

U.S. Department of Education
2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I [X] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Caroline Frye
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name KIPP DC Lead Academy
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 421 P Street NW
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Washington State DC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 20001-2417

County District of Columbia

Telephone (202) 469-3300 Fax (202) 518-3853

Web site/URL
<https://www.kippdc.org/schools/elementary-schools/kipp-dc-lead-academy/> E-mail caroline.frye@kippdc.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mrs. Susan Schaeffler E-mail susan.schaeffler@kippdc.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name KIPP DC Tel. (202) 265-5477

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Terry Golden
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 9 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 6 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 17 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	55	51	106
2	50	56	106
3	49	51	100
4	44	55	99
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	198	213	411

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 96.6 % Black or African American
 - 2.7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 0.7 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: 2%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	2
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	9
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	414
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Spanish, Yoruba, French, Amharic

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %

8 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 100 %

Total number students who qualify: 411

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %

74 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>4</u> Autism | <u>9</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>12</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>6</u> Developmental Delay | <u>32</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>2</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	93%	93%	94%	94%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

At Lead Academy, we all belong to a community of love and learning. We believe our work is urgent, classrooms feel joyful, consistency is key, relationships are essential, and small stuff matters. We all teach all kids, every day.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

KIPP DC's enrollment is determined by the My School DC common lottery, which is a single, random lottery that determines placement for new students at all participating schools. Student-school matches are based on the number of available spaces at each school; sibling, proximity, and other lottery preferences; how each student ranked their school choices; and each student's random lottery number.

PART III - SUMMARY

KIPP DC Lead Academy was founded in 2012 and is located in KIPP DC's Shaw Campus in Northwest Washington, D.C. Lead Academy shares the campus with KIPP DC Grow Academy (PreK3-K) and KIPP DC WILL Academy (5th-8th grades).

Lead Academy is home to 45 staff members and more than 400 exceptional scholars and their families. Together, we are a community of love and learning where true leaders are molded. Urgent and joyful learning is possible because of the passionate, driven teachers that come into the building everyday as well as the loving, supportive families that partner with them to support our scholars. The strong relationships between all parties and the common purpose we share allows us to deliver high quality learning day in and day out so that scholars can go out into the world, confident in who they are and prepared to make a difference.

We address all of our scholars as “leaders” because that is how we want them to think of themselves in all that they do. We truly seek to grow the whole child, with students who are well-rounded and capable of leading by example wherever their academic careers take them. Our leaders know the power of kindness and hard work and are equipped to use those to excel both academically and socially.

In the 2018-19 school year, Lead Academy scholars earned some of the highest scores among elementary charter schools in Washington, D.C. Nearly 70% of scholars scored level 4 or higher on the Mathematics PARCC assessment and 41% scored a level 4 or higher on the English Language Arts (ELA) PARCC assessment, making Lead the highest-performing charter school in Ward 6. Our scholars are able to achieve these results in large part because our teachers work incredibly hard to establish calm, predictable, and focused learning environments where all scholars feel welcomed and supported to take the academic risks necessary to grow.

Teachers create classrooms where scholars and their families are reflected back to them. Last year, our leaders completed classroom library audits and advocated for more books with Black and female characters with diverse family backgrounds. We utilized their data and persuasive writing projects to secure a grant that allowed us to purchase about \$28,000 worth of culturally relevant children's books for our classroom libraries. We want to ensure that scholars access rigorous, standards-driven instruction that is authentic and relevant to them.

In addition to robust academic and social-emotional curriculum, we also expose scholars to art, science, technology, and physical education classes each week. The elementary years are when we shape scholars' feelings toward and connectedness to school. At Lead Academy, we want to ensure that all scholars find a strength or passion, and we want to honor that that strength or passion may lie outside of daily math and literacy instruction. Therefore, we want to ensure that scholars can participate in extracurricular activities that supplement our core content.

At Lead Academy, we recognize that one of our greatest resources is our families. Consistent communication between teachers and families is vital to the overall success of each scholar. Weekly “Lead Letters” go home to families on Fridays with important schoolwide updates and graded work attached so that families are always aware of how scholars are performing in school. Teachers are always available in the evenings to answer phone calls about homework and support families with any questions. We also host three formal parent-teacher conference windows in addition to the ongoing informal communication that occurs at pick-up and drop-off.

