

B2. Access to Curriculum Criterion:

All students have equal access to the school's entire program and are provided assistance with a personal learning plan to meet the requirements of graduation and are prepared for the pursuit of their academic, personal, and career goals. The following measures will be put in place to support this goal:

- 100% of students will be enrolled in an UC "a-g" required course curriculum.
- 100% of students will be instructed using state adopted ELA and Math academic and performance standards.
- Students will demonstrate a mastery of grade-level standards and designated outcome goals in the areas of English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and physical education. The 2016-17 school year results will serve as a baseline.
- 100% of students will have access to highly[effective learning material.
- The Academy will provide appropriate and comprehensive interventions, based on Response to Intervention model, to support student who are struggling to achieve.
- English Learners will progress at least one grade level on the CELDT/ELPAC each year. EL reclassification rate benchmarks will be established at the end of 2016-17.
- All students will meet or exceed surrounding comparable schools EL proficiency and reclassification rates.
- All students will have access to Physical Education classes.
- The Academy will ensure all grades have exposure to a wide variety of enrichment opportunities.
- The Academy will close the 'achievement gap' with standardized test score data demonstrating a pattern of raised achievement over time for traditionally underserved minority students.
- The Academy will hire and retain a college counselor to provide guidance and support for all students.

Rigorous, Relevant, and Coherent Curriculum

All students have access to a rigorous, relevant, and coherent curriculum. There are clear policies regarding course completion, certification, credits, grades, home learning, engagement, etc. that guide student growth through the program. The Academy has clear policies regarding course completion and credits, course articulation, grades and other policies relative to student progression throughout the academic program. These policies are delineated in the student handbook, the course syllabus, is available on the school website and in various other publications available to the stakeholders. The instructional practices facilitate access and success for all students.

Career Exploration, Preparation for Postsecondary Education

The Counselor (currently, our Director of Student Services) is available primarily to provide personal support and college guidance, while questions concerning class schedules, grades, credits and similar topics should first be discussed with Advisors.

Through the Advisory class and other venues, the Counselor provides all students assistance with college planning, including:

- appropriate high school course selection
- college admissions test preparation & registration
- the college admissions process
- financial aid information & application assistance
- college information nights for students and parents
- campus visits from college admissions & financial aid professionals

Students whose future goals include alternative education programs, career exploration, and travel plans may meet with the Counselor to develop a post-high school plan.

Parents, students, and staff collaborate in developing, monitoring and changing a student's personal learning plan. The Counselor meets regularly with each student and family throughout their high school experience. Students will be given the opportunity to imagine their future selves, mapping out possible opportunities in college, career, and beyond through development of a Personal Learning Plan.

Advisory Program for College, Career, and Life

The Academy teachers value their students as individuals and build trust through careful listening, consistent expectations, respectful feedback, and a fundamental commitment to fairness. They are engaged with students and accessible outside of class not only as advisors, but also as activity sponsors, mentors in the academic commons, and fellow members of the school community.

Each student has a faculty advisor who serves as an advocate and a primary point of contact between home and school. The advisor receives reports from other teachers and monitors each advisees progress, with periodic calls home and frequent informal conversations with the student. Advisors meet once a week with their advisees as a group for general discussions, college readiness, and social skills development. The advisor is also the convener of parent/teacher/student conferences. The advisor will initiate contact with parents early in the school year. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's advisor if any questions or problems arise. Our advising system asks students to consider what matters to them, what skills, talents and values they're developing, and how they would like to live and work in the future. Just as our curriculum and faculty prepare Academy students for both the joys and challenges

of collegiate study, our life planning and advisory program offers complementary advisement that enhances important student personal, emotional, and professional growth.

Advisors work with students at all grade levels to help them explore career paths through research, reflection, informational interviewing and experiences (jobs, volunteering, and internships). This exploration leads students to become self-directed and authentic candidates for post-secondary education, and puts college choice into a larger context. Advisors and our College Counselor also works extensively with parents throughout the process to support our student's efforts, and bring expertise about the world of work to our advisement activities.

The big question students will examine: *How will their high school and post-Academy education support pursuit of a life that includes meaningful work, significant relationships, and commitment to community issues, local and global?*

The Academy's weekly Advisory program provides a safe and small classroom environment to develop intellectual and social character, as well as developing a roadmap to college and career. Teachers nurture students' character development through conversation, relationship-building, goal-setting, structured reflection, team counseling exercises, and personal encouragement.

Students develop supportive relationships with adults they trust, as well as with their peers. These relationships are foundational to fostering intellectual courage, in anticipation of increasing academic rigor and evolving social networks. Advisory is also focused on exploration, goal setting, and developing personal plans for college or career.

Our program integrates academic support, team building, multicultural programs, community involvement, activities that incorporate higher-level thinking, and communication skills. The small advisory group setting creates opportunities for students to practice open-mindedness, be curious, and explore their own identities. In the process, students make connections to others and cultivate a sense of self—academically, emotionally, and socially.

Community Support

Student Led Conferences: Connectedness and caring are key elements of the Academy education. Teachers regularly communicate with parents about their student's progress by phone or email. At any time, a parent or teacher may request a face-to-face conference, and the Academy strongly supports student presence at those meetings. A conference may be scheduled by contacting the teacher directly, or the student's advisor may help to facilitate a meeting particularly when it involves several teachers. The purpose of all conferences is to find ways to connect with their student and their family, personalize their learning, and support the

student in doing his or her best work. Each semester, the Academy implements student-led conferences in order to:

- Encourage students to take responsibility and ownership for their learning by involving them in the goal-setting and assessment process.
- Engage families in richer, more transparent conversations about student progress.

Community Meetings: The Academy prioritizes relationships as essential to a supportive learning environment. In addition to building a positive classroom culture, we set aside time, twice a month to celebrate the learning that is happening at the Academy, as a community. Students and teachers take turns highlighting the thinking and learning taking place in their classrooms and embrace the authentic platform to develop their presentation skills. Students develop their voice and are given the opportunity to listen to the diverse perspectives of their classmates. We also take time to celebrate individual community members who have demonstrated at least one of the virtues through our Virtue Ceremony.

Though the Academy will not have a graduating class till 2020, the research based practices the school utilizes are proven to be effective strategies and programs to facilitate transitions to college, career, and other postsecondary options.

The school ensures that all students have access to a rigorous and relevant curriculum that includes real world applications that will prepare them for success in college, career, and life with its intellectual virtues model observed through the SLOs, signature practices, and instructional design.

Instructional Design

Education researchers have identified a range of methods and strategies that, when properly employed, are effective at promoting intellectual and other types of development. We recognize that students learn in a variety of different ways and at different rates. Therefore, Academy teachers will make skillful use of differentiated and personalized instruction to develop and deliver curriculum that is accessible to heterogeneous groups of students. Some of the strategies that will be used include:

- Creating a “Culture of Thinking”: Teachers and students alike will be free and encouraged to wonder, ask questions, and pursue their curiosities. Moreover, students respond to and further develop what others in the group have said, requiring knowledge that is accurate and relevant to the issue under discussion. This will give students daily opportunities to “practice” intellectual virtues as they master standards-based core content.

- **Project-Based Learning:** Teachers will use well-designed, well-supported, and carefully monitored projects across different core subject areas. Students will be engaged by being provided authentic, real-world application that promote a deeper grasp and thoughtful application of important knowledge.
- **Socratic Dialogue:** A spontaneous but structured “Q&A” approach to instruction is an effective way of getting students to introspect and discover knowledge for themselves.
- **Focused Direct Instruction:** This focused approach to direct instruction is an important and powerful means of conveying and connecting students with important knowledge. It builds their foundation for curiosity and wonder across all disciplines. This practice also hones the note-taking, call, and response skills of students as they develop as thinkers and learners.

