



Tennessee Charter School Renewal Application
Applicant Information Cover Page

Charter School Name: Lester Prep
Charter School Address: 320 Carpenter Memphis, TN 38112
Charter School Phone: (901) 416-3640
CMO Name (if applicable): Capstone Education Group, Inc
Authorizer Name: Tennessee Public Charter School Commission
Name of Charter School Primary Contact Person: Drew Sippel
Primary Contact Phone: (901) 416-9569
Primary Contact Email: dsippel@cornerstoneprepmemphis.org
Date Charter Awarded: April 4, 2022
First Year of Operation: July 1, 2022
Date Charter Expires: June 30, 2024

Table with 4 columns: Total Current Enrollment, % Economically Disadvantaged, % Students with Disabilities, % English Learners. Values: 217, 89%, 19%, 11%.

Table with 3 columns: Year following renewal, Grade Levels, Total Student Enrollment. Rows for Year 1 through Year 10, showing enrollment increasing from 250 to 300.



Assurances

As the authorized representative of the school, I hereby certify that the information submitted in this renewal application is true, to the best of my knowledge and belief, and if awarded a charter, the school will:

1. operate as a public, nonsectarian, non-religious public school, with control of instruction vested in the governing body of the school under the general supervision of its authorizer and in compliance with its charter agreement and the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002⁴;
2. follow all federal, state and local laws and regulations that pertain to the operation of a public school, unless waived according to T.C.A. § 49-13-111(p);
3. provide special education services for students as provided in Tennessee Code Annotated Title 49, Chapter 10, Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
4. adhere to all applicable provisions of federal law relating to students who are English learners, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974;
5. follow all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services;
6. comply with all provisions of the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002, as amended;
7. employ individuals to teach who hold a license to teach in a public school in Tennessee;
8. comply with Open Meetings and Open Records laws (T.C.A. §§ 8-44-101 et seq.; 10-7-503, 504);
9. not charge tuition, except for students transferring from another district to the school pursuant to the local board's out-of-district enrollment policy and T.C.A. § 49-6-3003;
10. follow state financial (budgeting and audit) procedures and reporting requirements according to T.C.A. § 49-13-111, 120 and 127;
11. require any member of the governing body, employee, officer or other authorized person who receives funds, has access to funds, or has authority to make expenditures from funds, to give a surety bond in the form prescribed by T.C.A. § 8-19-101;
12. maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage;
13. obtain all necessary permits, licenses, and certifications related to fire, health, and safety within the school building and on school property;
14. notify its authorizer immediately of any change in circumstances that may have a significant impact on the school's ability to fulfill its goals as stated in its charter agreement; and
15. submit a request to amend its charter agreement if the school plans to make a change to its operations.

Signature:

Title: Chief Executive Officer

Date: March 28, 2023

⁴ Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002, [T.C.A. §§ 49-13-101-145](#).

Revised: 02/10/2022



Application Narrative

Pursuant to TCA § 49-13-121, a public charter school renewal application shall contain a report of the school's operations, including students' standardized test scores, financial statements, and audits of the eight (8) years immediately preceding the date of the renewal application.

The renewal application narrative is organized into four areas:

1. Academic Success
2. Operational Stability
3. Financial Health
4. Future Plans/Projections

Section I - Academic Success

- a. **Describe the school's academic achievement and growth results over the course of the current charter term. Include tables, charts, or graphs, as applicable, to illustrate cumulative and/or yearly assessment results.**

Lester Prep's Context

Prior to the Achievement School District (ASD) formation, the former Lester school performed consistently in the bottom 5% of schools in the state of Tennessee. In fact, Lester ranked as the lowest performing school in the state of Tennessee prior to the Capstone Education Group (CEG) transition.

Since joining the ASD as part of the original cohort, CEG has served the families of Binghampton for the past 11 years. CEG runs the neighborhood elementary school, Cornerstone Prep Lester Campus, which serves over 400 students in grades prek-5th grade.

CEG opened Lester Prep (LP) as a middle school in 2014, starting with only one grade, 6th grade and subsequently expanding to become a full middle school, providing families the opportunity to be served by one organization on one campus from prek-8th grade.

Through the elementary school and middle school, and with the deep and long-standing relationships in the community, CEG, CPL and LP have become a key fabric of the Binghampton community. Parents and community members have consistently expressed their gratitude and satisfaction with the organization and schools.

LP serves a mostly African American, low income, transient student population. Most students enter Lester Prep with significant academic gaps, having been at multiple schools prior to their enrollment at LP. Listed below is data regarding socioeconomic status, academic gaps and tenure of LP students enrolled in 2022-23:

- The 2020 Census revealed that the primary tract (Census Tract 28) around LP consists of adults with an average annual income of \$16,080, a 61% unemployment rate, a 16% college graduation rate and 38% home ownership rate
- The Binghampton precinct has the highest rate of police incidents in the city, more than 1.5 times the rate of the next highest area
- 20% of LP scholars are in their first year at LP and came from a school outside of CEG
- 98% of 8th graders did not start with a CEG elementary school



- The starting fall MAP NWEA TN Ready predictor revealed that not a single LP student scored high enough to be predicted to earn Master designation on TN Ready in math or reading
- The average GLE for enrolling 8th graders was 5.6 in math, 2.4 years behind
- LP had a 34% student mobility rate in 2022
- Only 51 students in the entire school entered the school year reading at grade level

Because LP serves a high needs population, LP must consistently deliver instruction at each student's identified level of need, differentiating instruction for each student, while at the same time delivering grade level instruction to all students, helping those at grade level continue to grow while exposing those below grade level to grade level content.

The high mobility rate of students, combined with the large academic gaps, means LP has limited time to get students to grade level. Therefore, LP must ensure that students grow more than one grade level equivalent each year. This reduces student academic gaps even if students do not stay in the school long enough to make it to grade level, given their large academic shortcomings.

LP's consistent growth as reflected in TVAAS and MAP assessments verifies the school's ability to deliver this instruction effectively. LP's execution of grade level instruction with strong differentiated teaching for every child has been a critical part of the academic success of the school.

Lifetime and Recent NWEA MAP Results

The school's lifetime average growth based on NWEA MAP data for each of the core subjects is listed below:

- Math 1.4 years of average annual academic growth
- Reading 1.5 years of average annual academic growth
- Language 1.6 years of average annual academic growth
- Science 1.4 years of average annual academic growth

Obviously, LP's lifetime average growth exceeds the national average and reflects the school's ability to consistently reduce student academic gaps over time.

Lester Prep students also display outstanding performance compared to others around the country as revealed by the NWEA National Growth Percentile. The National Conditional Growth Percentile shows how well each student or group of students grew relative to academic peers within the NWEA norms study. Academic peers are students in the same grade, with the same starting RIT score, and the same amount of instruction between testing in any given subject. The conditional growth measure translates RIT growth for a student or a grade into a meaningful value for comparison.

The data chart below was generated by the NWEA Achievement Status & Growth Norms Calculator for 2020 Norms. The data shows the average National Conditional Growth Percentile (NCGP) of each grade level and subject compared to academic peers. In essence, this chart shows how LP performed relative to other schools across the nation with students in a similar grade level and subject with a similar starting RIT score. This is considered one of the best metrics for evaluating growth as a school



because the NCGP includes all grades, all subjects, and accounts for grade level, subject, starting RIT score, and expected peer growth.

As you can see below in the data chart for the Fall-Spring 2021-22 NWEA MAP results, LP 8th grade students scored in the 99th percentile in reading. This means that LP 8th grade students grew more from Fall 2021 to Spring 2022 than 99% of students across the nation with a similar starting RIT value. Likewise, the school average NCGP for Language of 96 means LP on average performed better than 96% of schools nationally on the Language assessment with similar fall student RIT scores for the 2021-22 school year.

2021-22 Results	Mathematics	Reading	Language	Science
Lester Prep	63	88	96	93
6	22	70	89	80
7	97	94	99	99
8	69	99	99	99

This is obviously outstanding performance, with 9 of a possible 12 grades/subject combinations scoring better than 80% of schools nationally with a similar RIT score and many grades/subjects in the 99th percentile.

TN Ready and TVAAS Results Prior to the Pandemic

LP consistently earned the state's highest growth scores as evidenced by TVAAS. For the three full years of pre-pandemic education, LP earned the following TVAAS scores:

Subject	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-19
Math	5	4	4
ELA	5	5	5
Overall	5	5	5

During the last full year prior to the pandemic, LP had the highest proficiency rate of any ASD middle school in math, as noted below:



2018-19 TN Ready Math Results	Percent On
ASD Schools	Track &
	Mastered
Cornerstone Prep Denver Campus	27.1
Freedom Preparatory Academy Charter Elementary School	21.8
KIPP Memphis Academy Elementary	18.1
<i>Lester Prep</i>	<i>16.7</i>
Corning Achievement Elementary	16
Frayser Achievement Elementary	15.1
Georgian Hills Achievement Elementary School	15
Aspire Hanley Elementary	14.7
Whitney Achievement Elementary School	14
Neely's Bend: A LEAD Public School	13.6
Promise Academy - Spring Hill	12.7
KIPP Memphis Preparatory Elementary	12.7
Cornerstone Prep - Lester Campus	11.6
Memphis Scholars Caldwell-Guthrie	11.6
Aspire Coleman	11.4
Brick Church: A LEAD Public School	10.3
Memphis Scholars Florida Kansas	9
Aspire Hanley Middle School	8.9
Wooddale Middle School	8.4
KIPP Memphis Preparatory Middle	8.2
Kirby Middle School	7.3
Libertas School	4.5
Memphis Scholars Raleigh-Egypt	4.5
Humes Preparatory Academy Middle School	3.7
Westside Middle School	2.7

LP has also performed well when compared to national normed expectations for schools around the country. MAP results, the national assessment administered by NWEA, has revealed significant and consistent growth above the national norm and exceeding the NWEA's expected growth. The growth occurs across all grades and subjects, indicating the strength of the entire LP academic program. Listed below are the results from the two years data prior to the pandemic:

Grade	Math GLE Growth 2017-18	Math GLE Growth 2018-19
6	1.7	1.4
7	1.6	1.3
8	1.0	1.2



Grade	Reading Growth 2017-18	Reading GLE Growth 2018-19
6	1.4	1.2
7	1.7	1.3
8	1.1	0.9
Grade	Language GLE Growth 2017-18	Language GLE Growth 2018-19
6	1.4	1.2
7	1.3	1.4
8	0.9	1.1

Grade	Science GLE Growth 2017-18	Science GLE Growth 2018-19
6	1.8	1.1
7	1.7	1.4
8	0.5	1.3

This data reveals above average growth in most every grade and subject for two years. This measure indicates strong academic achievement and growth across the entire school, which we believe aligns with the intended outcomes found on the charter Commission scoring rubric.

The Pandemic

CEG’s Binghampton campus, which includes almost 800 students in prek, CPL and LP, along with all other public schools in the state, closed in early 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This began an exceedingly difficult era for all people, but especially the under resourced families served by Lester Prep. Many Binghampton families did not have resources such as computers, laptops, iPad or Wi-Fi or family support at home that would allow learning to occur at home while the school campus was closed. Unfortunately, the pandemic stopped the learning trajectory of many LP students for the 2019-20 school year.

The pandemic continued to negatively influence learning the following year. During the difficult 2020-21 school year, LP polled parents regarding their preference of learning method, based on the COVID 19 status at the time. Parent surveys over the summary indicated a significant desire to learn exclusively from home, online. Therefore, LP purchased hot spots and Chromebooks for every LP student, delayed the start of the school year by approximately one month to prepare teachers for online instruction, and opened the school year delivering online instruction to 100% of LP students.

During the week of October 5, 2020, CEG again surveyed current parents regarding their desire to begin on campus learning or continue online learning. The survey results revealed 43% of parents desired to send their child back to campus for instruction. CEG began on-campus learning November 12. From that point forward, LP executed the difficult hybrid instruction model, teaching students at home and on campus. At year-end, more than 50% of LP students not set foot on the campus and therefore had to learn exclusively from home and overcome so many obstacles to their learning.



Research and data results from last year consistently show students around the nation, and especially students of color, had dramatic setbacks in education due to the pandemic. Here are a couple quotes related to student achievement during the 2020-21 school year:

- “According to one commonly used reading assessment, the DIBELS benchmark measure, the percentage of students falling into the “well-below benchmark” category that predicts future reading failure grew from 26 percent in December 2019 to 43 percent in December 2020. All demographic subgroups were affected, but Black and Hispanic students were particularly impacted. There is no precedent for this kind of decline in the last 20 years of using these reading measures.”
- “New research by NWEA, a nonprofit assessment provider, predicts that because of school closures, some students could be as much as a year behind in math when they start school in the fall.”

Despite the difficult circumstances, and the data indicating most students fell further behind during the pandemic, LP scholars produced the following results on the year-end MAP assessment in 2020-21:

Grade	Math GLE Growth	Reading GLE Growth	Language GLE Growth	Science GLE Growth
6	1.1	1.5	1.8	2.1
7	0.6	0.9	1.1	0.9
8	1.0	1.5	1.3	1.7

The primary academic challenge that Lester Prep faced in its charter term, and identified by the Commission as off track, has been the continued struggle to overcome student mobility and large academic gaps of newly arriving students to convert outstanding academic growth to outstanding academic proficiency. While the school has improved enough in mastery to get off the priority list, an accomplishment very few other ASD schools attained, CEG still desires significantly better academic outcomes for their students.