We invite our families into the building as often as possible and celebrate them consistently across the school year to maintain the community feel at Lead Academy. The Lead Parents as Partners (LPAP) organization is a cohort of parents and guardians who come together several times during the year to brainstorm and orchestrate family engagement events for the school community. This year, our LPAP supported our Halloween and Valentine's Day celebrations with scholars. They have also served as volunteers for our Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration, Fall Festival and Food Drive, Black History Month Celebration, and Spring Book Fair. These events showcase our scholars' leadership and affirm their identities and their community.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

Lead Academy is unwavering in its commitment to strong instruction, and believes this commitment is central to student achievement. We believe in strong teacher models, guided practice, and independent practice that allows students to talk, think, and learn. Our commitment to strong instruction also drives Lead Academy to create spaces for teachers to push each other, plan together, learn from instructional coaches, and reflect on their practice. There is a strong culture of collaboration and excellence that motivates educators at Lead to take advantage of every opportunity to grow as professionals and leaders, while equipping them to support each reader, writer, mathematician, thinker, and growing human being that attends Lead Academy.

Our work at Lead Academy is grounded in our three core values: lead, love, and learn. Scholars internalize these values early on in first grade and bring them to life over the course of their education at Lead Academy. Each day during morning meeting and closing circle, our scholars are exposed to and practice a social-emotional competency through the PATHs curriculum so that we can support strong academic gains with strong social-emotional learning and development.

Relationships are also a driver of strong instruction. Meaningful learning experiences are created in environments where students feel loved and a sense of belonging, and Lead Academy teachers genuinely care about the personal connections they have with students and families.

1b. Reading/English language arts

A strong English Language Arts curriculum is a cornerstone of a world-class education. KIPP DC Lead Academy's curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Lead Academy places an emphasis on developing and strengthening literacy skills among our students. We use Reader's and Writer's Workshop curricula to build a love of reading and writing for students at every level. Classrooms have libraries aligned to students' reading levels according to the Fountas & Pinnell assessment, allowing scholars to practice grade-level standards with individually leveled books. Teachers support this on-level practice by conferring with readers during independent reading time. Literacy instruction is strengthened through blocks for Core Knowledge Language Arts, balanced literacy, and reading intervention each day. We also use close reading to improve comprehension and build students' confidence as readers. We teach students to develop their proficiency and power as writers, readers, speakers, listeners, and problem-solvers.

Lead Academy chose these English Language Arts curricula for their ability to educate students in foundational literacy skills and their flexibility to be infused through all parts of the school day, not just the literacy block. KIPP DC prides itself on implementing only researched-based curricula at the elementary level.

We provide teachers with daily lesson plans, exit tickets and summative assessments, and supplementary teaching materials to maximize the effectiveness of each lesson. Lead Academy has a dedicated literacy coach who leads two literacy meetings a week as well as bi-monthly professional development around small-group literacy instruction (guided reading and conferring). Our teachers also do a lot of collaborative content planning and content work to share strategies, evaluate new opportunities to engage students in the content, and build relationships. This approach to literacy instruction ensures that there are not islands of literacy excellence during a student's career at Lead Academy, but rather a comprehensive system of excellence aligned across a student's experience in elementary school and beyond.

1c. Mathematics

KIPP DC Lead Academy's math program is also aligned with the Common Core State Standards. We use a combination of MyMath and EngageNY for the core math curriculum and build a conceptual understanding of math through Cognitively Guided Instruction. This allows students to build on their own intuitive approaches to problem-solving and expands their mathematical understanding. We also use the ST program, leveraging technology to enhance and deepen understanding to support continued growth in math, as well as to diversify the avenues through which students can learn.

Students' conceptual understanding and the ability to apply mathematics is enhanced when students have frequent opportunities to communicate about math. We provide students with opportunities to read, write, and talk about math to build conceptual understanding and the ability to apply the skills being taught.