Academic, College- and Career-Readiness Support

Various personalized student support programs have been put into place to ensure all students are meeting the graduation requirements. The school counselor advises on academic affairs with Personal Learning Plans, coordinates visits to future universities, assists with college applications, and coordinate preparation for standardized testing. Teachers are available each day for additional support outside of class time. Study Hall and Credit Recovery are also offered on campus. Appropriate accommodations and modifications are made for SPED and various instructional methods are utilized to support ELs.

Teachers, with support of the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, will develop an education plan for each student at risk of retention, including highlighted, time-tracked areas of need in reading, writing, and mathematics. The education plan will be reviewed quarterly. This continuum will be used to identify appropriate learning goals for the student. The continuums will continue to be used and updated to monitor student progress during the retention year and thereafter. The student’s classroom teachers (in the current year) will collaborate with prior year teachers to create an educational plan with specific goals for the retained student, including but not limited to additional support from instructional aides, tutors, and after-school homework assistance. In cases where academic progress remains limited, a Student Success Team will convene a meeting to determine whether assessment for special education services is appropriate.

Our school services students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, based on an inclusion model. As a small school, we will be able to meet the unique needs of all students on a differentiated instruction. Additionally, we weave the ELD standards throughout our program and provide additional support for ELs. The Academy intends to function as a local education agency (LEA) and is a part of the Los Angeles County Charter Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) for purposes of providing special education and related services pursuant to Education Code §47641(b). In other words, the Academy will oversee all Special Education providers and

services ensuring that all of its students have access to a free and appropriate public education. English learners will be supported during regular instruction through teacher-implemented strategies. Additional opportunities to support ELs are available during the educational intervention period.

Achievements:

- ***Supports have been put into place and practice to meet all students needs***

Areas for Improvement:

- ***Build upon instructional techniques and practices to support classroom management***
- ***Formalize our EL program***

Category C

Standards-based Student Learning: Instruction

C1. Challenging and Relevant Learning Experiences Criterion:

To achieve the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes, all students are involved in challenging learning experiences.

Accessibility of all Students to Curriculum

All students have access to a challenging, relevant, and coherent curriculum. The Academy is committed to cultivating the potential of each student in an inclusive and collaborative setting which promotes intellectual character growth in a thoughtful, supportive, safe, and challenging environment. This well-articulated, research-backed, comprehensive academic program, will enable students to pursue college and career objectives in the near future due to its signature practices, focus on virtues and instructional design. Teachers and administration collaborate to ensure that the curriculum is accessibility to all learners and achieves the SLOs.

Students have multiple opportunities to better understand the standards and the level of performance expected to demonstrate their knowledge. Several access points are made to ensure the SLOs are articulated and practiced:

- Student Summer Orientation
- Weekly Advisories
- Student Led Conferences
- Monthly Community Meetings
- Monthly Virtue Awards
- Exhibition of Learning
- Thinking Routines Used Daily in Class
- Making Thinking Visible
- PLP sessions
- University Visits for College and Career Readiness
- Student Leadership
- Team Building Activities
- Mentoring

Challenging and Varied Instructional Strategies

Instructional staff members differentiate instruction in order to address student differences in learning modalities, cognitive ability and life experiences that impact student learning. Teachers address various learning styles and student needs through the instructional approaches used.

The teachers strengthen student understanding and achievement of the learning outcomes through the use of a variety of instructional strategies that are selected on the basis of the learning purpose(s) and effectively engage students at a high level of learning. The instructional strategies and signature practices selected for specific learning experiences strengthen student understanding and achievement of the learning outcomes. The following practices scaffold from simple to more complex concepts with the use of benchmarks, leading to complex projects and culminating tasks that address a variety of learning outcomes:

- SLOs (Master Virtues): fosters meaningful growth in the personal qualities of a good thinker or learner:
 - Creativity Virtues: curiosity, open-mindedness, courage
 - Critical Thinking Virtues: attentiveness, carefulness, thoroughness
 - Virtues of Self Growth: autonomy, humility, tenacity
- Strategies:
 - Creating a “Culture of Thinking”
 - Project-Based Learning
 - Socratic Dialogue
 - Focused Direct Instruction
 - Accountable Talk
 - Making Thinking Visible
 - Thinking Routines
 - Metacognition
 - Critical Thinking Pedagogy
 - Agenda of Understanding
 - Modeling
 - Using Language of Thinking
 - Positive Reinforcement
 - Ongoing Self-reflection and Self-assessment
 - Incorporating Virtue Concepts into Standards and Assessments
- Signature Practices:
 - Personal Approach
 - Rigorous
 - Reflective
 - Actively Engaged
 - Relational

Multimedia and Technology

Teachers systematically integrate technology within the school so that all students develop a wide range of technological skills. The Academy uses technology professional development programs, including Project Based Learning with the use of technology to help teachers prepare Exhibitions of Learning. Administrators and teachers work closely to create a variety of activities and assessment that integrate various technology programs. Teachers have access to the latest technology in the classroom to optimize critical media literacy.

T#INK: Technology #Innovative Knowledge is the Academy's technology program that teaches students how to use technology resources responsibly, creatively, and with effective communication. Our goal is offer the resources, textbooks, and materials for student learning that can adapt and change with the best practices, and ever changing nature of the world's information to inspire individuals to their fullest potential. Increased access to electronic information and communication brings new levels of opportunity, as well as responsibility, to the school community. The power of these systems lies in their ease of use and ability to connect instantly to a growing host of global resources.

Part of the \$375,000 PCSGP start-up grant we received was allocated to providing our students with the technology to develop 21st Century skills; therefore our classrooms are supported by a fast wireless internet. Students can access a "nearly" paperless education through **Google Classroom**, which will foster critical thinking, collaboration, and mental agility. Parents will be able to access their student's classroom information in real time, and utilize student Google Chromebooks to stay involved in daily activities.

We are a one-to-one technology school. Every student receives their own **Google Chrome book** for the academic year, connecting all of our students to the world's resources and information. This allows for a significant amount of our curricular materials to be cloud-based supported with appropriate textbooks. This widespread access allows students to check out the Academy devices, use their home or mobile devices, and/or utilize the public access points to continue their learning. The Academy will be using a small group instructional approach. The realm of digital curriculum is constantly expanding, and there will likely be very different options available by the time we are a fully populated 9-12 grade high school.

Achievements:

- ***Supports have been put into place and practice to meet all students needs***
- ***Integration of technology***

Areas for Improvement:

- ***Build upon instructional techniques and practices to support classroom management***
- ***Create access to a robust resource library***

C2. Student Engagement Criterion:

All teachers use a variety of strategies and resources, including technology and experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom that actively engage students, emphasize higher order thinking skills, and help them succeed at high levels for college, career, and life.

Teachers keep current with the instructional content taught and research-based instructional methodology, including the use of multimedia and other technology. During the weekly and quarterly professional development sessions teachers explore the new technology and share their experiences and student outcomes. The teachers and administration survey both free and budgeted technologies available. Online resources have been made available to support the instructional programs including textbooks, google classroom, and various educational softwares that support instruction and learning. As needed, the school will integrate formal training for programs that require it. Teachers often assign multimedia projects, peer review sessions, provide digital feedback, and model the use of new and old technologies.