Subgroups and Diverse Learners

Most of the students served at Lester Prep fall into the subgroup of economically disadvantaged and African American. So, the scores of the school roughly reflect those two subgroups and therefore are contained in the data and comments found throughout the application.

The other subgroup of significance is special education. The school’s three-year proficiency rates for this subgroup have not been as high as we would hope. We have found that mastery in grade level proficiency has been difficult to reach for most of our special education students. However, we have had good success in closing academic gaps and growing our special education students as they work towards reaching grade level. The data below from our most recent in NWEA MAP assessment shows this growth in grade level equivalents for the last full year pre-pandemic and the 2020-21 school year (we did not take the assessment when schools were required to shut down in the spring of 2020.)

Grade	Math 18-19	Reading 18-19	Science 18-19	Math 20-21	Reading 20-21	Science 20-21
6	1.1	1.4	0.6	1.2	1.7	2.2
7	0.7	0.9	1.2	0.6	0.8	0.8
8	1.1	1.6	2.4	1.1	1.6	1.9

As the chart reveals, the special education subgroup performed extremely well during the last full year students were on campus for the entire day as well as during the pandemic in most grades and subjects. LP is working hard to improve the consistency of the academic growth of all students in special education.

Here is the data for special populations over the last two years:

	% On Track or Mastered	
	2021 Math + ELA	2022 Math + ELA
All Students (6-8)	2.8	9
Black, Hispanic, Native American (BHN)	2.9	9.2
Economically Disadvantaged (ED)	2.5	9.8
English Language Learners (ELL)	14.3	13.7
Students in Super Subgroup	2.8	9
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	2.7	18.8

Here is a comparison of sub-group performance in 2021-22 and the subsequent “on track” status:

	2022 School Success Rate				
	Lester Prep	MSCS	MSCS Status	ASD	ASD Status
All Students (6-8)	9.2	16	Off Track	7.8	On Track
Economically Disadvantaged (ED)	9.9	10.4	On Track	6.8	On Track
English Language Learners (ELL)	13.7*	10.2	On Track	6.8	On Track
Black, Hispanic, Native American (BHN)	9.3	13.9	On Track	7.6	On Track
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	18.8	14.1	On Track	15.1	On Track
Achievement Score from Report Card	3.1	3.5	On Track	2.5	On Track



Notes: All data from TN School Report Card unless otherwise notified.* suppressed in TN School Report Card due to less than 30 students, but SSR available from Inform TN as average of Math and ELA meeting/exceeding expectations. On track refers to the new Charter School Performance Framework (page 9) comparative performance relative to the resident district. Needs to be within 5% of the resident district (MSCS) for all students and various subgroups. When the report was written (12/29/2022) the on-track measure was within 3%. On 1/27/2023 the framework was updated to on track being within 5%. ASD is listed for additional context. “The numbers provided in the Lester Prep Cumulative Performance Report differ slightly from the values and corresponding statuses found on the Tennessee School Report Card for Lester Prep and MSCS when utilizing the School Success Rate (SSR) which accounts for performance of MSA and TCAP-Alt. Below are the numbers that CEG has found based on the Report Card and SSR in 2022. Furthermore, the new Charter School Performance Framework defines “On Track” as within 5 percentage points of the resident district. This was originally 3 percentage points when the Cumulative Report was written on December 29, 2022 but has since been updated to be within 5 percentage points as of 1/27/2023.”

As you can see in the data above, when accounting for the key differences utilizing SSR and the new Charter School Performance Framework, LP Performance on most Subgroups is On Track. The only exception is All Students SSR when compared to MSCS. While MSCS is the resident district, the demographics of MSCS are quite different from LP which is described in detail above and in summary in the below table.

LP	ACH Score	Growth Score	BHN	ED	SWD	ELL	ED SSR
LP	3.1	2.9	>95%	89%	17%	10%	9.90%
MCS	3.5	-	93%	57%	10%	13%	10.40%

The data indicates LP has 1.6 times and 1.7 times the Economically Disadvantaged and Students With Disabilities populations, respectively, compared to MSCS. Additionally, MSCS is not an equal comparison when accounting for median household income, as Memphis is 2.8 times higher than the primary LP zone.

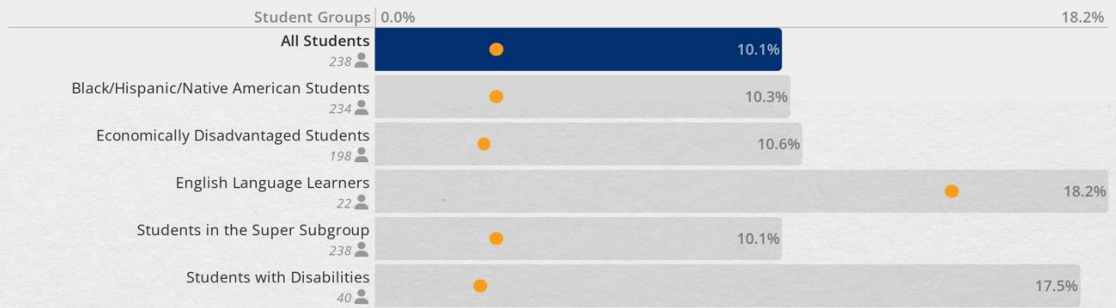
Data from Inform TN demonstrates that CEG students in all subgroups are growing when compared to previous year performance with the exception of ELL students who performed within 1 percentage point of the previous year when averaging Math and ELA.

	2021 Math and	2022 Math and
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	ELA On Track	ELA On Track
All Students	2.8	9
Black, Hispanic, Native Am	2.9	9.2
Economically Disadvantaged	2.5	9.8
English Language Learners	14.3	13.7
Students in Super SubGroup	2.8	9
Students with Disabilities	2.7	18.8

The data is further broken down by subject below. The charts are from Inform TN. The bar represents 2022 TN Ready performance and the orange dot represents 2021 TN Ready performance. As you can see below, subgroups outperformed the prior year in 11 out of 12 possible scenarios.

Where do you see challenges in **On-Track or Mastered School-Wide ELA** across **Student Groups**?



Where do you see challenges in **On-Track or Mastered School-Wide Math** across **Student Groups**?



After the Pandemic

As national data and analysis reveal after COVID was contained, the pandemic negatively affected the learning of all students. Some quotes reflect this:

- “The coronavirus caused by far the biggest disruption in the history of American education,” Meira Levinson and Daniel Markovits wrote in The Atlantic last year.
- The pandemic also created surging inequality. “As Robin Lake and Travis Pillow write in a Brookings Institution article, “American students are experiencing a K-



shaped recovery, in which gaps between the highest- and lowest-scoring students, already growing before the pandemic, are widening into chasms.”

- “And for the country’s most vulnerable students, the pandemic has left them even further behind. The drops in their test scores were often more pronounced, and their climbs to proficiency are now that much more daunting.”

Lester Prep performance aligns with these national trends, with TVVAS scores and TN Ready mastery scores in 2020-21 reflecting the lowest scores in school history. However, the growth began to recover in 2021-22 as did mastery, though mastery gains were slower to improve, as closing academic gaps caused by the pandemic lagged the growth improvements:

Subject	2020-21	2021-22
Math	1	5
ELA	3	5
Overall	1	4

TN Ready Mastery	Pre-pandemic	Post-pandemic
Lester Prep	18%	6%
Math	14%	4%
ELA	8%	5%
Science	33%	10%
Social Studies	18%	9%

TN Mastery levels were low but were twice as high in 2021-22 compared to 2020-21 in both math and ELA. This improvement in mastery, combined with the strong growth revealed by TVAAS 5 scores in math and ELA and the school performing better than 96% of schools nationally on the Language assessment (and 88% in Reading) with similar fall student RIT scores for the 2021-22 school year, provide evidence of the recovering academic program and a positive trajectory for achievement to return to pre-pandemic levels.

Comparisons to Nearby MSCS Schools

While none of the geographically close MSCS schools provide a better comparison than ASD schools, Douglass provides the closest location and similar demographics to LP, though LP serves much higher rates of special populations. Douglass demographics compared to LP:

- Douglass has 10% special education population while CPL has 20%
- Douglass has 0% ELL while CPL has 10%
- Douglass has 95% African American while CPL has 97%

Though LP serves a higher needs population (based on the demographics above), LP has better student outcomes than Douglass:

- More than 3x the number of TVAAS points achieved between 2019-2022
- 2-3x the rate of proficiency in 2022
- 3x higher Achievement Score on the TN School Report Card

Additionally, LP has demonstrated performance at or above the level of the nearest



schools and local district:

- 2nd highest Growth Score according to the TN School Report Card with the highest level of ED%
- Highest school Achievement Score from the TN School Report Card with the highest level of SWD%
- Scored within 0.5% proficiency as the local district, MSCS, when controlling for Economically disadvantaged status even though the median income of the primary LP zone is almost 3x less than the median income of Memphis
- Scored within 0.1 points of Reward School designation if not accounting for Chronic Absenteeism

Plans to Address Off Track Areas

LP is addressing the areas identified as off track in the Commission's renewal document.

As noted earlier, high student mobility and decreasing housing units have caused enrollment to fluctuate. LP believes the recently created role of Director of Public Relations & Recruitment, along with the hiring of two part-time student recruiters, and the soon to be completed 200-unit housing project located within walking distance of the school, will reduce the fluctuations in enrollment. The Director of Public Relations and Recruitment is currently creating a plan to utilize the two new hires to canvass Binghampton and surrounding neighborhoods to ensure parents understand the options provided at Lester Prep. (As a side note, the Director also hired two interns who work exclusively on student absenteeism and chronically absent students. These interns created celebrations and rewards for attendance and call absent students every day to understand and resolve any issues that may create the student absence. We believe this will lead to higher rates of attendance and lower rates of chronic absenteeism.)

Beginning in August of 2022, Lester Prep began offering clubs and specials courses attractive to parents and students. Lester Prep now offers computer programming, dance classes, financial literacy and performing arts opportunities in addition to the long standing after school extracurricular sports and programming. LP believes these offerings will be attractive to students and parents and combined with the new housing units, will stabilize the fluctuations in enrollment.

The Commission noted consistent TVAAS scores as another off-track area. In the last 5 years, LP has earned the highest Composite TVAAS score of 5 on three occasions, a score of 4 once and a score of 1 on one occasion. Therefore, LP has met the composite TVAAS growth score every year but one – Year 7. Math TVAAS scores follow a similar pattern, with one TVAAS score 5, two scores of 4, one score of 3 and the same Year 7 low score of 1.

Lester Prep returned to higher TVAAS scores last year, earning a score of 5 in RLA and Science, math score of 3 and overall composite score of 4. The mid-year MAP and interim data for 2022-23 indicates continued student growth that should lead to TVAAS scores of 4 and 5 on TN Ready this spring.

NWEA MAP scores over the course of the MOU provide strong evidence that the school consistently delivers above average growth in all subjects and grades. Lester Prep expects this to continue with year-end MAP assessment results available in May.



All other areas noted as off track by the Commission relate to student mastery levels. Listed below are the primary actions taken to improve student mastery.

CEG continues to work with counselors, the behavior team, local apartment complexes and the Binghamton Development Corporation to address housing and life issues that create high levels of mobility and chronic absenteeism. These are long-term system issues for the community, but LP will continue to address needs within the scope of the school and with partners to address issue that create mobility for families and students. LP's history of academic growth exceeding national norms would lead to higher levels of student mastery if students remained longer at the elementary school as well as Lester Prep. So, both schools will continue to work with families and agencies to solve these issues.

Leadership performance inconsistencies contributed significantly to the decrease in student growth and achievement. CEG addressed existing leadership team issues by hiring a new team for the 2022-23 school year. In prior years, LP lost a principal mid-year, lost a DOI to a family issue and had two deans return to the classroom. Therefore, CEG placed Meagan Tate in the principal role this year and hired a new set of leaders.

Meagan Tate formerly served as the founding Dean of Culture at Lester Prep. She then grew into the Dean of Instruction for ELA and Social Studies for the school before accepting a principal position at another charter school. Meagan returned to CEG as the Chief Culture Officer before accepting the principal position at Lester Prep for the 2022-23 school year. Meagan immediately created a Powerful Student Culture, hired three new deans, and replaced most of the teaching staff. All the new leaders have been successful in 2022-23 and have been offered contracts for the 2023-24 school year. This strong set of leaders have provided the leadership the staff needs in 2022-23 and will return next year with a full year of leadership experience in the school.

Staff turnover and quality also contributed to the lower levels of mastery for the last two years. The new principal did not renew most teacher contracts after the 2021-22 school year, electing to change leaders and teachers as part of the strategy to turn around Lester Prep.

This leadership and teacher fresh start at Lester Prep was modeled after the process at one of CEG's other schools, Cornerstone Prep Denver Campus (CPD). CPD struggled over a two-year period and the decision was made to replace the entire leadership team and most of the staff. That change in leadership and staffing created a new adult and student culture and took CPD from the lowest performing school in the CEG network to the highest performing school in the ASD. CEG believes that approach is working currently at LP and will lead to comparable results. The adult and student culture has dramatically improved at LP this year, similar to Year 1 of the turnaround at CPD. CEG expects to see improved levels of mastery on TN Ready and continued growth in MAP and TVAAS based on the significant improvements to school and staff culture driven by the new leadership team.