Teachers use coaching strategies to facilitate learning for all students depending on the situation and need. Teachers are models both in and outside of the classroom. In this role, the coach models continuous learning. As a coach, the teacher uses reflection on and practice of, is aware of the needs of the learner, understands the learning process, provides opportunities for proactive support, and leads others as they journey toward changing their knowledge, attitudes, skills, aspirations, and behaviors.

Students demonstrate that they can apply acquired knowledge at higher cognitive levels to extend learning opportunities. This is apparent in their thinking routines, growth in the engagement rubric, making thinking visible, projects, internal assessments, and the exhibition of learning.

Students demonstrate higher level thinking and problem solving skills in a variety of instructional settings. These learning opportunities take place in and outside of the classroom as student struggle and grow with the challenges and obstacles they face. The students self reported in the surveys how they had grown over the year. They use restorative practices to address age related developmental obstacles. They take leadership during information sessions and exhibitions of learning.

In addition to internal and external assessments, the school uses a variety of materials and resources and this is demonstrated through student work and their engagement in learning:

- An engagement rubric was developed to create an active dialogue within the community of what it means to be engaged and track the development of the SLOs. Directors, students and teachers have self-assessed their engagement during the first semester and will conduct one more at the end of the year to evaluate growth.
- Student, parent, and teacher survey results are utilized to hear the voices of all stakeholders and determine areas of growth and areas of celebration.
- The exhibition of learning provides an opportunity for the community to engage with the student learning through making thinking visible, simulations, socratic seminars, and performances representing the learning that took place each semester.
- Weekly advisors provides opportunities to have courageous conversations and determine how to best serve student needs by empowering the student voice.
- Monthly community meetings allow for the celebration of students growth in the SLOs.

Career Preparation Activities

Students have access to and are engaged in career preparation activities. The student to counselor ratio is currently 59:1 (versus ~900:1 state average). Students receive highly personalized attention that will help guide their academic, co-curricular, and career pursuits. This ultimately translates to individualized letters of recommendation that will allow our students to stand out and opportunities to explore all career possibilities.

- Proactive approach to engage with students and their families: the Counselor will meet regularly with each student and family throughout their high school experience. Students will be given the opportunity to imagine their future selves, mapping out possible opportunities in college, career, and beyond through development of a Personal Learning Plan.
- Career exploration events/fairs, college visits and visits from admissions representatives bring the college experience to students: there are thousands of options upon graduation, and our Counselor will help navigate students through these options while providing them with the information they need to make an informed college and career decision.
- College workshops educate our community on the college experience, financial aid, and scholarships: we will provide frequent counselor led workshops keeping students and families educated of the college process and timelines through Parent Academy nights.
- Internship opportunities: the school will partner with various organizations and agencies to provide student exposure to their career interest. These real life experiences will provide an authentic understanding of students' career interests.

Achievements:

- ***Supports have been put into place and practice to meet all students needs***
- ***Faculty/Staff have care and compassion for all of their student***
- ***Establishment of a culture of thinking***
- ***Creation of a living rubric to measure engagement***
- ***Commitment the SLOs through instructional planning, hands-on learning, project-based learning***
- ***Use of technology***

Areas for Improvement:

- ***Build upon instructional techniques and practices to support classroom management***

Category D
Standards-based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability

D1. Using Assessment to Analyze Monitoring and Report Student Progress Criterion

The school uses a professionally acceptable assessment process to collect, disaggregate, analyze, and report student performance data to the school staff, students, parents and other stakeholders.

Assessment Process

The school's assessment processes includes data from external and internal sources. Externally, the school utilizes the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) map growth to support every student. This system allows the school to monitor individual students' proficiency levels as they enter the Academy and growth through the first few years at the Academy. The insights gathered help students learn, teachers teach, and leaders lead. These assessment solutions, customized professional learning, and industry-leading research help ensure consistency and growth as times and standards change. The results allow us to be better facilitators and understand the needs of each student in regards to their knowledge and skills. In the future, more external grade level standardized tests will be administered including ELPAC, SNAP, SBAC, PSAT, SAT, CAASPP, etc.

The Academy will also be administering other standardized tests, to ensure a complete and holistic assessment of each child's academic and social capacities. Students with IEPs or English Learners who meet the applicable criteria will be given alternative assessments. The Academy will be using a computer based diagnostic platform that assesses performance in reading, writing, and math. Additionally, students can be evaluated on socio-emotional factors, which informs teachers so that they may adapt learning experiences.

The school's curriculum is geared towards preparing students for colleges and universities. The school will require all ninth graders to participate in the NWEA in grades nine and ten, the PSAT in grades ten and eleven and provides information and assistance for students in grades eleven and twelve to take the SAT, SAT Subject Tests, and/ or ACT to assist students in meeting college admission requirements.

In the 2016-17 school year, the Academy administered all state assessments required pursuant to Section 60602.5. In addition to all external state assessments required pursuant to Section 60602.5, internal formative and summative assessments are administered in all core courses throughout the academic year; which are further described in section D2.

Communication to Stakeholders

Student progress is shared with all stakeholders in the following processes, platforms, and mediums:

- Progress Reports (every 5 weeks)
- Report Cards
- Student Led Conferences: share testing results and analysis
- Board Meeting Reports
- Emails of Survey Results to Families
- Newsletter Including General Survey Results
- PLP meetings
- Support List Follow-up
- Study Hall
- Advisories
- Community Meetings
- Information Sessions
- Parents Alliance
- Engagement Rubric
- State of the School
- End of the Year Report (Board and LACOE)
- SARC
- LCAP

Determination of Student Performance

Students' grades, their growth, and performance levels are determined through an equitable and reflective process. Guidelines and rubrics are utilized for all major assessments to clarify expectation and communicate performance in order to ensure students have an active role in tracking their growth. Teachers have weekly coaching sessions and feedback in best practices. Assessment performance is gathered and shared during professional developments to find trends and inform future lesson plans and instruction to meet student needs.

Student Work and Other Assessments

Student work and other assessments demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful learners of the curriculum. These skills include reading and auditory comprehension, synthesis and analysis of information, mathematical computation, and oral and written communication.

Student Feedback/Feedforward

Student feedback is an important part of monitoring student progress over time based on the SLOs and the curricular objectives. At the middle and end of the school year, students have an opportunity to evaluate and rate all of their classes using an anonymous survey. Results from these evaluations are used to make modifications to reading lists, rubrics, teacher goals, and class projects.

Teacher Monitoring

Teachers monitor student progress over time and use student feedback/feedforward as appropriate to determine whether course objectives have been met. Student academic progress is monitored by teachers both formally, through assessments, and informally, through observation and student feedback. Progress is also monitored during individual or group tutoring sessions and one-on-one evaluation mentoring. Students also complete individual reflections on some assignments of their progress towards achieving the class and school learning goals. These reflections are used by the teachers to inform classroom instruction and assessment.

Teachers meet weekly or as needed with the Director of Instruction to share outcomes, brainstorm strategies, and celebrate progress. Weekly professional development sessions are provided to share their experiences, develop strategies for interventions, share ideas, build/nurture team morale, and celebrate achievements.

Achievements:

- ***Supports have been put into place and practice to meet all students needs***
- ***Teachers have autonomy to implement their own creativity into the daily teaching/learning process***

Areas for Improvement:

- ***Build upon assessment techniques and practices to support classroom management***
- ***Continue to focus on assessing and evaluating ways to improve standardized test scores***

D2. Using Assessment to Monitor and Modify Learning in the Classroom Criterion

Teachers employ a variety of appropriate formative and summative assessment strategies to evaluate student learning. Students and teachers use these findings to modify the learning/teaching practices to improve student learning.

Appropriate Assessment Strategies

In the beginning of the year, teachers conduct pre-assessments, then administrate mid-year and end of the year assessments to track student progress and growth. During the course of the school year, teachers use appropriate assessment strategies to measure student progress toward acquiring understanding of a specific body of knowledge or skills. Teachers use a great variety of assessment tools including oral presentations, quizzes and tests, essay portfolios, socratic seminars, thinking routines, making thinking visible, class and home learning, individual and group projects, student reflections, and engagement rubric to check for student learning and understanding over time.

Assessments correlate with the skills and knowledge being taught during instructional time. Outcomes are reviewed on a regular weekly basis by individual teachers and as a whole to ensure that they accurately measure student learning and monitor student acquisition of the programmatic goals and academic standards.

Correlation

Alignment of classroom assessments with the state standards and school learner outcomes is done in conjunction with the course curriculum map and curriculum development guide. The curriculum map and development guide, along with the assessments will be reviewed annually to ensure they reflect the desired learning outcomes. New assessments will be created with an eye to ensuring they are aligned with the curriculum and SLOs. Each assessment also measures specific objectives and skills, and correlates to the specific instructional approach being used. Daily learning objectives inspire the instructional strategies used by each teacher. These strategies include but are not limited to, student questioning, direct instruction through multimedia lecturettes and presentations, labs, cooperative learning activities, socratic seminars, debates, fishbowls, thinking routines, making thinking visible and character role play.

How Assessment Data Drives/Informs Future Instruction

Internal and external assessment data (formative and summative) is collected/analyzed and used to make changes and decisions about curriculum, rubrics, instruction, professional development activities, and resource allocation. Teachers modify and revise the curriculum and instruction as a result of student assessment, both collectively and individually during the school

year. The curriculum map and development guide will be assessed and updated annually.

Standardized test scores and survey results are analyzed and discussed during faculty meetings to look for areas of strength and growth. Individual course assessments are reviewed on a regular basis by the teacher and the faculty as a whole to ensure that they accurately measure student learning and progress towards the SLOs. Curriculum and instruction are modified as needed based on the results of the student assessments or changing student needs. Results of student assessments, including student portfolios, are also used to measure the level of the school's success in achieving the SLOs and in making class placements for the upcoming school year. Based on the areas of need, resources are allocated to purchase materials need to improve instruction or fund staff attendance at professional development sessions.

Student Achievement

Academy students have made major developmental strides in relation to academic standards, college and career readiness and SLOs. The incoming class consisted of over 40% SPED, compared to about 10% local, state, and national averages. We know of no other similarly situated school. As 8th graders, their median GPA was 1.91 and they had 15% absenteeism (4% in LBUSD is the average). Of the starting academic proficiencies, 50% of the incoming freshman came in with 6th grade or lower proficiency in mathematics and 31% came in with 5th grade or lower proficiency in reading. 34% of the incoming freshman stated that they felt “so sad or hopeless for two weeks or more that [they] stopped doing some usual activities.” Despite these deficits, standardized test scores and parent/student surveys demonstrate tremendous student growth:

Academic Growth (standardized tests)

- Students met their NWEA year-over-year growth targets 90% of the time on all three tests covered: Math, Reading, and Language
- NWEA semester over semester results reveal Academy students grew in all subjects faster than the national average
- California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) demonstrated Academy students grew 12.6 percentiles semester over semester

SLOs (Master Virtues)

- *Growth Mindset*. “Adults at this campus believe I am capable of academic growth.”
 - 74% agree at LBUSD (but with “academic success” instead of “academic growth”)
 - 95% students agree at the Academy (no change from first semester)

- *Autonomy/Tenacity.* “I work harder, and challenge myself more, on my class work than I did in 8th grade.”
 - 78% students agree at Academy second semester (95% first semester)
 - 92% parents agree second semester
 - Further supported by absenteeism rate dropping from last year 16% v. this year at 5.5%
- *Engagement (Courage/Curiosity).* “Students speak up and share their ideas about class work in this class.”
 - Research confirms that this is a high value question
 - At the public secondary level, the 25th percentile class has 40% student agreement (v. 68% at 75th percentile)
 - 92% students agree at the Academy
 - 96% parents agree instruction promotes engagement and deep thinking
- *Carefulness/Thoroughness.* “My teachers want me to carefully and thoroughly explain my answers – why I think what I think.”
 - 95% students agree at Academy
- *Curiosity/Open-Mindedness.* “Class content encourages me to be curious about, and seek to understand, other ideas.”
 - 89% students agree at Academy
- *Humility/Metacognition.* “My classes allow me the opportunity to reflect upon my mistakes.”
 - 78% students agree at the Academy
- *All Virtues.* “My teachers push me to become a better thinker.”
 - 95% students agree at the Academy
 - 92% parents state their child “has grown” to be a “better thinker”

Engaging in Dialogue with Students

Teachers, administrators, parents, and students regularly reflect on their learning experiences to ensure they are relevant, assessable, and understood in preparing them for college, career, and life. These practices are embedded within the curriculum and are articulated by the SLOs (Master Virtues). An engagement rubric was developed to determine the degree to which teachers and students are engaged in regards to their creativity, critical thinking, and self-growth. The starting virtue for each virtue category are assessed: curiosity (creativity), intellectual attentiveness (critical thinking), and intellectual autonomy (self-growth). Both teachers and students conduct self self assessments, teachers assess the students, teachers are assessed by administrators, and peer-assessments are conducted as well.

Weekly advisory sessions and monthly community meetings are utilized to discuss various topics for college, career and life. Teachers utilize class surveys to collect data in regards to

their course as a way to check for relevance, accessibility, and understanding. These formal and informal assessments and observations allow for effective student feedback/feedforward. Student progress is monitored both individually and in group sessions through one-on-one or group evaluations, conferences, and mentoring. Students have opportunities to complete reflections through benchmarks, on multi-tiered projects/assignments. The reflections show progress towards achieving in the class and SLOs with rubrics and guideline checklists as tools for reflection. These reflections are then used by teachers to inform classroom instruction and assessment.

Achievements:

- ***Practices have been put into place to support teachers and students based on the principles of the SLOs***
- ***The school employs a wide variety of assessments to ensure that all students are engaged in the learning process***
- ***Engagement rubric was created and is being utilized to measure growth in SLOs***

Areas for Improvement:

- ***Build upon assessment techniques and practices to support classroom management***

D3. Using Assessment to Monitor and Modify the Program Schoolwide Criterion:

The school, with the support of the district and community, has an assessment and monitoring system to determine student progress toward achievement of the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes. The system drives the school's program to continually improve and to allocate resources to effectively meet student needs.

Assessment data is collected, analyzed and used to make changes and decisions about curriculum, instruction, professional development workshops, and resource allocation. Teachers modify and revise the curriculum and instruction as a result of student assessment, both collectively and individually. The school has adopted a student information system called *Illuminate* that is utilized by all stakeholders for monitoring progress and accountability. This system functions as a grading system, is an electronic communication tool, and conveys attendance and academic performance information to parents.