Staff offer letters for the 2023-24 went out in March and the LP leadership team offered 95% of existing staff a contract for next year. This is the highest rate in the network and should ensure a very stable, retuning staff for next year. CEG experience reveals teachers thrive in Year 2 with the organization, when they can apply all the professional development and knowledge about CEG systems at higher levels than is possible in Year



I. We believe this high staff retention will lead to more effective instruction and should be a significant basis for expecting student mastery to increase, addressing the most significant issue noted by the Commission as off track.

LP also strengthened the academic approach for providing extra support for students who did not master content during the first teach. In January, LP added a math interventionist and a reading interventionist role. These two roles will work alongside core subject teachers, the RTI specialist and students to support students who do not show mastery on the weekly Show What You Know Quiz. The reading interventionist position was filled in February and LP leaders are interviewing for the math interventionist. LP expects these two roles to lead to increased mastery for students close to grade level next year.

Finally, CEG created a new network position that began in August of this year. CEG designed the role, Math and Science Content Manager, to increase content knowledge of math and science teachers throughout the network. CEG believes increased content knowledge of teachers will improve student mastery over time.

All the plans noted above address student mastery for all students, including special populations. However, in addition to those items noted above, LP hired an additional special education teacher and a new ELL teacher in 2022-23, both of whom have been offered positions for next year. They should provide additional support to ensure subgroups perform better this year and in years to come.

Conclusion

In summary, Lester Prep's academic achievement and growth results over the course of the current charter, along with the plans to address areas identified as off track by the Commission, reveal:

- Lifetime NWEA MAP growth exceeding 1.4 years in all subjects
- Multiple years of TVVAS 5 scores, both in individual subjects and composite scores
- Pre-pandemic TN Ready mastery level exceeding Memphis middle schools in the ASD and earning priority school exit status
- 2021-22 NWEA MAP data with 9 of a possible 12 grades/subject combinations scoring better than 80% of schools nationally with a similar RIT score and many grades/subjects in the 99th percentile
- TVAAS scores improvement last year, earning TVAAS 5 in ELA and Science and Composite score of 4
- The hiring of the LP founding dean and former CCO as the school principal has dramatically improved adult and student culture
- 100% of the new LP leadership team will be returning for a second year together for 2023-24
- Offers to 95% of existing staff should bring back an experienced team for 2023-24

CEG believes this data provides clear evidence that Lester Prep consistently overcomes student mobility and neighborhood and socio-economic challenges to effectively close academic gaps for all its students and will show improvement in all areas identified as off track by the Commission.



b. **Address progress toward meeting the academic goals outlined in the current charter agreement. Were any amendments made to academic goals? If so, explain.**

Lester Prep's progress towards meeting the academic goals outlined in the ASD charter agreement are noted above.

LP met the most significant ASD academic goal, earning Priority School Exit Status, in 2019. The ASD went through several leadership and organizational changes over the years and therefore the academic goals were inconsistent as were the requirements of the performance school framework of the ASD. However, there were no official amendments made to the academic goals for Lester Prep. LP certainly met charter agreement growth goals as measured by TVAAS and MAP but did not attain the ultimate mastery goal as found in the ASD's original mission of reaching the top 25% of schools in the state.

This is the first year of the school's authorization under the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission. The full year MAP data will be available in May and TN Ready and TVAAS data will be available this fall.

Though the final year-end Commission report will not be available until later this year, the Commission has already conducted the Annual Site visit for Lester Prep. On March 8, 2023, representatives from the Commission visited the school. Here are some comments provided during the site visit wrap up with the CEG and LP leadership team:

1. Students are engaged across the board. Commission staff saw good student participation in classrooms.
2. We saw high leverage moves in the classroom. Commission staff observed students utilizing the strategies, such as TLAC, discussed in the morning data meeting as "look for's" throughout the day.
3. Teachers were consistent, had high expectations of students, yet students were happy in classrooms.
4. We observed lots of good spiraling.
5. Pacing was good and lots of the things that were part of PD were being executed in classrooms, including aggressive monitoring practices.
6. Teachers interviews indicated they had strong staff support in meeting the high expectations of the role.
7. Student interviews revealed support of the school and culture.
8. Parent interviews felt welcomed, safe ("though the world is unsafe – this school is safe"), liked the high behavior expectations, the counseling at school really helped her child.
9. It is clear that LP has set a good baseline to turn things around from last year.

The Commission noted these opportunities to get better:

1. The things are in place to improve mastery over time. Keep growing kids 1.5 years on the way to the higher mastery required.
2. There is still work to be done in all academic areas but the leadership team is strong and seems to be focused on the right moves including strong intervention practices in reading and math.
3. Chronic absenteeism is higher than other schools. LP needs to keep working on that.
4. Enrollment is lower than expected. It needs to be increased next year.



LP expects scholars will show significant growth in all subjects and grades at year-end. Leaders believe the school will earn TVAAS 5 and reach or exceed AMO goals, two of the Commission performance framework measures. The school will not reach the mastery level goals found in the rubric, given the gap between the starting point of this year's students and the goals found in the rubric. However, LP's trajectory this year will propel the students towards the academic goals found in the current charter agreement in the years to come.

LP is on track to reach the AMO goal for reducing chronic absenteeism. LP is also making progress toward English language proficiency through one of the two pathways.

c. Outline the school's assessment system and explain how assessments are used to inform instructional practice, evaluate teacher effectiveness, and implement professional development.

CEG defines an interim assessment as a form of assessment that educators use to (1) evaluate where students are in their learning progress and (2) determine whether they are on track to performing well on future assessments, such as standardized tests or end-of-course exams. LP teachers administer Exit tickets, Show What You Know Quizzes (SWYK) and CEG Interim Assessments to assess student learning needs and progress throughout the school year. All these assessments align with the curriculum map and Tennessee state standards and therefore provide accurate data on the students' progress towards CEG goals and mastery of state standards. These assessments provide valuable insight into the learning needs of every individual student as well as all sub-groups.

An Exit Ticket is an assessment administered to students at the end of every lesson in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies classes. It is an assessment with 3 questions that are directly linked to the lesson objective. The lesson objective is connected to a Tennessee Standard but focuses on a small portion of the standard. As students complete an Exit Ticket, they are expected to hand in their Exit Ticket as they leave the classroom or when the lesson ends. Educators will immediately score the Exit Tickets and use this data to verify whether a student can solve a problem or answer a question based on the lesson. Results from the Exit Tickets should assist to drive the questions for the following lessons Do Now or warm-up.

Show What You Know Quizzes (SWYK) are weekly assessments that assess student's knowledge of several skills/objectives that have been taught during the week. The skill/objectives to be assessed should be articulated prior to the assessment. The SWYK should include "standardized test language" in the directions and mirror standardized test format. Educators will create the SWYK Quizzes using the approved network item bank. Educators include questions that address all levels of rigor based on Webb's Depth of Knowledge. SWYK quizzes may be administered as paper versions or an electronic assessment. In either case, students must show their work and thinking on a paper copy so that the teacher can review that as well as their final answer. The deans of instruction will approve the SWYK quiz before administration. The expectation is that SWYK Quizzes are graded by the end of the day when the assessment was administered. Results from the SWYK will drive the focus of weekly data meetings. Since the SWYK is aligned to the curriculum and state standard, the results provide an accurate and clear picture of how well students, grade levels and schools are progressing



toward the school's goals on TN Ready. The blueprint clearly defines the grading policy for these assessments.

At the end of the weekly data meeting, school leaders identify next steps which could include individual professional development for certain teachers, content meetings for all teachers in a certain content area, or small group or whole staff professional development. The data drives the planning for all teachers and school leaders determine when to provide this professional development, which could be during an individual teacher's planning period, before or after school, or during the designated professional development time every Friday. The academic and leader blueprint further define the data cycle and the professional development.

Teachers administer Interim Assessments every 9 weeks to assess the standards that have been taught during the 9 weeks in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies. These assessments evaluate the learning progress of students and determine whether they are on track to perform well on TN Ready. The CAO creates and distributes the assessments to schools.

CEG and school leaders review data from these assessments, comparing them to the goals and priorities of the school, and adjust instruction and professional development as necessary to ensure that the students reach their individual goals and are progressing towards mastery on the state assessment.

In addition to the internal assessments described above, LP uses MAP and I-Ready assessments to measure and evaluate academic progress of students, student cohorts, sub-groups and the entire school throughout the year.

NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), is administered during the Fall, Winter and Spring. MAP assesses students in Reading, Language, Math and Science. In Reading, the areas that are assessed are Word Recognition, Structure and Vocabulary, and Reading Informational Texts. The Language assessment addresses Craft Structure and Evaluation, Grammar and Usage, and Writing Conventions. The areas addressed in Mathematics include Algebra, Geometry, Measurement, Problem Solving, Reasoning, and Proofs. Finally, in science the areas that are assessed are life science, earth and space science, and physical science. As students answer questions correctly or incorrectly, the rigor of the questions either increases or decreases. Once a student completes the MAP assessment, they receive a RIT score. The RIT score indicates not only the level that the student is performing on, but also identifies the key skills that students will work on throughout the year. Teachers use this assessment information for instructional planning for individual students or an entire class.

I-Ready is an adaptive diagnostic that pinpoints student needs down to the sub-skill level and gives teachers an action plan for the success of each student. To build this instructional plan, I-Ready diagnoses student performance by domain across multiple grade levels, with questions getting easier or harder based on a student's answer to the previous question. This assessment provides the data I-Ready needs to create an individualized learning trajectory for all students. This assessment is administered 3 times a year (Fall, Winter and Spring.)

These assessments, combined with the data explained above, provide significant, consistent, systematic measures to evaluate academic progress of individual students,



student cohorts, sub-groups, and are used to inform instruction and professional development for teachers.

All data is analyzed during weekly data meetings. During this meeting, all teachers, including Special Education teachers and EL teachers, will come prepared to discuss the performance of their students and identify instructional strategies for reteach, remediation or acceleration. The deans of instruction lead the weekly data meetings as outlined in the blueprint.

LP also uses Illuminate, Fastbridges, PowerTeacher and Live School to collect and analyze data. These tools are described below:

Illuminate is the organizations assessment dashboard that houses all weekly common assessments and interim assessments. After teachers administer and scores assessment, the scoring tool in Illuminate allows for teachers to receive real time data immediately. This data will be analyzed during data meetings with teachers and school leaders.

Fastbridges houses Tier II and Tier III assessment resources. AReading and AMath are the diagnostic assessments that identifies specific skills to address for intervention. CBM is the progress monitoring tool that is used to monitor student's response to the prescribed interventions each week. During RTI data meetings, students' progress is discussed to determine whether the intervention is appropriate. Adjustments are made to the intervention and the area being monitored based on students' scores over a 4-week period.

Power Teacher is CEG's online grade book. Teachers use Power Teacher to input grades from classwork, homework and weekly assessments.

Live School is CEG's online culture tracking system. LP teachers use Live School to input merit and demerits each day. Teachers and leaders use various Live School reports and information to identify individual students, teacher and cohort performance and needs. Live School reports are distributed bi-weekly as an update on student behavior.

Student performance is communicated to guardians and students bi-weekly through the distribution of Student Reports, mid-quarter through progress reports and at the end of each quarter through report cards. These reports include an update on academic performance through the reports from Power Teacher and an update on behavior through Live School Reports. In addition to those reports, parent teacher conferences are held four times each year. These meetings are for face-to-face communication between the teacher, parent and/or other school leaders on the performance of students. This built-in system allows parents to have multiple opportunities throughout the school year to receive an update on their child's performance. Results from state assessments are publicized and disseminated to parents, staff and community members for stakeholders to continually refine the instructional program of the school. This information is communicated through the parent newsletter, the annual TSIP process, Open House and Title I meetings.

The academic blueprint contains the process in which data is analyzed, interpreted and connected to professional development. The table below summarizes this for each assessment.

Assessment	Frequency	Data Analysis	Professional Development
SWYK	Once a week	On Fridays, SWYK quizzes are administered to students. By 1:00 pm, all teachers will score these assessments using Illuminate scanning tool in order to have data. Weekly data meetings will occur on Fridays to discuss student performance on SWYK quizzes. Directors of Instruction in ELA/SS and Math/Science, will lead these data meetings. Teachers will share out the percentage of students that were either proficient or advanced, and discuss next steps to support students that struggled with the standard. The information gained from the data meetings will be used to inform reteaching	Based on student performance and overall trends, the DOI will provide teachers a plan for improving based on the data from each assessment. The development plan could include a variety of strategies that could be implemented during individual planning periods, before or after school or during the weekly Friday PD time. In almost all cases, the DOI will provide teachers with strategies that should be incorporated during reteach. The DOI will model for the teacher the strategy and teachers spend time practicing the strategy in front of their peers.
RTI Data Meetings	Once a month	RTI Data Meetings helps teachers review and develop interventions for Tier II and Tier III students. Progress monitoring data is reported out to determine whether students who receive interventions are on track to meeting learning goals. RTI Data Meetings are led by DOI's includes classroom teachers. Teachers are responsible for overseeing the RTI data, processes, scheduling for their grade level.	
Interim Assessments	Once a quarter	Every nine weeks, interim assessments are administered to garner student performance on the targeted standards for the unit. Once Interim Assessments are administered, teachers scan the assessments using Illuminate's scanning tool in preparation for the Interim Assessment Data Meeting. Prior to the Data Meeting, DOI's will review all Data and help identify standards that need to be addressed.	

CEG equips leaders and staff with appropriate resources and tools used to inform instructional practice, evaluate teacher effectiveness, and implement professional development. Considerable time is invested on professional development for leaders in analyzing, interpreting and using performance data. All Capstone Education Group leaders are expected to participate in one week of Leadership Training in the summer. During this training, essential tools such as the use of Illuminate and expectations for conducting Data Meetings are discussed and practiced. The COO and CAO facilitate



these sessions. During these sessions, CEG leaders review prior year leading indicator data, which includes student and staff attendance, teacher and student turnover, tardy, merits and demerits, suspensions, and other leading indicators. Then, the group reviews lag indicators, which include primarily daily, weekly, interim and year-end student achievement. During these sessions, CEG leaders discuss how to interpret and apply the data, adjusting either the blueprint or the plans to execute the blueprint for the following year. During the year, CEG and school leaders meet bi-monthly to analyze, interpret and create professional development plans and identify teacher effectiveness based on the data.

CEG leaders then train school leaders how to use data to drive in instruction. CEG leaders provide training on how to use the Illuminate system, the dashboard that stores student performance data. Secondly, CEG leaders equip school leaders with tools to lead a data meeting which will require participants to review previous assessment data, determine strategies to address misconception and then use the data meeting protocol to facilitate the meeting. Each leader will have a chance to analyze data and lead a session. Participants give each other feedback on their ability to identify the appropriate areas of concern.

At year-end, CEG and school leaders review all data points, analyzing individual students, student cohorts, sub-groups, and the entire school to ensure they school has successfully met state, local and CEG goals and to make any changes necessary for the following year to inform instructional practice, evaluate teacher effectiveness, and implement professional development.

d. Describe how the school uses other data (qualitative and quantitative) to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic program.

CEG and Lester Prep use other qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic program. Some of those data points are discussed below.

The CEG school board and CEO review many areas of the program, including leading indicators and lagging indicators, in addition to the academic achievement of students, to evaluate the school's success in accomplishing the mission. The CEO meets with school leaders, as well as other members of the CEG support services team, to discuss progress or challenges in these areas.

Each day, Lester Prep tracks student attendance and student tardies. These quantitative measures provide a leading indicator of expected student achievement, as clearly students need to be on campus on time every day to learn.

The school office, along with the HR Specialist, track daily teacher attendance. This not only directly affects student learning but can also be an indicator of staff morale, sustainability of the workload and buy-in to the school mission, all of which affect student achievement.

During the day, school leaders get real-time updates on student behavior through LiveSchool. The number of merits, demerits, suspensions, calls to parents and results of parent meetings are updated in real time, helping teachers and leaders know how they can best support students throughout the day.



CEG support services administer parent and staff surveys annually. These data points provide school leaders, as well as the CEG board, with critical opinions of staff and parents. The parent survey includes 10 questions and a place for comments, while the staff survey includes over 100 questions and places for staff input. School leaders respond to these critical surveys, adjusting the academic program based on feedback from these important stakeholders.

CEG and LP leaders also look at other measures, including enrollment, student mobility, staff retention, parent attendance at events, community input, board participation, extra-curricular programs, volunteer involvement, and donations as evidence of the success of the academic program.

e. Discuss progress made toward closing achievement gaps.

Lester Prep has made dramatic progress in closing achievement gaps. As noted throughout the application, Binghampton suffers from high rates of mobility. Therefore, progress made on closing achievement gaps will always be reflected in annual student growth but may not always be reflected in student mastery/grade level attainment, which for many students requires longer than one academic year. The data points and discussion below reflect the noteworthy progress made in closing achievement gaps.

The lifetime average growth based on NWEA MAP data for each of the core subjects:

- Math 1.4 years of average annual academic growth
- Reading 1.5 years of average annual academic growth
- Language 1.6 years of average annual academic growth
- Science 1.4 years of average annual academic growth

Obviously, LP's lifetime average growth exceeds the national average and reflects the school's ability to consistently reduce student academic gaps over time.

Lester Prep students also display outstanding performance compared to others around the country as revealed by the NWEA National Growth Percentile. As you can see below in the data chart for the Fall-Spring 2021-22 NWEA MAP results, LP 8th grade students scored in the 99th percentile in reading. This means that LP 8th grade students grew more from Fall 2021 to Spring 2022 than 99% of students across the nation with a similar starting RIT value. Likewise, the school average NCGP for Language of 96 means LP on average performed better than 96% of schools nationally on the Language assessment with similar fall student RIT scores for the 2021-22 school year.

2021-22 Results	Mathematics	Reading	Language	Science
Lester Prep	63	88	96	93
6	22	70	89	80
7	97	94	99	99
8	69	99	99	99

This is obviously outstanding performance, with 9 of a possible 12 grades/subject combinations scoring better than 80% of schools nationally with a similar RIT score and many grades/subjects in the 99th percentile.



In addition, LP consistently earned the state's highest growth scores as evidenced by TVAAS. For the three full years of pre-pandemic education, LP earned the following TVAAS scores:

Subject	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-19
Math	5	4	4
ELA	5	5	5
Overall	5	5	5

While the pandemic affected student growth and achievement, high TVVAS scores returned last year:

Subject	2020-21	2021-22
Math	1	5
ELA	3	5
Overall	1	4

Lester Prep also outperformed other ASD in closing gaps. Here are some data points indicating the difficulty of the work across the ASD:

- The overall ASD TVAAS average has been a score 1 for four of the last five years
- The ASD direct run schools were unable to attain Priority School Exit Status and therefore returned their schools to MSCS
- Of the 28 non-CEG schools, only 3 schools earned Priority School Exit Status prior to 2022

During that same time:

- Lester Prep was the only school in the District to be identified as a TVAAS Level 5 school on TN Ready 3 consecutive years
- Lester Prep earned a TVAAS 4 in 2021-22, revealing above average growth
- Lester Prep has averaged 1.6 grade levels of growth per year, over 5 years, as measured by NWEA's MAP assessment
- Lester Prep was the highest performing school in the district on Reading grade level growth in 2015-16
- In 2018-19, Lester Prep was the highest performing middle school in the District
- Lester Prep earned a TVAAS 5 in both RLA and science in 2021-22
- In 2020-21, Lester Prep overcame the pandemic and displayed outstanding growth in several areas

Clearly, LP students have performed at levels far exceeding those of other ASD schools which were serving similar populations in similar circumstances, indicating LP's greater success in closing academic gaps than those in similar neighborhoods with similar supports.

In summary, Lester Prep NWEA MAP GLE growth, comparisons on NWEA National Growth Percentile charts, TVAAS results. and relative growth compared to other ASD schools show significant progress made closing achievement gaps.

f. Outline leader and teacher professional development and its impact on student achievement.



Professional development (PD) plays a significant role in the development of teachers. Capstone Education Group invests significant time and resources in developing teachers through professional development throughout the school year. During the summer, new staff receive three weeks of intense professional development on behavior management strategies, instruction, and data analysis. Returning staff attends PD for two weeks with the emphasis on content acquisition. The final week of PD includes time for teachers practicing their day-to-day lessons in front of members of their leadership team to receive quick in the moment feedback.

After summer PD, professional development continues throughout the school year. During the school year, every Friday, students are released early for professional development to occur. This provides time for staff to engage in data meetings, content specific PD, behavior management strategies, and practice. The instructional schedule provides professional development blocks each Friday afternoon from 2:30-4:00pm. LP typically has 20-22 Fridays dedicated to professional development throughout the year.

Teachers have at least one full planning period each day. During the planning period, teachers may participate in collaborative planning with other teachers, individual coaching or professional development, observations of other classrooms or data dives.

The network level leaders (CAO, content specialist, Supervisor of Special Education) provide schools with a road map of essential PD topics that are required for the month. School level leaders (principal, deans of instruction, dean of culture) use data based on observations and student achievement to create PD topics that are school specific. School leaders share their weekly PD schedules with network level leaders for approval. This process ensures teachers get systematic development as educators as well as receiving immediate support indicated by the weekly student achievement data.

Academic Acquisition Professional Development Sessions increase teacher content knowledge. DOIs, Master Teachers and the CAO lead these sessions. Training topics in addition to the ones mentioned above include the following:

- Instructional Blueprint Overview - review of the instructional expectations
- Close Reading Phase I- Review components of Phase I, Read Like a Writer (and reader), practice
- Gradual Release Model- Discuss Gradual Release Model, make anchor charts, practice
- Learning Lab Review- How to plan a Guided Reading Lesson (Before, During, After), making flexible groups
- Literacy in Math- Collaborate across content on developing math skills in science
- Nonfiction Reading in Science- Incorporating literacy in math including a problem-solving protocol and constructed response rubric
- Writing PD- Discuss Writing Requirements, planning, and practice execution

Culture professional development sessions are designed to ensure that equitable disciplinary actions and a positive school culture exist throughout the building. These sessions are led by school leaders in the organization. Training topics in addition to the ones noted above include the following:

- Dean of Your Own Classroom – how to set up, maintain and manage your classroom. How to use behavior interventions to individualize supports for students



- Responsive Classroom – how to build classroom culture through morning meetings and daily check ins.
- Culture Blueprint Overview – review and Q&A with practice of specific school-wide systems (including common signals, common language, incentives, etc.)
- The school character trait program: developing common language, common lessons, common practices to teach these traits
- Teach Like a Champion (TLAC) – PD on all behavior management and systems to set your students up for success (ex. Clear what to do, do it again). Modeling, practice, and scripting systems
- Key Teacher Skills Training – High repetition practice on critical skills teachers need to support all students’ social and emotional needs
- Live School Training – how to use Live School reporting on merits and demerits, iPads and parent app to provide value feedback on student behavior
- CPI training on de-escalation training for all staff on how to properly address certain difficult situations with students
- Trauma Informed Classrooms – understanding how trauma affects behavior

Special education and ELL teachers receive professional development specifically designed for their populations. These sessions occur during the summer and are led by the Director of Special Education and Lead ELL, respectively. SPED and ELL teachers also receive extra professional development outside of the organization during the summer. Recently, for example, the ELL teachers went to Nashville for an ESL conference.

The Director of Special Education, the ELL Lead and the CAO provide professional development to general education staff during the summer and throughout the course of the year. These PD topics focus on the needs of special populations. Some topics that will be addressed are the following:

- Understanding Your Student’s IEP and ILP, including the academic needs, language needs, goals, strategies, and accommodations
- Tiered Intervention Systems
- Addressing the needs of gifted students
- Writing an appropriate IEP goal
- Progress monitoring

Network leaders work with EL teachers to provide summer professional development to all teachers regarding the special needs of EL students. Then, during the year, the EL teachers meet with classroom teachers during their planning periods or on Friday to discuss EL student data and adjust as needed.

CEG also conducts professional development and training to all staff on the topics of diversity, inclusivity, and culturally relevant pedagogies during our 3-week summer professional development and throughout the year during our weekly Friday afternoon PD as needed. During the summer, the specific professional development PDs given to staff on these topics include but are not limited to:

- Community Matters – Schools and Families
- Race and Responsibility
- Trauma Informed Classroom Practices for Building Healthy Relationships with All Scholars



Described below are brief summaries of the 3 PD sessions noted above:

Community Matters – Schools and Families equips and empowers students and adults to create schools that are safe, welcoming, and inclusive. Parents and staff learn how to implement a shared understanding of restorative practices to support in-person learning and apply their new skills, tools, and strategies to improve climate at home, and at school. Staff and community members will harness the power of shifting the paradigm from punitive discipline to restorative discipline through proactive and responsive circles.

Race and Responsibility supports students and staff with anti-racism awareness and training. Specifically, teachers learn about the effect of microaggressions, hidden beliefs and unconscious biases in classroom instruction and towards students. The technique taught to staff and students is S.P.A.C.E²: Slow down, Perspective, Ask yourself, Cultural Intelligence, Exemplars, Expand. Through this PD students and staff grapple with the fact that we all have biases as humans. By being aware and digging deep, we can salvage relationships and create new ones based on understanding and respect.

Trauma Informed Classroom Practices professional development and training help staff identify the basic components of trauma, analyze, trauma-informed classroom practices and CEG aligned priorities, and create an action plan to prioritize practices with grade level teams. The team explores the how trauma can come from neighborhood violence, social injustices in the community, transgenerational trauma, and structural oppression. Adverse Child Experiences such as abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction and manifestations in the classroom can impact the way in which students learn. The specific techniques below are aligned to CEG priorities and the Midwest PBIS Network best practices.

CEG has a pipeline and development opportunities for future leadership roles through teacher leadership roles such as Grade Level Chair, Master Teacher and Mentor Teacher roles. Each of these roles allow teachers to cultivate their leadership skills while remaining in the classroom.