Parents can access their children's information anytime from the internet. The school and teachers have made a commitment to the parents to update their grade books with a minimum of one grade each week for each one of their classes for every student. As part of the commitment, teachers will ensure that the grades inputted weekly represent various types of assessments to make certain that parents have a clear idea of the progress their student is making. Additionally, teachers utilize google classroom to maximize learning opportunities, track submission, provide efficient feedback/feedforward and access.

Standards-based Curriculum-Embedded & Standardized Assessments

The entire school examines and analyzes standards-based curriculum-embedded as well as other standardized assessments. Textbooks are aligned with the CCSS and teachers received professional development on curriculum development alongside weekly follow-up meetings. CCSS, NGSS, and 2012 ELD Standards are being used for curriculum development. AP Central/College Board Curriculum will be used for AP curriculum and curriculum mapping/pacing/development. Advanced placement supplemental courses will be offered as needed. The Spanish department uses the standards for foreign language and CCSS to develop the curriculum and the textbook supports these standards. One elective course is now offered, and perhaps six more will be added in the years to come. All core courses and electives will be submitted to the University of California system, and placed on the A-G course list. A student-centered master schedule has been developed to improve student tracking. Rubrics are used in all subject areas, and students are introduced to CCSS rubrics for projects or research papers, essays etc.

Nationally based standardized tests (PSAT, SAT Reasoning, SAT Subject, and ACT) are used. In addition, the NWEA is used to track skills. Additional standardized tests will be administered to test specific subjects or needs (SBAC, CAASPP, ELPAC, etc.).

Schoolwide Assessment Results

The school uses schoolwide assessment results to make changes in the school program, professional development activities and resource allocations. Standardized test scores are analyzed and discussed during weekly professional development sessions to look for areas of strength and growth. Individual course assessments are reviewed on a regular basis by the teacher and the faculty as a whole to ensure that they accurately measure student learning and progress towards the SLOs.

Curriculum and instruction are modified as needed based on the results of the student assessments or changing student needs. Results of student assessments, including student portfolios, are also used to measure the level of the school's success in achieving the SLOs and in making class placements for the upcoming school year. Based on the areas of need, resources are allocated to purchase materials need to improve instruction or fund staff attendance at professional development sessions.

Assessing Curriculum and Instruction

Processes are put into place to assess its curriculum and instruction in relation to its evaluation processes. During the first semester, teachers have weekly meetings and observation by the Director of Instruction as a coaching model for teacher evaluation. This system provides for the opportunity for teachers to brainstorm with the instructional leader, learn from their practice and strengthen the lesson plans for future instruction.

During the second semester, the teacher meetings will take place every other week, the number of weekly in class support will increase by the Director of Instruction, and peer-observations will be put in place. In this way teachers will regularly engage in the process of growth and development. Thus, the evaluation process is designed to take a proactive, supportive, and coaching approach to inspire actively improve curriculum and instruction in a supportive, thoughtful and challenging environment. There is a firm belief that if we support and care for our educators, they will support and care for our students, which creates a positive learning climate and school culture.

Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholder involvement in assessing and monitoring student progress has a major impact on growth. All stakeholders play a role in the student support process through teacher individual meetings, student-led conferences, and the utilization of the online grade report system. In

addition, celebratory events are held to showcase student progress, such as the exhibition of learning where students make their thinking visible to board members, administrators, teachers, staff, parents and the wider community.

Security Systems

The school has installed security systems that maintain the integrity of the assessment process. All major locations on campus have been secured by cameras just in case they are needed. There has been no violation of our academic dishonesty policy during assessment. Moreover, the student to teacher ratio is small, and teachers are able to circulate in the classroom actively. This proximity allows teachers to have clear vision of what is taking place in the classroom.

Achievements:

- ***Teachers used assessments to inform/modify future practice***

Areas for Improvement:

- ***Build upon instructional techniques and practices to support classroom management***
- ***Continue to develop assessments to support all learners needs***

Category E
School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

E1. Parental and Community Engagement Criterion:

The school leadership employs a wide range of strategies to encourage family, business, industry, and community involvement, especially with the learning/teaching process.

Parent-Teacher Organization

The parent-teacher organization at the Academy is referred to as the Parent's Alliance. Its activities connect to the school along with the larger community. This newly formed group attends regular meetings to discuss the schools achievements and growth areas. They have played an instrumental role in preparing for school events including dances, exhibitions of learning, thanksgiving feasts and last day of school breakfast buffets.

Professional Preparation and Resources

The school plans to partner with community liaisons to use community resources to support students through activities such as career days, business partnerships, speakers, and professional services. Thus far the school has freshman and sophomore grade levels. This school year the Director of Student Services planned a sophomore field trip to the local career exploration fair. The school plans to continue to offer such opportunities and begin to host them on the campus as well, as the junior and senior classes form.

The school is working on partnering with local government agencies and liaisons for internships, libraries for resource access, and museums for field trips. There are plans to utilize access to the local police force and fire department to provide visits that highlight healthy and personal safety through presentations and simulations.

Parents, Community, and SLOs

The school educates and involves parents and community members in understanding the school's purpose, the schoolwide learner outcomes, and academic standards in the following forums:

- Weekly E-Newsletters
- Emails
- Text Message Reminders to Current Families
- Parent Alliance Meetings

- Information Sessions
- Parent Academies
- Student-led Conferences
- Teacher-Parent Meetings
- Press Releases
- Social Media Accounts: facebook and instagram
- School Website
- Thanksgiving Feast
- Exhibition of learning
- Making Thinking Visible

Through the aforementioned mediums and forums, parents are involved with the school and are active partners in the learning process for their students. Parents have access to all school personnel regarding all concerns through email, illuminate (the school information system), and individual requested appointments. The school regularly communicates to parents and other stakeholders through open houses, information sessions, workshops, the school website, emails, e-newsletters, conferences and the online grade book. 97% of parents state that their feedback and collaboration are valued, and another 97% state that they are satisfied with the Academy's communications.

Achievements:

- ***The school utilizes various platforms to communicate with its stakeholders and be transparent***

Areas for Improvement:

- ***Investigate the possibility of students participating more in activities and learning opportunities/events outside of the immediate school community***

E2. School Environment Criterion:

The school ensures that it is a) a safe, clean, and orderly place that nurtures learning and b) has a culture that is characterized by trust, professionalism, and high expectations for all students with a focus on continuous school improvement.

The initial study reflects a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment that is in line with the school's articulated mission/vision and SLOs. The school demonstrates caring, compassion, intellectual virtues, and high expectations for students in an environment that honors individuality and diversity. To ensure a safe and healthy climate, the school first and foremost promotes caring amongst the faculty and staff in their dealings with students inside and outside of the classroom. Monthly community meetings, weekly advisory sessions, grade level assemblies, counseling programs, electives, messages from the directors, virtue celebrations, restorative practices, and school-wide celebrations help to nurture student character and a safe and secure learning environment. By establishing these traditions and practices the school has created and supported an atmosphere of trust, caring, concern, and high expectations for students in an environment that honors individual differences through school programs, procedures, and policies.

The school fosters student self efficacy through high expectations for each student and recognition of successes. To convey high expectations for each student, the school requires:

- Completion of daily in-class and home learning
- Engagement in class
- Technology based research
- Presentations in front of class individually or as a group
- Exhibition of Learning where students Make Thinking/Learning Visible
- Participation in debates, socratic seminars, performances, and creative expression through music and art
- Contribution to special school events and programs
- Assistance by means of academic counseling with the Director of Student Services and/or the principal when results show a need in a specific area.