CEG also offers effective teachers the opportunity to develop leadership skills through the mentorship by current leaders in the organization. These opportunities give future leaders hands on practice on how to lead other adults. In addition to hands on practice, future leaders will be required to participate in monthly afterschool book studies and developing and leading professional development. These meetings will be led by a CEG school leader and will focus on essential leader moves that promote others to follow.

CEG seeks to differentiate PD based on teacher experience and experience within the CEG network. Newly hired teachers all go through the new teacher professional development to ensure they have mastery of the CEG blueprint and skills necessary to accomplish the mission. After year 1, all teachers who earn their way out of certain professional development content areas will be asked to lead some of the professional development sessions and will also be allowed to choose areas where they would like to be developed.

Over time, CEG differentiates professional development for teachers based on skill level. Before the beginning of summer professional development, the school principal along with the deans of instruction and support services staff, review each teacher's



scores on the evaluation rubric from the prior year in addition to student achievement. Based on student data and teacher scores, teachers receive differentiated professional development designed to push academic achievement. Teachers “earn” their way out of certain professional development based on the evaluation on the teacher rubric.

Teachers hired mid-year go through one week of orientation before teaching in the classroom. The week of orientation includes a “crash course” of the summer professional development agenda provided by the support services team, classrooms observations led by the principal and Dean of Instruction and then 2 days of preparing lesson plans.

CEG also offers a Leader Residency Role. The CAO and CEO work with other CEG leaders to design and implement a program based on the individual, lasting from 2 months to 12 months, to develop future leaders of the organization. The Residency includes role plays, coaching, observations, participation in leader meetings, mentoring and other aspects designed to prepare a person for a future leadership role at CEG. Potential leaders also participate in the leadership programs provided by Relay and Uncommon Schools.

In conclusion, Lester Prep’s professional development systems develop teachers and future leaders and contribute significantly to the school’s impressive track record of student growth.

g. Explain how the school supports diverse learners.

LP provides special education services that follow the IDEA continuum of services and guidelines for 504 and English Language Learners. These services are mostly conducted in general education settings, resource environments or self-contained classrooms.

Here are the general principles on which the school supports students with disabilities:

- Ensure a comprehensive screening and assessment plan emphasizing the early identification and evaluation of students with disabilities;
- Utilize the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team for reviewing assessments, formulating programming, and determining placement for every student with a disability, meeting their unique needs with a plan reviewed annually
- Ensure that placements are made to educate students with disabilities with nondisabled, age-appropriate peers to the maximum extent appropriate;
- Execute discipline practices in accordance with the requirements of state and federal laws;
- Involve parents of students with disabilities in a meaningful dialogue all throughout the process
- Allow parents to express complaints or grievances through the appropriate school channels, and if still unresolved, through the authorizing body

A more detailed description of the services are as follows:

Inclusion/General Education Settings: Most students with special needs are included in the general education environment. In the academic classes, students typically receive whole group and small group instruction. Students generally participate in all assignments, activities, etc. with any needed accommodations and modifications.



Resource Settings: Students receive special education services in a classroom environment specifically designed to more effectively meet their needs.

Gifted and Talented Settings: Students who have been identified as gifted receive academic and cultural enrichment. These services are offered in the general education setting, as a part of the inclusion program, and in a separate pull-out model.

Self-Contained Settings: Students receive special education services in a classroom environment specifically designed to address their needs, which are typically intensive or extensive.

Currently, CEG schools provide self-contained classrooms for students who have cognitive or adaptive scale scores below 70 based on the IQ and Adaptive assessments that are provided by the psychologist. The structure of the classrooms are as follows:

Curriculum: The students receive instruction in Reading, Writing, Math and Pre-Vocational / Life Skills. The curricula that is used to support these areas are Sing/Spell/Read/Write Winning Program, EDMARK Functional Reading Skills and Musical Math. Instructional strategies that are used include explicit direct instruction and the incorporation of multiple intelligences (kinesthetic, visual, musical.)

Students with 504s: Students who have 504's will be instructed in the general education classroom. Teachers will implement the needs of the 504, which may include frequent breaks, modified assignments, etc. For students that have counseling as part of their 504 plan, they will receive this service from the school counselor.

CEG serves EL students in accordance with State Board Policy 3.207. Students receive most of the instruction in their assigned general education classroom. EL teachers push into their English Language Arts classes and serve as a co-teacher in the classroom. Time is also dedicated for additional instruction from the EL teacher through pull out instruction. This support focuses on basic language acquisition. The details of the EL academic plan are provided later in this section.

Capstone Education Group has a Director of Special Education and Assistant Director whose responsibility is to ensure that all students with IEP's are receiving services through the management of the Special Education Coordinator and Special Education Teachers. The Director of Special Education has 26 years of educational experience in which 15 of those years were dedicated to Special Education. The Director of Special Education initially started as a resource/inclusion teacher and moved on to become a Director of Special Education.

LP school leaders and the CEG network team work together to oversee special populations in the school. The network team works with the school leaders and the special education teachers and assistants to ensure the special populations receive all the necessary support and communication necessary for these students to be successful. Weekly meetings with both leaders and teachers ensure that all compliance and educational goals are being met for each student.

The school and leadership team work together at year-end to review the progress of all special education students and to identify students ready to exit the special education program. Exit From Special Education occurs when the child:



- No longer meets the Tennessee eligibility standards,
- No longer requires special education and related services,
- Graduates with a regular diploma, or
- Exceeds the age of eligibility for FAPE (age 21) before the start of the school

The staffing model assumes 20% of LP students will qualify for Special Education services. These students are served by 4 certified special education teachers and 2 special education assistants or one-on-one assistants. As new students with disabilities enroll or students who are identified as having an IEP, adjustments will be made either using teacher personnel or through the hiring of additional staff. To ensure that we have qualified Special Education Teachers, the Director of Special Education will review all potential applicants and work with the HR department to review licensure obligations.

The network Gifted Program Lead works closely with general education teachers to identify potentially gifted students, completes the assessments, creates the IEPs and then delivers the instruction for all gifted students across the three schools.

CEG also employs a nurse to provide essential daily and other regular services for all CEG students, including those with special needs.

LP works with Shelby County Schools and other local providers to provide student services that cannot be provided effectively on the LP campus. For externally placed students, the caseworker at the home CEG school ensures that they are following the services as designated in the IEP. The Director of Special Education attends all IEP and re-evaluations to ensure FAPE is in place. The Director of Special Education receives all original documents from the IEP meeting, which is housed at the LEA school.

CEG partners with Le Bonheur to provide students with the following services: Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, and Physical Therapy. Service providers maintain a practice log and electronically archive communications concerning service delivery. Documentation is compared to students' service requirements for feasibility.

LP uses the same data process for data analysis to evaluate data and academic progress for students with disabilities, English Learners, at risk students and gifted students. CEG network leaders responsible for special education, ELL and gifted join the school leaders and teachers to evaluate the data and ensure the academic success for all students.

When a child is struggling in the classroom with academic performance levels, the teacher uses multiple intervention strategies designed to identify specific needs and provide the implementation of strategies for student learning and success. This process allows the teacher to apply interventions daily for academic support. Based on student responses, teachers will determine if they are successful in the advancement of academic learning for the child's academic program, or if additional support is needed. If successful, there is no need for further action to be taken, because the results indicate that the child has shown academic growth through the response to intervention. If Tier I and Tier II strategies are not successful, the teacher can proceed to referring the child to the Child Study Team process to provide additional options for academic success.

Once that child's name has been submitted to the Child Study team, the team begins the process of evaluation. The parent is notified that the child has been identified as a



struggling student in areas of academic learning, and a meeting with the team and parent is set up to discuss testing and evaluations options and gain permission to begin the process. Initial consent is obtained and testing and evaluations begin. Depending upon the child's performance levels, the necessary testing is set up and completed by the appropriate staff. Once the testing and evaluations are completed, the team meets again with the parent and discusses the results and options to support the student's academic/behavioral needs.

CEG seeks to avoid misidentification of children for special needs services. CEG accomplishes this through the intentional, individual attention given to student needs. The process noted above ensures that teachers use all typical intervention strategies as part of the daily instructional model. Then, all stakeholders analyze academic and behavioral data for the child presented for their evaluation. Every child receives an individualized plan and evaluation that allows and encourages the specificity in determining an exact identification of needs for that child to assist each child in their academic track for success.

CEG instructional programs and practices provide plans and methods to meet the academic and behavioral needs of all students. CEG programs include special education options from Inclusion support in the general education classroom to the self-contained classroom settings. CEG prefers the best practice of teaching the student in their least restrictive environment.

The inclusion classroom settings provide academic support for a child that needs minimal support for academic success. This service is provided in the general education classroom with the support of a general education teacher and a special education teacher delivering services and providing academic support for the child's success. This delivery service is provided for students in the areas of Reading/Language Arts and Math. This is additional support for grade level instruction and performance levels.

Students unsuccessful with the first level of support received further interventions, called Resource Support. Resource Support provides academic support in a separate special education setting. This is small group instruction provided in Reading/Language Arts and Math areas of instruction. In this area of support, students work on their deficit levels of academic area of needs in a smaller group or individual group setting.

The most restrictive learning environment is a self-contained classroom setting. This setting best supports students unable to be successful with the first two layers of intervention. (In other words, children are not able to participate successfully in the general education curriculum with success.) These children require individual goals and objectives determined for their level of understanding and success. Strategies that are used to support these areas of learning are provided through implementation of differentiation in academic activities and materials in all areas of classroom learning. Tutoring is available after school for academic support as well as Saturday school being provided for additional academic supports and strategies for learning success. Learning labs and additional support from reading specialists provide students with additional strategies for academic support.

Continuum of services is provided through annual updates of the IEP goals and objectives as well as Re-Evaluations that occur every three years to determine present



levels of performance. These safeguards allow careful and considerate modifications and adjustments of program instruction for maximum learning success.

General education curriculum is always the primary option for children to find learning success. Exposure to general education curriculum can be provided to all students through the participation in general education settings. Many students unable to be successful in general education classrooms for core subjects will still attend support classes such as P.E., Art, Computer, etc. These activities allow and encourage participation with general education peers and maximize the interactions between students within the school setting to ensure academic success to all students enrolled in the school setting.

Fidelity checks are completed on all Special Education students to ensure that appropriate instructional practices are being implemented for student success. A stakeholder who does not provide academic services to the child completes these checks. School psychologists, Special Education Coordinator, Director of Special Education as well as appointed staff will complete these as non-biased and non-judgmental observations that are presented to the team for review.

Progress monitoring is completed weekly in the areas of Reading and Math to provide data for individual levels of growth and progress. These are completed using a standardized platform of Fast-Bridges computerized program implemented school-wide for all students.

Progress reports for IEP goals and objectives are updated every nine weeks. These progress reports are sent home for parental review. If any adjustments are needed, the case manager can call an IEP meeting and make the necessary adjustments to maximize academic success.

Annual IEP updates occur each year to guarantee that the child is making adequate progress in their learning program. When needed, meetings with the team are scheduled and a new learning plan is developed to support the child's present levels of performance. IEP addendums can also occur to make any needed adjustments in the learning path provided by the IEP goals and objectives.

Re-evaluations occur every three years and can provide team with additional data as needed for student success as well as to continue services. If a classification or identification of disability needs to be adjusted, this is the time and place for it to occur for student academic success. The Director of Special Education, Assistant Director of Special Education and school personnel work together to coordinate communication with the LEA and other critical stakeholders in the process.

CEG provides instruction by teachers trained in the WIDA standards and serves EL students in accordance with State Board Policy 3.207. EL students are identified immediately after registration by gathering all the Home Language Surveys that indicate any language other than English spoken by the student. EL teachers gather all prior records from students who come from other schools. If records cannot be attained, then the student must be tested. All students who do not have a WIDA score from the previous spring are given the WIDA Screener to determine if he or she qualifies for EL services. Students who have received WIDA scores from the past school year will receive EL services depending on their previous year score. By the third week of school,



the EL teachers complete testing and identifies the services each EL requires. If a student enrolls mid-year, the same process is completed as indicated from the beginning of the year, within 10 days of enrollment in school. EL teachers receive results from ACCESS 2.0 and use the results to determine how many hours of service the EL student will receive. EL teachers also evaluate each student's scores in Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing to determine what level of English instruction and academic content will be implemented into the curriculum for each group. Teachers use data from standardized tests, including TN Ready and MAP assessments, to individualize and differentiate English language instruction.

After EL teachers receive the WIDA scores, the EL teachers connect with the general education teachers to review the Can Do Descriptors to identify what language learners can do at various stages of language development as they engage in teaching and learning in class. Comparing the ELL students' skills with the Can Do descriptors helps EL and general education teacher create learning environments for ELL students based on what they can do and to determine the most appropriate way to make the academic content accessible for ELL students. The EL teachers and classroom teachers also work together during actual instruction to create the best possible learning environment for ELs.

As the year progresses, the EL teachers continue to participate in grade level planning meetings and also review and modify regular classroom lessons as needed so that ELLs are reaching state standards and are being provided with academic rigor, while simultaneously providing accommodations to support the needs of each individual English language learner. EL teachers provide EL students with an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) and interventions for students who are not meeting the expected growth trajectories outlined in their ILP.

WIDA ACCESS 2.0 results are used to determine how many hours of service an EL student will receive. Annually, EL teachers also evaluate each student's scores in Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing to determine what level of English instruction and academic content will be implemented into the curriculum. Teachers use data from standardized tests, including TN Ready and MAP assessments, to monitor and evaluate the progress and success of EL students.

English learners who take WIDA ACCESS and score a 4.2 or higher composite and 4.0 or higher for literacy may be exited from receiving ELL direct services and become a Transitional I student. These students do not receive EL services but are monitored consistently throughout the year by the EL teachers. English language learners who receive a 3.6 or below require EL services for an hour a day. A score of 3.7-4.1 still qualifies a student for EL services but does not require an hour a day.

Parents of EL students are given notice of and information regarding the instructional program within the first thirty days of the school year, or within the first two weeks of a student being placed in an ESL program, in a language the parent understands. The notice includes the following:

- The reason for identifying the child as an EL student
- The child's level of English language proficiency, including how the level was assessed, and the status of the child's academic achievement
- Methods of instruction used in the program, methods of instruction in other available programs, and how they differ



- How the program meets the educational strengths and needs of the student, and how the program will help the student reach English language proficiency and meet academic standards
- Program exit requirements, rate of transition to standard instructional program classroom, and expected rate of high school graduation
- How the program meets the goals of an EL student with an IEP
- Information on the parents' right to withdraw the student from the program or choose another program or method of instruction if available.

The school encourages parental involvement and regularly apprise parents of their child's progress. If a parent refuses direct ESL services for the student, the general education classroom teacher is responsible for providing appropriate accommodations as required in the student's ILP. Further, retention of an EL student is not based solely on English language proficiency. The school shall follow the procedures outlined in the State EL guidelines when considering an EL student for retention.

The CEG EL Lead is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of EL students, including exiting students from EL services. The Lead has been performing this function for the past three years for all CEG schools, and she will continue to work with school leaders and teachers to manage the process and ensure that all EL students are being successful.

Historically there have been 5 to 25 students qualifying for EL services. The needs of these students have been met by one staff member with the support of the EL lead if needed, meeting the 1:35 teacher-to-student ratio. The ongoing budget assumes a similar student enrollment and staffing plan.

h. Discuss areas of academic concern and changes made to address any deficiencies

Lester Prep has demonstrated consistent, significant progress in closing academic gaps. However, lower than desired levels of student mastery concern the school and the organization.

CEG hired a Director of Public Relations and Recruiting to improve student attendance and tardy issues, which inhibit grade level mastery. This staff member, along with LP office staff, will work with counselors, the behavior team, local apartment complexes and the Binghamton Development Corporation to address housing and life issues that create high levels of mobility and chronic absenteeism that negatively affect student outcomes.

Leadership performance inconsistencies contributed significantly to the decrease in student growth and achievement. CEG addressed the leadership team issues by hiring a new team for the 2022-23 school year. The new leadership team has created a Powerful Student Culture 2022-23 and have been offered contracts for the 2023-24 school year, which should lead to increased student mastery.

Staff turnover and quality also contributed to the lower levels of mastery for the last two years. The new principal did not renew most teacher contracts after the 2021-22 school year, electing to change leaders and teachers as part of the strategy to turn



around Lester Prep, and has offered contracts to 95% of the current staff for the 2023-24 school year.

LP also strengthened the academic approach for providing extra support for students who did not master content during the first teach. In January, LP added a math interventionist and a reading interventionist role. These two roles will work alongside the core subject teacher, RTI specialist and students to support students who do not show mastery on the weekly Show What You Know Quiz.

Finally, CEG created a new network position that began in August of this year. CEG designed the role, Math and Science Content Manager, to increase content knowledge of math and science teachers throughout the network. CEG believes increased content knowledge of teachers will improve student mastery over time.

All the plans noted above address student mastery for all students, improving the area of greatest academic concern.

i. Explain why the school's academic outcomes merit renewal of its charter agreement.

The evidence for academic outcomes meriting renewal is best seen through comparisons of other organizations and schools performing similar work in similar neighborhoods with similar district support.

The ASD originally authorized all CEG schools, including LP, to serve schools performing in the bottom 5% of all schools in the state. LP was among the first schools to begin the school transformation process.

The ASD would eventually include over 30 schools with some of the most effective national school operators and strong local organizations. CPD and LP would join CPL as part of the ASD serving students in the lowest performing schools in the state in some of the communities of greatest need.

Here are descriptions of some of the high-quality national organizations that joined the ASD to perform this most challenging work:

- Aspire Public Schools - Founded in 1998, Aspire Public Schools currently operates 36 schools for 15,200+ students in California.
- Green Dot - Founded in 1999 and serving more than 14,000 students, U.S. News and World Report has ranked these schools among the very best in the nation.
- Scholar Academies – a high performing charter school network in the northeast
- Yes Prep - an award-winning Texas public charter school system serving more than 20,000 students
- KIPP - currently operates more than 280 schools with 175,000 alumni nationwide after being originally founded 19 years ago.

These highly effective national organizations joined local networks such as Libertas, Promise Academy, Gestalt, Pathways in Education, Frayser Community Schools, and Freedom Prep to form a very strong ASD cohort.

Each of the schools and organizations, like CEG, contracted to turn around schools found on the Priority School list and located in a high-needs community. Most schools



served high SPED populations and mostly low-income families.

The work proved to be very difficult. Many of the organizations were unable to continue as part of the ASD, as noted by the following:

- Aspire returned to CA and spun off their Memphis ASD schools
- YES Prep returned to TX unable to find a way to be successful in turnaround work in Memphis
- Scholar Academies chose to spin off their Memphis schools and discussed closing their Memphis ASD schools
- KIPP, Freedom Prep, Gestalt, Pathways in Education and the ASD direct run all closed their ASD schools, unable to successfully meet the expectations of their MOU

The organizations that remained in the ASD faithfully worked to improve student outcomes and overcome the significant challenges of students and families.

Unfortunately, most have been unable to make significant academic gains. Here are some data points indicating the difficulty of the work across the ASD:

- The overall ASD TVAAS average has been a score 1 for four of the last five years
- The ASD direct run schools were unable to attain Priority School Exit Status and therefore returned their schools to MSCS
- Of the 28 non-CEG schools, only 3 schools earned Priority School Exit Status

By comparison, CEG schools, working with the same access to resources and district support and also serving schools performing in the bottom 5% of the state of Tennessee, generated these results:

- Ten times earned a school composite TVAAS score of 5
- Continuation of all 3 schools for their entire MOU length with a positive cash flow every year
- Moved each one of their schools off the Priority List
- Earned Reward School Status
- Moved the lowest performing school in the state past more than 150 schools in TN Ready achievement
- Earned the highest rates of mastery of Memphis ASD schools on 5 separate occasions
- Consistently scored high parent satisfaction ratings despite the difficulty of turnaround work
- Earned the highest level of math mastery among ASD schools in Memphis 3 separate times

During that same time:

- Lester Prep was the only school in the district to be identified as a TVAAS Level 5 school on TN Ready 3 consecutive years
- Lester Prep earned a TVAAS 4 in 2021-22, revealing above average growth
- Lester Prep has averaged 1.6 grade levels of growth per year, over 5 years, as measured by NWEA's MAP assessment
- Lester Prep was the highest performing school in the district on Reading grade level growth in 2015-16
- In 2018-19, Lester Prep was the highest performing middle school in the district
- Lester Prep earned a TVAAS 5 in both RLA and science in 2021-22



Clearly, CEG and LP have performed at levels far exceeding those of other ASD schools which were serving similar populations in similar circumstances. This provides strong evidence that LP and CEG schools outperform most schools serving similar demographics and that LP deserves renewal of their charter agreement.

While none of the geographically close MSCS schools provide a better comparison than ASD schools, Douglass provides the closest demographics to LP, though LP serves much higher rates of special populations. Douglass demographics compared to LP:

- Douglass has 10% special education population while CPL has 20%
- Douglass has 0% ELL while CPL has 10%
- Douglass has 95% African American while CPL has 97%

Though LP serves a higher needs population (based on the demographics above), LP has better student outcomes than Douglass:

- More than 3x the number of TVAAS points achieved between 2019-2022
- 2-3x the rate of proficiency in 2022
- 3x higher Achievement Score on the TN School Report Card

Additionally, LP has demonstrated performance at or above the level of the nearest schools and local district:

- 2nd highest Growth Score according to the TN School Report Card with the highest level of ED%
- Highest school Achievement Score from the TN School Report Card with the highest level of SWD%
- Scored within 0.5% proficiency as the local district, MSCS, when controlling for Economically disadvantaged status even though the median income of the primary LP zone is almost 3x less than the median income of Memphis
- Scored within 0.1 points of Reward School designation if not accounting for Chronic Absenteeism

In summary, LP's consistent ability to generate academic results exceeding organizations and schools serving similar populations provides overwhelming evidence that LP's academic outcomes merit renewal of its charter agreement.

Section II – Operational Stability

a. Address progress toward meeting the operational goals outlined in the charter agreement, if applicable.

Lester Prep has consistently met the operational goals outlined in the charter agreement.

The school, along with the organization, have always met the financial objectives regarding cash on hand, operating budget, and receiving unqualified third party audits without reservation. The school and organization have also applied for and received financial grants that were competitive and noncompetitive, and met all financial obligations related to those grants. The organization has received the highest marks for all of its financial goals.

Lester Prep has also met the facility expectations, maintaining the building including making significant operational and capital improvements. The building has passed all



required inspections and has been renovated and upgraded to a condition that far exceeds the original condition of the building 10 years ago.

Parent and staff survey results consistently review or high levels of satisfaction, including over 90% of parents consistently stating they would recommend Lester Prep to their family and friends.

Lester Prep complies with all staffing requirements, including certification requirements, labor laws and other personnel requirements.

Finally, Lester Prep has been an exemplar school for meeting all compliance requests as well as meeting the ASD and Tennessee Public Charter School Commission expectations around state, federal, and local compliance issues, required reporting and governance requirements.

In summary, the school materially complies with all material legal, statutory, regulatory, or contractual requirements contained in its charter agreement and has met all operational goals outline in their original charter.

b. Discuss student enrollment over the course of the current charter term. Is the school operating at maximum capacity? How many students are currently on the waitlist?

As a neighborhood school, Lester Prep enrollment mirrors the population trends in the community. The Binghampton community suffers from significant family turnover caused by life issues outside of the control of the school. Families frequently lose housing or move out of the neighborhood based on financial or family considerations. This results in significant student mobility rates for the school, averaging 28% during non-COVID years. Therefore, enrollment tends to move up and down over time as families move in and out of the neighborhood. Here are the enrollment trends since opening:

14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
78	248	244	223	258	289	284	258	215

Binghampton lost housing over the last two years through the elimination of two apartment complexes. However, the Binghampton Development Corporation, along with the city of Memphis, have plans to bring in more than 200 multi-family apartment units located on Tillman, which is a three-minute walk from the Lester campus. The Commercial Appeal states “Plans call for 86 one-bedroom units, 89 two-bedroom units and 44 three-bedroom units on the 8-acre property.... The units...are intended for low- and moderate-income residents.” The tillmancove.com website indicates opening in summer of 2023. There are also preliminary plans for additional housing on Walnut Grove near the Public Library, which is less than one mile from the school.

LP believes these two significant investments in housing located near Lester Prep will lead to significant increases in enrollment and move the school enrollment closer to its maximum capacity of 350 students. As of March 15, LP enrolled 169 students and has no wait list for the 2023-24 school year.

c. Describe trends in student attrition rates and how leaders have addressed any concerns in attrition.



Historically, LP students have suffered from high rates of mobility. According to the 2021-22 annual report, 80% of student transfers during the school year were due to the family moving out of the neighborhood. This corroborates the data from the 2020 US Census that shows only 38% of households are owner-occupied in the primary LP attendance zone.

Further information on mobility and attrition of students at Lester Prep is noted in the table below.

School	10/1/2021 Enrollment	Ending Enrollment	Entries	Exits	All Movement	Attrition	Mobility Rate	Attrition Rate
Lester Prep	253	263	35	25	60	10	23%	4%

The consistent turnover in students makes annual academic growth a key measure of school success, as student academic gaps upon entering LP make student mastery hard to achieve for many students. LP must ensure that each year the students who enroll grow more than one grade level during the academic year, regardless of their starting point, to ensure that LP has effectively narrowed every student’s academic gaps. If students return year after year, and LP grows them more than one grade level each year, students will be on track to reach grade level mastery on TN Ready. However, should family circumstances dictate that students move out of Binghampton and therefore leave LP after one or two years and therefore before reaching grade level, LP may not display increasing mastery on TN Ready but still be very successful meeting the needs of new and returning students by delivering more than 1 year of academic growth for each child.

While individual family mobility consistently removes students from LP, new families move into the neighborhood and enroll their children in the school throughout the school year. LP teachers and staff must consistently welcome new students, identify their learning levels and quickly incorporate them into the LP systems and culture.

CEG and Lester Prep continually address these concerns in attrition. The organization has utilized Communities in Schools in the past to identify obstacles that force parents to remove their families from the community and then help them overcome those obstacles. CEG also met with other charter school leaders to identify ways they support families with housing or family issues.