Mutual respect and effective communication among and between staff, students, and parents is evident. Members of the school faculty and staff maintain effective communication with each other, the students, and parents through the following:

- Teachers keep a record of phone calls and email communication with parents
- Teachers are encouraged to keep a record of students who attend office hours
- Teachers make weekly positive communication efforts via email or phone
- Teachers attend faculty meetings

- Teachers have boxes in the Cove which are used to share relevant letters, treats, information, notes of encouragement, and gratitude.
- Teachers and staff take part in and lead professional development on a weekly basis
- Annual virtue academies are held with all stakeholders to share and discuss their reflections of the SLOs and develop action plans for the following school year
- Newsletters are updated on a weekly basis to keep the community updated on school events, achievements and progress
- All stakeholders that part in conferences facilitated by the student: student-led
- Teachers facilitate open forums
- Faculty, staff, parents, and teachers provide opportunities for parent engagement through parent academies in the evening
- Information sessions are held to keep the community updated about the school progress, along with shadow days and rolling school tours

The purpose of maintaining effective communication throughout the school is to enhance learning and to develop a healthy self esteem for students, a caring environment, and positive school climate.

There is a level of support and encouragement for teachers to use innovative approaches to enhance student learning. Staff members are encouraged to enhance their knowledge and skills in the field of education by attending outside workshops, inservices, seminars, and classes. These endeavors may be for personal/professional growth and the goal of advancement in their field, which adds a sense of confidence, assertiveness, and empowerment in the instructional process.

The school has policies, codes, and procedures and resources (e.g., facilities) that ensure a safe, healthy, nurturing environment. The safety of the school is ensured by:

- Front office staff who oversees visitors, employees, and students
- A clearly articulate supervision schedule for all times of the day and days of the week
- Drug and alcohol awareness advisories, guidance lessons by the Director of Student Services, and guest speakers
- Before-school, After-school and break-time supervision by teachers
- Surveillance cameras that monitor all areas of the school

Immediate action is taken in cases of student misconduct as spelled out in the Student Handbook. In order to enhance the school's nurturing climate, the Director of Support Services is available for all students to meet their personal, social, and emotional needs.

The Academy's Cultural Strength

The following indicators demonstrate the strength of the Academy's culture:

- Absenteeism was cut from 15% in 8th grade to to 5.5% at the Academy
- 90% of students based on an anonymous student survey feel the Academy is a supportive and inviting place to learn
- Parent surveys reveal that 100% of parents feel their child has grown in their ability to interact with others
- 100% of parents agree that their child is safe at the Academy
- 97% of parents "strongly agree" that they feel welcomed at the Academy

Achievements:

- ***All students experience a thoughtful, supportive, and challenging school environment***
- ***Professionals on campus care about the students and their colleagues well being***

Areas for Improvement:

- ***Investigate the possibility of a daily janitorial service***

E3. Personal and Academic Student Support Criterion:

All students receive appropriate academic support and intervention to help ensure school, college, and career success. Students with special talents and/or needs have access to a system of personal support services, activities, and opportunities at the school. These are enhanced by business, industry, and the community

Serving All Students Needs

Academic and personal support services, including referral services, to support students in such areas as physical and mental health and career, academic, and personal counseling have been established in order to serve all students needs.

The Academy views classroom management in phases to ultimately support student growth and development. Phase 1 focuses on two overarching best practices. These are infused and reinforced within the classroom culture:

CHALLENGING & THOUGHTFUL LEARNING

- Instructional planning
- Collaborative planning for SPED/EL students
- Consider developmental needs
- Maximize instructional minutes
- Build on their funds of knowledge
- Make thinking and learning visible

LOVE OF LEARNING, SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

- Joyful learning climate- fun!
- Empowering Language
- Student/teacher relationship
- Student/student relationship
- Routines/engagement
- Provide opportunities for choice - autonomy
- Flexibility

When a student is struggling to focus, engage, complete work, or follow the classroom agreements, Phase 2 is followed. This phase of student intervention is Teacher Initiated. It focuses on the relationship between the student and the teacher. This allows the student to become aware of their behavior, how it is affecting the rest of the class, and allows them to make a new choice.

1,2,3 Steps to Behavioral Intervention in the Classroom (Notice, Re-Direct/Reinforce, Problem-Solving, Return & Repair)

1. Notice - Lets the student know that you notice their behavior; language is clear, non-judgemental, non-shaming, REMINDs them of the ideal behavior. It is best practice to also reflect and reinforce the students who are doing the ideal behavior as a model for those who are not.
 - Warning one. (Could be verbal or non-verbal.)
 - “I notice...”, “I am aware of...”, “I see that...”
 - Reinforce: “Thank you for...”, “I appreciate those students who are...”, “Can someone please remind those who forgot, the steps to complete right now?”
 - “What should you be doing right now?”, “Who can tell us...”, “Who remembers...” “I hear talking, this is a quiet activity”, “What strategies can we use to get it right next time?”, “(Behavior) has begun”, “Tell me how you are going to...”
 - Student stays in the class.

2. Re-Direct - Gives directions, not a request; is clear about what went wrong; is non-judgemental; names the ideal; invokes sources of authority.
 - Warning two. (Could be verbal or non-verbal.)
 - “Show me a safer way to...”, “Freeze! That looks unsafe, please...”. “You have been (describe behavior). What might you do to solve this?” “See if you could figure out a way to work together, otherwise you will need to...I’ll be back to check on your progress.” “Show me you know what you are supposed to be doing right now.” “I know you can finish this, please redirect your attention to...”
 - “You still have not started working. Focus your attention on the task now.” “I have reminded you of the task, and yet you are...Please show me you can...”
 - Fix on the spot
 - Remodel
 - Loss of privilege
 - Students stay in the class, but take a break away from the distraction. They can return once they are ready.
 - If the student makes a good choice, REINFORCE this behavior! “You were able to... and now...” “What helped you?” “I notice that you...” “I notice that...How does that make you feel?” Show us how you did that” “What choice did you make?” “What strategies did you use?” “You helped us by...”
 - i. This is a great opportunity to make a positive phone call to student’s parents.

3. Problem-Solve

Choices for Intervention

- Move seat
- Mini conference
- Fix it on the spot
- Silent conversation
- Reflection
- Take a break in the classroom
- Teacher consequence (group or individual)

4. Return & Repair

- Student returns to class and joins in the lesson. Teacher welcomes the student back without judgement and accepts their reflection (“thank you”, “welcome back”). This may require a follow up conversation if necessary. Please ask for assistance if needed.
 - i. OR
- Student stays in office for the remainder of the period. Teacher meets with student after class for a quick conference (Describe problem, Understand, Plan, Closure). Review reflection form. Please ask for assistance if needed.
- Parent/guardian is notified.
 - i. Directors (and SpEd) are included on email to parents.
- Incident is documented in Illuminate.

If the student is still struggling to engage with their academics or classroom community, Phase 3 is Initiated by the Teacher with Support from our Directors. Our teachers will send the student to the office with a referral form:

YELLOW FORM

- Restorative/conversation reflection (notification of service program)
- Counseling support

Reflection/Service - Oversight by Director of Student Services & Counselor

- Why are you here?
- What is your plan of action when you return to the classroom?
- In what ways can you give back to our community?

If the behavior continues, the administration becomes more involved and schedules a Student Support Team meeting with:

- Director SS

- Director IC
- Teacher/s
- SPED
- Advisor
- Student
- Parent
- Others

The Academy provides a ‘learning support’ umbrella team that brings together all support service providers at our school site to develop and monitor programs and resources that enhance prevention and intervention efforts contributing to student success. The Academy focuses on referred students, and coordinates respective programs and services to promote their academic success. In addition, school-wide issues are identified and addressed. Ideally, SST referrals are processed and prioritized by the support team at school sites.