LP also worked with the local development corporation, the Binghampton Development Corporation, to identify opportunities for increased and improved housing in the community. This resulted in loan and financial plans to transition renters to homeowners in the community and construction of several new houses on Carpenter Street, the street on which the school is located. CEG leaders also met with the owner of the Red Oaks apartment complex to understand issues affecting housing in the community. The apartment manager frequently communicates individual family needs to the school so the school can try to support the parents when possible.

CEG recently added a Director of Public Relations and Recruitment, and plans to add a Student Recruiting Specialist to continue to understand and address family and student needs that lead to the high student mobility in the school and community.

d. Explain how the school provides a safe environment and addresses the physical, social, emotional, and health needs of students.

LP spent the last 9 years creating a positive and safe academic environment that reinforces the school's mission, values and goals. Students and parents enjoy deep relationships with teachers and staff and the consistency of the school's expectations year over year creates a safe and nurturing environment in the school. This consistent approach provides a safe school environment that addresses the physical, social, emotional, and health needs of students.

The CEG and LP blueprint describes this environment as a Powerful Student Culture. The blueprint describes the methods and systems school leaders and teachers utilize to create a positive learning environment where all students feel emotionally safe, are motivated and celebrated, and connect to their school community. The Powerful Student Culture requires the contribution of all members of the school community, including students, parents, school staff and school leaders, to create a safe environment where all students thrive and succeed.

The Powerful Student Culture begins when students feel prepared, safe and ready to learn. The school communicates the key components during the summer and parent nights so students and families understand how to arrive at school feeling supported and confident. For example, the Parent and Student handbook describes the belief that school uniforms unite students and promote a feeling of team and community.

The Parent and Student handbook also outlines the Lester Prep character traits and expectations so that all students and parents know how their child will be supported as well as the keys for creating a safe environment. The school feels safe and students feel social and emotional support when students and staff model the character traits and follow the school expectations.

Teachers and staff teach and model the schoolwide expectations found in the Parent and Student handbook during the first two weeks of school. The expectations align with our school's PREPROCKS Character Traits and are reviewed, discussed and practiced during these first two weeks. The PREPROCKS character traits include:

- Prepared - made ready in advance
- Respectful - having consideration and regard for someone
- Engaged - greatly interested in the learning environment
- Purposeful - having or showing determination having a clear goal or target to accomplish.
- Resilient - able to withstand or recover quickly from difficult circumstances
- Optimistic - hopeful and confident about the future
- Courageous - face difficulties without fear
- Kind - having or showing a friendly, generous, and considerate nature
- Self-Controlled - control over impulses, emotions, and/or desires

The facility also creates a safe environment that addresses the social and emotional needs of students. A visitor walking down the hall of LP would notice the college banners displayed on the walls, the school values and expectations posted in classrooms, quiet and clean hallways and bathrooms, and see students joyfully engaging in learning throughout the building. LP created this school culture through 9 years of hard work



and consistency and therefore enjoys an unmistakable school culture woven through every aspect of the school.

The merit/demerit system leads to a safe environment that sets students up for college and career success. The system helps students understand which behaviors will facilitate their success, and which ones will create future obstacles. Students learn to contribute to their community by displaying positive behaviors and making good decisions. A school-wide system creates a positive community of learners, where everyone is aware of the expectations.

The school staff executes this system based on individual student behaviors. When students misbehave, they earn a succession of consequences, starting with redirection and getting progressively more involved as needed, based on the student's response to each consequence and their correction of behaviors. This helps to remind students not to repeat misbehaviors and to use their learning time wisely. Likewise, when students display the PREPROCKS traits, they receive merits and public praise that affirms the student and their decision to support a safe learning environment and exemplify behavior that lead to success.

The school staff also provide classroom and grade level opportunities to celebrate good choices that lead to a safe and nurturing school environment. Competitions among classes and grades reward merits earned and result in class and grade level rewards and celebrations.

The organization and school provide other supports to ensure a safe environment and addresses the physical, social, emotional, and health needs of students. These are listed below.

CEG agrees with the expectations around the Tennessee Coordinated School Health Program. Some of the components include the handling of health issues with students. No student will be denied an education solely because of a communicable disease, and his/her educational program shall be restricted only to the extent necessary to minimize the risk of transmitting the disease. Parents or guardians of infected students shall inform appropriate school officials of the infection so that proper precautions for the protection of other students, employees, and the infected student shall be taken. No student with a communicable disease which may endanger the health of either himself/herself or other individuals will enter or remain in the regular school setting but will be provided other alternatives.

Because Tennessee requires schools residing in school districts with pregnancy rates above 19.5 per 1,000 females ages 15-17 to implement family life education, LP provides an age-appropriate family life planning course that emphasizes abstinence until marriage and includes instructions for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. Parents and legal guardians have a right to examine the grade level instructional materials and confer with school leaders regarding any or all portions of family life. A parent or guardian who wishes to excuse a student from any, or all, portions of family life shall submit a request, in writing, to the student's Principal. A student who is excused from any or all portions of family life shall not be penalized for grading purposes if the student satisfactorily performs alternative health lessons.



LP also provides regular physical education classes for students in all grades taught by a certified teacher. The curriculum aligns with the expectations of the state of Tennessee and provides students with a variety of physical activities and occurs in the school gymnasium.

CEG also believes that the school environment communicates something to and about its students. Therefore, CEG schools seek to create a healthy school environment that is safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing. This aligns with the cultural expectation of the school and also shows students that they are valued and important. Parents surveys include questions regarding the cleanliness and appearance of the school campus, classrooms, common spaces and bathrooms.

Lester Prep provides a full-time counselor and full behavior team to provide students support around emotional, social and mental health needs. These staff members build relationships with students and create opportunities for student to share concerns they have around school and life issues.

The school enjoys a full-time nurse available to support students as needed. The nurse executes the Coordinated School Health Program, which includes:

- Monitors compliance of school health programs with federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies.
- Collaborates with other child-support agencies in designing and providing health support to students and families.
- Administer daily and PRN (as needed) medications and nursing care procedures prescribed by the student's physician.
- Provides first aid care and medically prescribed services.
- Maintains security of school health supplies.
- Serves as a resource person on health issues
- Provides staff development on health-related topics for school staff and volunteers.
- Connects with providers to facilitate health screens and health appraisals for students and staff.
- Works with school staff to ensure all students have proper immunizations before enrolling
- Work with other staff to develop Individual Health Care Plans and 504 Plans for students as needed.
- Follow procedures for suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.

Annually, LP prepares plans for safety and security for students, staff, guests and property based on the needs of the school campus and stakeholders. The Dean of Operations is responsible for school safety operations. Some of the key roles and needs for the safety plan include identified locations for evacuations, emergency transportation plans for locations requiring transportation, student release procedures, communication plan with parents, CPR and other emergency training for all staff and design and posting of emergency evacuation routes.

The Dean of Operations also supervises the campus security guard to ensure the safety of staff, parents and students while on campus.

Lester Prep students enjoy afterschool athletics, cheerleading and other extracurricular activities to support their physical and health development.



Finally, CEG and LP contract with psychologists and LeBonheur services to provide full wrap around services as needed. LeBonheur places fulltime staff on campus and provides such support as physical therapy, language and speech therapy. These services are provided in accordance with a plan of care established by the multidisciplinary team, with parent input, documented on the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). LeBonheur provides all therapy evaluation, and consultation services at the school.

In summary, the LP systems and support, combined with expertise of trained professionals, provides a safe environment and addresses the physical, social, emotional, and health needs of students.

e. Explain how the school has made community connections and developed working relationships with parents and families.

Over the last nine years, Lester Prep has made significant community connections and developed close working relationships with parents and families. LP, located on the same campus and part of the same organization as the CEG pre-k and elementary school, have authentic and deep relationships with parents and the community.

The school regularly requests feedback from parents, family members, and the community on how to better serve students and meet the needs of individual students and the community. Family and community members provide formal survey feedback twice a year on the winter and spring surveys, quarterly at the TSIP and annually at the Title I meeting, quarterly through the parent committee meetings, as well as informally at other points in the year like parent teacher conferences, school assemblies/celebrations, and at their convenience to the principal or their teacher.

The parent committee brings parent thoughts and input about every aspect of the school, including the academic programs, school culture, staff interaction, after school opportunities and any other area of concern, providing valuable insight and feedback during those regular meetings. In addition, all board meetings are also open to the public with access information available on our website. Finally, the school regularly communicates with families about their students and other school updates through weekly newsletters, text messages, website, social media, automated calls, special letters home, personal phone calls.

Opportunities for parent engagement start during the summer before opening and continue once the school year begins. These events are listed as part of the school calendar. Sample events include: Summer fun events on campus, Summer recruiting events in the community, Annual Title I Meeting, Open house, Literacy Night, Math Night, Black History Night Program, Annual ELL Family Connection Night, Community Member Meet and Greet Events, Principal Coffees, Monthly Character Celebrations, Quarterly honors programs, Community members sharing with classes during community meeting, and Parent training events/classes.

School policies, commitments and volunteer opportunities are first presented to parents during the registration and enrollment process. CEG requires all parents to sign a Parent-Student Compact which outlines the parental involvement policy.

There are other opportunities for parents and the school to work together in addition to the original compact. The school communicates via weekly parent newsletters placed in every child's homework folder, the parent bulletin board, parent teacher conferences,



the grade level curriculum meeting held in the fall, report cards, returned daily and weekly assessments, signed daily homework, MAP, TCAP and TN Ready scores, and through regular communications with the School Leader or staff member.

LP has nine years of relationships with organizations that support LP and partner in serving the Binghampton community. Some of these organizations include: Lester Community Center, Binghampton Development Corporation, Junior League of Memphis, Carpenter Art Garden, The Exchange Club Family Center, Agape Family Child and Services, Service Over Self, Eikon Ministries, Refugee Empowerment Program and World Relief Memphis.

LP and the CEG Binghampton elementary school, Cornerstone Prep Lester Campus (CPL), share the same campus and have many common families and students. Currently, more than 65 families have students in both CPL and LP, enrolling over 175 students in the schools. In 2021, CEG engaged parents utilizing the state approved trigger law to discover parent interest in CPL continuing to be the neighborhood school after the end of the 10-year MOU with the ASD. In just one week, 98% of respondents indicated they wanted CPL to continue to as the neighborhood school. The response rate was extremely high, as 278 families (82%) of Cornerstone Prep Lester Campus provided signed, written affirmation of their desire for CEG to continue to run their neighborhood school as part of the trigger law. This overwhelming response provides dramatic evidence that parents like the program, teaching, culture, and success of CPL and desire for CPL to continue to be their child's school. The close connection and overlap between CPL parents and LP parents would indicate that LP parents would provide similar responses to a question regarding the future of LP as their school of choice.

Because CEG is a small organization with deep relationships and partnerships in the city, CEG schools can provide extra support and focus to students, parents and the community that other schools and large districts cannot provide. LP and CPL provided many new opportunities, academic support, wrap-around services and neighborhood improvements over the last 10 years.

For example, LP provides unique in-school support to meet the needs of students:

- Full time Nurse
- Dedicated Inclusion Special Education teachers
- On site wrap around services through Le Bonheur and other partners, including occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language development, hearing and vision screening, providing more than \$1 million in services since inception
- Full time Counselor
- Math and reading interventionists
- Dedicated English Language Learner teachers
- Full Behavior Team

CEG has unique and longstanding partnerships that have invested heavily in Binghampton over the last 10 years. Improvements on Carpenter Street (the immediate street on which LP is located) since the school opened include:

- 3 new homes built
- 6 “unhealthy” homes torn down



- Art Garden
- Vegetable Garden
- Bike shop
- Tutoring house
- Installation of police cameras, speed humps, crosswalks and flashing school zones for the community

In summary, LP has significant and deep relationships with parents, students and members of the Binghampton community.

f. Explain how the school sustains a well-functioning organizational structure that provides for personnel stability and effective teacher retention.

The Lester Prep organizational structure and systems that lead to stable staffing and effective teacher retention are based on the CEG mission, vision, and best practices as found in the organization's blueprint. CEG serves more than 1400 students with approximately 200 employees and has been a desired place of employment for more than 12 years. CEG began with five employees and over time the focus on creating a joyful professional adult culture with consistent support and employment practices has led to the successful growth of the staff.

The organization places a high priority on supporting teachers and students, as evidenced by behavior teams at every school, security on every campus, counselors and wrap around services for all students, as well as deans and coaches that provide support and development for all staff. The organization also places a high priority on consistency in applying employment practices and therefore utilizes salary schedules and consistent benefits that ensure that all staff receive fair and equitable treatment.

The organization also employs a support services department that serve all the schools and provides academic expertise through the CAO and content managers as well as operational support from the COO. The CEO, director of special education, and the HR specialist provide leadership and support in planning, hiring and supporting the school leaders and staff. The support services department works together to provide the schools a well-functioning organizational structure that generates personnel stability and effective teacher retention.

g. Describe the development of the board members and school leadership during the current charter term.

The Governing Board is organized through the Officer positions of Board Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Directors. The bylaws allow for a minimum of five members and a maximum of nine members. Currently there are 8 members of the board, excluding the CEO.

The Governing structure is based on successful multi-school networks across the country. The structure has been in place for the previous ten years, during which time the board ensured that each school, and collectively the organization, accomplished the mission and is an educational and operational success.