The Student Success Team (SST) is a problem solving and coordinating structure that assists students, families, and teachers to seek positive solutions for maximizing student potential. The SST focuses in-depth on one student at a time, and invites the parent and student to participate in finding solutions. Additionally, SSTs provide a structure to review the academic, behavioral, and health status of each student in a particular classroom. This process informs individual actions for students, including referral to the formal SST process, and class-wide actions to address issues such as use of class resources, behavior management, classroom modifications, and health education.

If a behavior continues, or if the behavior is extreme, we implement a way for students to “Make it Right”. Students work with our Director of Curriculum and Instruction and are given a chance to reflect on their behavior, research behaviors that are similar to their behavior, and make connections to their self and how to improve.

Personalized Approaches, Access, and Rigorous Standards-based Curriculum

Varied types of strategies are used by the school leadership and staff to develop and implement personalized approaches to learning and alternative instructional options which allow access to and progress in the rigorous standards-based curriculum.

The Personalized Learning Plan process is an opportunity for students to reflect upon their learning, view their grades, and begin to shape their future, while better understanding the path to accomplishing their goals. The counseling team meets with each student individually to discuss high school graduation requirements, college admission requirements, individual goals towards college and career, as well as exploring their individual passions. Students are given a personalized plan which identifies all of the courses they have taken, their grades, G.P.A., and total credits. This plan also provides suggestions for students to take extra-curricular activities

directed at their interests, community service, or other steps towards preparing for college acceptance. We start the conversation early, helping students crystalize the vision for their future.



PERSONAL LEARNING PLAN

Name: _____ Student ID #: _____ Graduation Year: _____ Date: _____

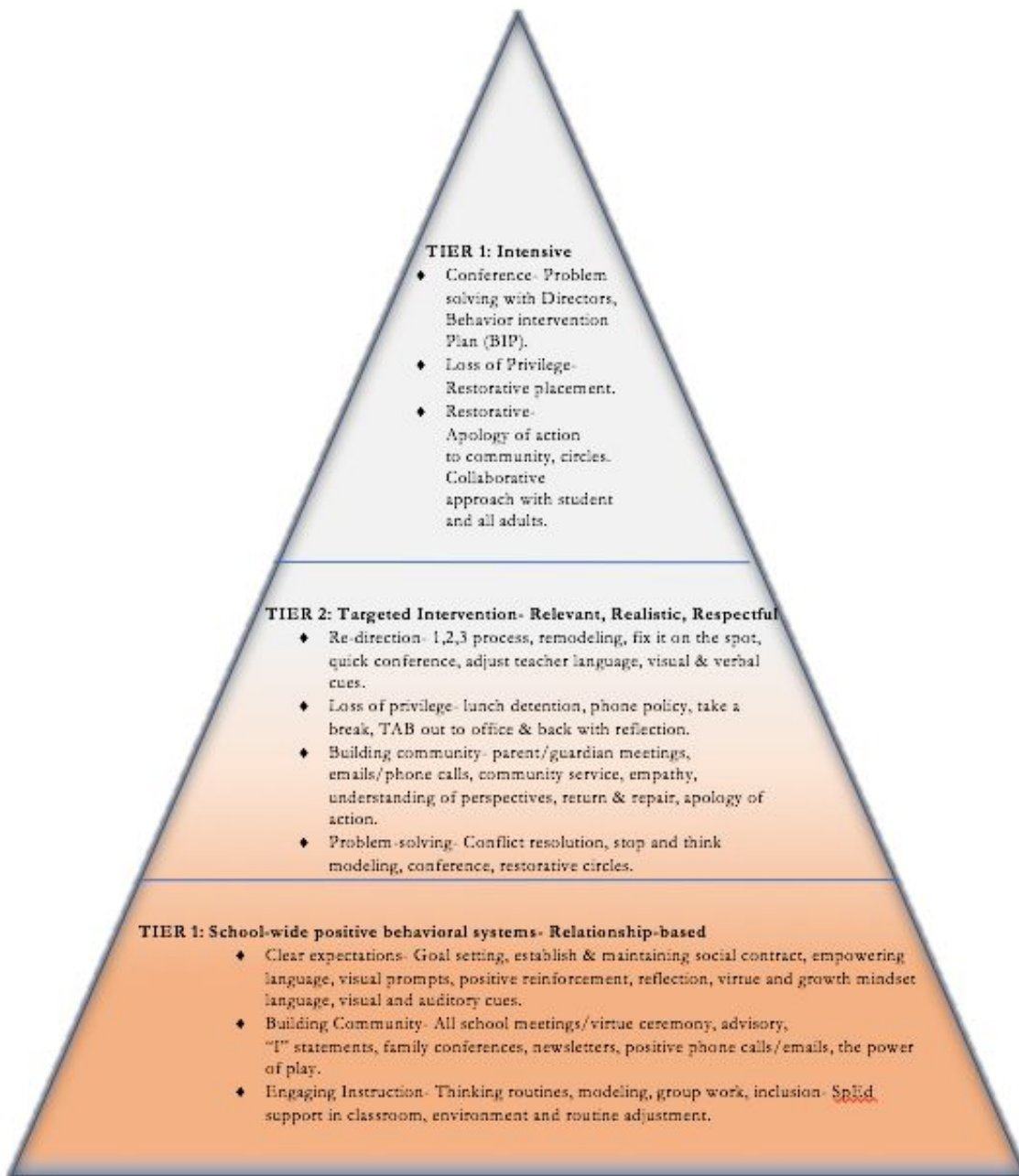
Post High School Plan:

Subject Area	Required HS Credits	A-G Required Credits	Grade 9				Grade 10				Grade 11				Grade 12			
			Semester 1	Gr	Semester 2	Gr	Semester 1	Gr	Semester 2	Gr	Semester 1	Gr	Semester 2	Gr	Semester 1	Gr	Semester 2	Gr
English	40	40																
Social Studies	30	20																
Mathematics	30	30																
Laboratory Science	20	20																
World Language	20	20																
Visual Performing Art	10	10																
Cornerstone Humanities Courses	20	0																
Electives	20	10																
Physical Education	10	0																
Advisory	0	0																
Recovered Credits																		
Total Required Credits	Notes:																	
Additional Elective Credits																		
Total Credits/Semester GPA				0.00			0.00				0.00				0.00			0.00
Total GPA	0.00				0.00				0.00				0.00					
Cumulative GPA	0.00																	
Student	9th Pass Courses C or Higher (Maintain at least a 3.0 GPA); Engage in Extra-Curricular Activities/Athletics/Clubs				10th Pass Courses C or Higher (Maintain atleast 3.0 GPA) Prepare for Standardize Tests (PSAT, ACT) Maintain Engagement in Extra-Curricular Activities/Athletics/Clubs				11th October: Take PSAT Spring: Take SAT or ACT ACT plus Writing required for UC admission				12th November 30: UC/CSU Deadline December: Finish SAT/ACT Some school require Dec or Nov scores; check with each campus					
Parents/Guardian																		
Counselor																		

Response to Intervention

The Academy uses an Response to Intervention Model for our discipline process. The three tiers are:

1. School-wide positive system - Relationship-based
2. Targeted Intervention: Relevant, Realistic, and Respectful
3. Intensive Intervention.



Educational Support Personnel: The Academy provides highly qualified educational support personnel (EL Coordinator, SpEd instructor, other SpEd support) to implement differentiation based on student need, including placement in intervention support classes (RSP, study halls, and ELA/Math), credit recovery/remediation and other RTI supports, through continuous monitoring of instruction and student achievement data. This contributes to meeting the increased or improved student services requirement.

Student Learning Needs, Support, Intervention and Access to SLOs

The school leadership and staff are committed to ensuring that student learning needs are accurately identified in a timely manner and the appropriate support and intervention services are provided to enable access to the academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes for all students. The school referral system, weekly professional development, meetings with teachers, SST and PLP systems allow for an effective structure to support all students. When a student is perceived to be having difficulty academically or emotionally the Director of Student Services assesses the student, along with the appropriate support staff, to determine how the school can arrange the support through the intervention to provide the necessary resources. Parents may be invited to a meeting to discuss the assessment and discuss how to proceed with support within the school and community. By doing so, the school ensures that every student's needs are met, and that the student has access to the SLOs.

Access to a Challenging, Relevant, and Coherent Curriculum

Various instructional frameworks -- such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and the inclusion model -- establish the foundation to which teachers build a learning environment and curriculum that is challenging, relevant, and coherent. UDL is an educational framework based on research in the learning sciences, including cognitive neuroscience, that guides the development of flexible learning environments that can accommodate individual learning differences for all learning styles, intelligences, and various student needs. In addition to the availability of RTI, the school maximizes students' engagement in the classroom with their peers through the inclusion model with the support of staff and teachers that push-into the classroom.

The school is building a comprehensive and sequential documented curriculum that will be articulated within and across grade levels for the improvement of programs, learning, and teaching. The curriculum will be modified as needed to address current educational research and thinking, other relevant international/national/community issues, and the needs of all students. There are clear policies regarding course completion, certification, credits, grades, home learning, engagement, etc. that guide student progression through the program. These policies are delineated in the student handbook, school website, course syllabi, and various other publications available to all stakeholders.

All students are issued a Google Chromebook which they are able to take home in order to use for all of their classroom assignments and access all the materials needed for class which they can access as needed. All courses are built to fulfill the A-G requirements and 77% of students say that it is challenging (compared with 51% nationally at public K-12 schools). By utilizing these methods based on current global and local research the school is sculpting a coherent

curriculum that prepares students for college, career and life, whilst ensuring that it is standards-based.

Curricular and Co-curricular Activities

The school provides quality and varied extracurricular opportunities for students after school that are aligned with the SLOs, A-G requirements and standards. Students at the Academy run a number of clubs representing a wide range of interests and identities. Clubs provide students with opportunities to get involved in the school, meet new people, and to take leadership positions. Additionally, many students have gained leadership skills through the experience of founding a club. All clubs are student-initiated with the support of an adult advisor.

We have offered the following (non-sport) extra-curricular programs:

- Debate
- Skate Club
- Leadership
- Neuroscience
- Hip Hop Dance
- Cultural Drumming
- Introduction to Robotics
- Photography
- Yearbook
- Theatre

It is our goal to align our Triton Athletic Program with our mission, vision, and values. Our school's mission is to foster meaningful growth in intellectual character virtues in thoughtful, challenging, and supportive environment. We believe that athletics provide a unique opportunity for students to grow in their understanding and application of their intellectual character while aligning with the Academy's mission, vision, and values. Our athletics model represents the culture of thinking and learning that is valued within our community.

The Triton Athletic Program mission is to create an environment in which student-athletes are challenged to focus on their individual growth, as well as value the growth of others in a supportive team environment.

Because of our small school size and the athletic resources available to the Academy, we participate in partnership with outside organizations. Even given these limited resources, 56% of students participated in a sport and 76% participated in an extra-curricular program. We have offered the following sports:

- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Futsal
- Cross Country

Achievements:

- ***A supportive and restorative process was developed by teachers and administrators to support the growth and needs of all students***
- ***Wide participation in after school program***

Areas for Improvement:

- ***Continue to build on classroom management strategies and supports***
- ***Continue the consistency practice of classroom management techniques and protocols***
- ***Build-out more variety to after school program***

Part IV



Major Achievements/Needs

Part IV: Major Achievements/Needs

Major Achievements/Accomplishments: Provide a prioritized list of major achievements/accomplishments (within the past three years) of students, staff, and school.

1. A positive school environment that is thoughtful, challenging, and supportive.
2. Increased student engagement.
3. Improved test scores.
4. A well-qualified and dedicated faculty and staff that is remarkably committed to individual student achievement.
5. Decrease in the amount of student referrals.
6. Improvement and additional extra-curricular activity offerings.
7. Improved attendance and tardies.
8. High attendance of student-led conferences.
9. Meeting students socio-emotional needs and building conflict resolution strategies.
10. A comfortable environment for students to be themselves.
11. Providing individualized care for SpEd students and more attention 1:1.
12. Teachers, students, and parents taking more ownership and leadership within the school, overall more happy and satisfied with the program.
13. Intellectual Virtues Model (SLOs/Master Virtues), is more transparent within the classroom by means of Making Thinking Visible, Thinking Routines, and Making Learning Visible.
14. Evaluating aspects of teaching/curriculum to best meet student learning needs.
15. The school has developed a distinctly caring and nurturing community and educational environment based on growth mindset.
16. For a small school, the school offers a strong college preparatory program and extra-curricular program.
17. School leadership that has provided vision and resources to help the school develop into a strong college preparatory academic institution which focuses on developing an appreciation and understanding of Intellectual Virtues.
18. A school that consistently meets the resource needs of the students and faculty.

Major School Needs: Provide a prioritized list of areas for improvement in relation to impact on student achievement.

Nobody can claim that our academic and cultural successes were the result of “cherry-picked” students. Indeed, our largest challenge was creating a culture of high academic expectations and thoughtfulness serving the students who chose to attend the Academy. The incoming class had: an average GPA of 1.9 in 8th grade; nearly a third of students who were reading at a 5th grade level or lower; exactly half who were at a 6th grade of mathematical proficiency or lower;

over three times the absentee rates in 8th grade than district average; and 40.5% with an IEP (or over three times district, state, and national averages).

A second challenge remains student recruitment. We currently have about 60 students for two grades, but this rate of recruitment is unsustainable. We need about 50 students per incoming class to meet our sustainable 3-year budget needs. To address this challenge, we thoroughly reviewed our marketing/outreach program; overhauled our approach by focusing on student-centered approaches, social marketing, and engaging our entire community (now that we have one); and made, and are making, hiring decisions to adequately staff our plan. Now that we have a track record of success, if there is a way forward, we will find it.

Based on the aforementioned stakeholders have developed the following growth targets:

1. School Culture:
 - a. to continue to develop an environment based firmly on the SLOs (Master Virtues).
 - b. to nurture and foster school morale and spirit within the student body and educational professionals.
 - c. to build programs that support the college-going spirit and mission/vision of the school based on student interests and passions.
2. Classroom Management:
 - a. to continue to build upon effective classroom management strategies and techniques in order to serve all student needs.
 - b. to utilize instructional strategies based on various styles and techniques that prepare students for the 21st century.
 - c. to ensure the consistent application of all school policies and procedures in unison.
3. Enrollment:
 - a. to unite all stakeholders in the enrollment process.
 - b. to invest in the outreach program and support thereof by faculty and staff.

Name: Armine Movsisyan, Ed.D. Position: Director of Instruction

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