In the past, the board has recruited new members with identified skills needed at the time on the governing board. The board typically asks school leaders, community leaders, parents, and other board contacts to submit proposed names for future board



members. Then the board members work together to contact and vet these proposed candidates to prepare the final list to come before the whole board for approval. The board then votes to add any additional new members. This has occurred in the past when there has been board member attrition or when the board needed to acquire new members to represent parents or a new skill needed. It is expected that this process will continue in the future.

New board members receive training from the board chair and the CEO. They receive training and insight on how the board operates, tour the schools, review financial and academic data, review the approved charter agreements and meet key stakeholders.

Likewise, the current board members receive annual board training and development as required by T.C.A 49-13-111(o). Past training included certified Tennessee Charter School Association trainings, various other board certification presentations and on-line study and the hiring of a professional consultant to help equip and develop the board. The board also has conducted a retreat where short-term and long-term plans were discussed and developed. Each year the chairman reviews state provided options for meaningful board training and selects the training that best meets the needs of the board at that time. Then, the evidence of the training is submitted to the state for approval before the required deadline.

CEG utilizes the support services department, along with such organizations as Uncommon Schools and Charter School Growth Fund to develop school leaders.

Support services includes the CEO and Chief School Officer (CSO) to manage and develop principals. Each week these support services staff members meet with principals to discuss student progress, staff development and other issues that arise. Then, once per month, all CEG school principals meet together to share best practices and problems solve.

The CAO equips and supports the deans of instruction (DOI). The CAO meets regularly with the deans, conducting school walkthroughs and reviewing student data. The CAO also collaborates with the deans to develop weekly professional development sessions.

The COO leads and develops the deans of operations. The COO meets weekly with the operations dean to discuss facility and operational needs and execute the operations blueprint.

CEG contracts with Uncommon Schools and Charter School Growth Fund to develop principals and other school leaders. Uncommon Schools comes to campus at least twice per month to develop school leaders and provide support as needed. Charter School Growth Fund allows CEG leaders to attend local and national conferences to provide networking and skill development.

Over the past 10 years, the following leaders have come through this development plan:

- A teacher became a dean of instruction and then became a principal
- A dean of instruction became a principal
- A teacher became a dean of culture
- A dean of culture became a principal



- An ESL teacher became an ESL lead
- A SPED teacher became an assistant director SPED
- A principal became a chief schools officer
- A dean of culture became a chief culture officer

h. Describe any facility changes/improvements and their impact on achieving school goals.

CEG believes that the facility should communicate several things to students and families. First, the facility should indicate the students are valued and will be safe. Secondly, CEG wants the facility to cast vision for the future, ideally college for all students. Finally, the facility should meet the needs of the whole student.

The following changes and improvements implemented at Lester Prep were designed to accomplish one of those three goals:

- 2015 – place college pennants and flags in all classrooms, line the walls with inspiring quotes and desired character traits
- 2015 – paint all classrooms and bathrooms
- 2016 - roof replacement to stop leaks
- 2018 - 3rd floor complete renovation: fresh paint for all LP space, new hardwood floors, new tile and stalls and paint in bathrooms, installation of brighter lights throughout the space
- 2019 - built out weightroom for athletic department
- 2020 - gym paint/lights, completely new Wifi network
- 2022 - upgraded all water fountains with water bottle fillers
- 2023 – new HVAC Controls and New Windows

In summary, CEG has spent more than \$750,000 improving the Lester Campus to make the school more welcoming and effective for learning.

i. Explain why the school’s operational condition merits renewal of its charter agreement.

For nine years, Lester Prep has consistently met the operational goals outlined in the charter agreement. In summary:

The school has always met the financial objectives and has received the highest marks for all of its financial goals, including unqualified audits for nine consecutive years.

The school has met all the facility expectations, maintaining the building including making significant operational and capital improvements. The building has passed all required inspections and has been renovated and upgraded to a condition that far exceeds the original condition of the building 10 years ago.

Parent and staff survey results consistently review or high levels of satisfaction, including over 90% of parents consistently stating they would recommend Lester Prep to their family and friends.

Lester Prep complies with all staffing requirements, including certification requirements, labor laws and other personnel requirements.



Lester Prep has been an exemplar school for meeting all compliance requests as well as meeting the ASD and Tennessee Public Charter School Commission expectations around state, federal, and local compliance issues, required reporting and governance requirements.

Lester Prep has made significant community connections and developed close working relationships with parents and families, as evidenced by parent survey results and multiple long-lasting community partnerships and relationships.

The school provides a safe environment and addresses the physical, social, emotional, and health needs of students through the staffing model that includes a counselor, nurse and behavior team, a blueprint and Parent and Student handbook that describes the method for making students safe and successful and supports from outside organizations such as LeBonhuer.

The school has made significant academic gains despite dealing with a high-needs neighborhood with significant student attrition and has done it while remaining financially stable for the past nine years.

The organization governing board has been a stable, consistent board since inception, with 4 board members from the founding board joined by 5 new members to create a successful governing organization.

The current Lester Prep principal founded the school more than nine years ago as a dean of culture and has worked as a dean of instruction, Chief Culture Officer and now school principal.

In summary, the school has met or exceeded all of the operational goals outlined in the original charter and therefore merits renewal of the charter agreement.

Section III - Financial Health

a. Address progress toward meeting the financial goals outlined in the charter agreement, if applicable.

Lester Prep, along with the entire CEG network, has always met the financial goals outlined in the charter agreement. Even in years when the enrollment dipped below projections, LP reduced expenses or obtaining grants in order to meet all of the financial obligations in the charter agreement. CEG's balance sheet contains over \$5 million in financial reserves, providing evidence of the organization's financial management.

The school materially complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations, LEA policies and procedures, and provisions of the charter agreement relating to financial reporting requirements, including but not limited to: Complete and on-time submission of financial reports, including initial and revised budgets, periodic financial reports as required by the State Board via the Reporting Calendar, on-time submission and completion of annual independent audit and complete and on-time submission of all additional reporting requirements related to the use of public funds.

b. Report on the fiscal management of the school during the current charter term based on previously submitted audits, including A-133 audits if applicable, and financial reports.



Lester Prep, as part of the CEG annual network audit, has always earned an unqualified opinion from auditors and a very strong balance sheet. There have been no noted issues over the last 10 years of annual audits.

c. Address the alignment between expenditures and the school’s mission, plans for student academic growth, and staff professional development.

CEG believes the most effective spending plan to accomplish the mission and ensure academic growth and staff development is to invest in qualified staff members who believe in the CEG mission. CEG invests more than 75% of its expenditures in staffing or staffing related expenditures, supporting our belief that teachers and support staff are the most important part of executing the mission in a school setting.

LP employs deans of instruction, culture, and operations to support the staff and provide professional development for each individual teacher. The network also provides a CAO and content manager who work with the schools leaders to develop the school staff during summer PD sessions, Friday PD sessions and daily planning periods for individual teachers.

In addition, the LP principal receives more than \$10,000 per year to reward, celebrate, and inspire the staff with gifts, meals, and other expenditures that support staff development and retention. The principal also has a student reward expenditure budget that allows for class celebrations and incentives for things like student achievement and attendance.

LP has never had a staff layoff or downsizing due to financial concerns, evidence that the organization’s commitment to staff as the primary resource and expenditures align with the mission and support academic achievement.

In summary, this staffing and spending plan aligns the expenditures, mission, student growth and staff professional development.

d. Review how any significant fiscal challenges were addressed during the current charter term.

CEG, as well as Lester Prep, have encountered no significant fiscal challenges during its tenure. Reduced spending, grants and reallocation of resources have been used to address minor fiscal challenges during the charter. All schools have successfully addressed any issues or shortfalls in revenue.

e. Describe efforts to operate the school in a financially sound and transparent manner.

The CEG governing board, along with the process for creating budgets and approving spending, ensure the school operates in a financially sound and transparent manner. The board approves the budget every year and reviews the monthly financial statements at the board meetings. The CEO must explain any variances and communicate a plan to resolve the fiscal challenge. The board reviews the annual audit and form 990. All board minutes are published on the website and the annual audit as well as 990 are made publicly available.

f. Explain why the school’s financial condition merits renewal of its charter agreement.



The school, along with the entire CEG network, has been financially sound for more than 10 years. Every audit has been received as an unqualified positive opinion and the organization has met every financial requirement as found in its charter agreement. The board has approved every annual budget and held the CEO accountable for following appropriate reporting standards as well as meeting the financial plan submitted as the budget. The network's strong balance sheet, combined with its historical financial success, merits renewal of the charter agreement.

Section IV – Future Plans/Projections

Provide an overview of the charter school's future goals and plans for their achievement, including:

a. Academics and updated academic benchmarks

LP's annual and long-term goals are as follows for all students, including all sub-groups:

1. Ensure that all students currently below grade level grow at least 1.3 years as measured by NWEA's MAP, reducing their existing achievement gap and getting them closer to being college ready.
2. Ensure that all students that are on grade level grow at least 1.0 years as measured by NWEA's MAP, keeping them on track for college.
3. Ensure that an increasing number of scholars are moving towards mastery and on track levels on TN Ready by adding 5 percentage points or the AMO amount annually to the previous year's percentages in the On Track and Master categories until surpassing the MSCS district average for schools with similar demographics.
4. Earn a TVAAS 4 or higher every year in every subject.
5. Ensure scholars come to school with a 95% attendance rate, arriving on time and ready to learn and reducing the chronically absent rate by the AMO rate each year.
6. Ensure parents feel supported, heard and part of their child's success at school through annual parent satisfaction rates of 85% or more and student retention of 75% year over year.
7. Ensure teachers deliver effective instruction and participate in a joyful professional culture, measured by teacher ratings on the teacher rubric of 4 and 5 and teacher retention rates of 75%.
8. Ensure a powerful student culture that enables students to feel safe at school through the implementation of clear and consistent expectations connected to the school's core values as measured by merits, demerits, and suspensions recorded in LiveSchool.
9. Meet all local, state and federal fiduciary reporting and financial stewardship expectations, including meeting all compliance requirements, meeting all financial goals and obligations and the expectations of the governing board.

The plans for accomplishing these goals can be found in Section I of the application.

b. Organizational changes (if applicable)

LP plans no organizational changes. The school and organization have created a codified blueprint of its best practices and systems, including leadership and staffing models, that will continue to be used to serve students. CEG plans to add a content specialist and possible CFO in the future.

c. Expansion (if applicable)

CEG has been authorized by TDoE add 3 schools in 2024-25 as part of ASD 2.0. CEG provided detailed plans for this expansion as part of the ASD 2.0 application which is available if requested. The key to the successful expansion is the effective execution of the CEG school transformation blueprint. CEG's blueprint has been created over the last ten



years to ensure smooth transition and replication when new schools are added to the network. Other keys include hiring qualified and effective staff, retaining 30-60% of the staff present at the MSCS location, training school leaders in the CEG model and working with parents and the community to continue the successful and enjoyable aspects of the existing school while implementing the critical success factors of the CEG model.

d. Facility improvements

CEG has already made significant improvements to the facility, investing more than \$750,000 over the last several years and noted in Section II(h). Because CEG is committed to the Binghampton neighborhood and its current students, plans are in place for a renovation of over \$500,000 to upgrade HVAC classroom level controls and replace the majority of windows with high efficiency glass and new frames. Together these projects address the lack of classroom level climate controls and drafty windows present ongoing health and safety concerns for students and staff. Sitting in uncomfortable classrooms that are either too hot or too cold can create health concerns for all students and staff; especially those with chronic issues such as sickle cell and asthma.

CEG also plans to purchase the facility as part of the transition out of the ASD for the other school housed in the building, Cornerstone Prep Lester Campus, in 2025. The purchase, as allowed by Tenn. Code § 49-1-614 (k)(2)(B), is both a fiscally responsible choice for the county and we believe, best for the community. Lester Prep has developed many relationships in the neighborhood in its 9+ years of operation. The students and community would experience a great loss if LP is not able to purchase the Lester facility in Binghampton. After purchasing the facility, CEG would prepare a detailed 10-year plan for facility improvements.

e. Projected financial security

CEG enjoyed a 10-year track record of financial success and viability, and there is no indication this will change in the future. The current balance sheet provides significant financial security and therefore CEG sees no financial risk in the coming years.

f. Operational management

CEG continues to look for best practices, working with successful networks and CMO's around the country, along with the Charter School Growth Fund, Uncommon Schools, and Memphis Education Fund, to identify opportunities to be more efficient and effective operationally. The current COO and CEO each have more than 10 years of operational experience with the organization and there is an operations blueprint that would provide guidance to any successors. The COO and Director of Operations at our Denver Campus are reviewing the operations section of the blueprint during the summer of 2023 to ensure its clarity and accuracy as part of the preparation for joining ASD 2.0.

g. Addressing any past academic, organizational, or financial deficits

CEG has no past organizational or financial deficits. The academic plans noted in this application provide the plans for addressing academic deficits, primarily around increasing the number of students displaying mastery on TN Ready. Keys to that include increasing teacher content knowledge, providing strong reading interventions, continuing to invest in the professional development of all staff, and continuing teacher/leader opportunities that lead to high teacher retention.