As with our literacy curriculum, we provide teachers with daily lesson plans. Daily assessments or exit tickets are taken on the computer each day so that scholars can practice the skills they are learning and have the opportunity to write about their thinking and problem-solving. Much like in literacy, our teachers also do a lot of collaborative content planning and content work in math to share strategies, evaluate new opportunities to engage students in the content, and build camaraderie. Our network-wide mathematics team takes best practices from across KIPP DC's elementary schools and quickly implements them at each school. We provide our teachers with ample planning and collaboration time to allow for quick adoption and confidence when engaging students in lessons.

1d. Science

Establishing an effective elementary science program is essential for providing students with a strong foundation in science concepts, instilling a sense of wonder and curiosity in their world, and answering the need for critical thinkers in an evolving STEM-based society. At Lead Academy, teachers in grades 2-4 use the Amplify Science curriculum. This science curriculum engages students in a wide range of science topics and includes hands-on and online simulation experiences as well as science reading and writing opportunities. In each Amplify Science unit, students inhabit the role of a scientist or engineer to investigate a real-world problem, using relevant, 21st-century contexts to investigate scientific phenomena. The Amplify Science program provides our teachers with a comprehensive curriculum that includes literacy-rich activities, hands-on investigations, digital simulations, embedded assessments, and robust teacher supports.

Science teachers at Lead Academy use data to inform instruction. Edulastic is used as a tool for formative and summative assessments. Lead Academy's science teachers have also cross-collaborated with other elementary science teachers across KIPP DC to start an environmental literacy initiative. Bringing science to life is a key aspect of the student learning experience at Lead Academy— for example, Lead Academy science teachers have partnered with the National Park Trust to bring in real birds to learn more about ecological diversity.

To ensure lesson and content internalization, our science teachers attend weekly planning meetings and receive feedback on lesson plans. In addition to reviewing lessons, teachers analyze student work and assessment samples to ensure student mastery, identify misconceptions and plan for re-teaching strategies. Lead science teachers have also been able to observe the Amplify Science curriculum in action in other KIPP regions to develop best practices and strengthen instruction.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

In social studies, Lead Academy follows the Core Knowledge curriculum infused with Writers and Readers Workshop components. Our units of study include influential leaders throughout history, social movements, the Holocaust, technological innovations throughout time, ancient civilizations, and periods of conflict. In addition, each class spends an intensive period of social studies instruction during Black History Month educating students on important civil rights leaders, with an emphasis on leaders from the Washington, D.C. area.

We are lucky to be a short trip away from numerous cultural institutions that help reinforce social studies and science instruction. Past field trips, to supplement our units of study, have included visits to the National Zoo, Air & Space Museum, Anacostia Community Museum, Fredrick Douglass National Historic Site, National Gallery of Art, and National Museum of American History.

We strive make social studies come to life by showing students how it applies to their lives. We use texts that are both mirrors of our students' experiences and expose them to the rich diversity of cultures across the world. We assess comprehension and ensure that regardless of level, our students are prepared to be engaged citizens, ready to contribute to society.

1f. For secondary schools:

1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Lead Academy compliments effective, high-quality instruction with robust curricular offerings to give our students a well-rounded education. Scholars in first through fourth grade participate in a daily specials block for 60 minutes, rotating between physical education, art and technology.

Our art classes are designed to hone fine motor skills, expose students to a variety of art techniques and theory, and promote self expression. Physical education at Lead Academy exposes students to a wide variety of sporting activities and physical endeavors, while complementing our social-emotional curriculum by promoting confidence, teamwork skills, and perseverance. Physical education also serves as an avenue to reinvigorate students and help them push through each day's challenges. We also offer a technology class in which scholars are exposed to STEM-related concepts and learn the basics of coding. Scholars are able to put the concepts they learn to the test by programming their own robots.

Lead Academy also offers a wide-range of after school activities and clubs to help students explore their passions. Girls on the Run recruits young women in second, third, and fourth grade and creatively integrates life-skills and promotes confidence, camaraderie, and fitness through running.

The Girl Scout Troop at Lead Academy is comprised of 24 first grade scholars that build leadership and entrepreneurship skills during bi-monthly programming. They have raised more than \$3,000 in the current school year. Basketball and cheerleading clubs are offered after school for scholars in third and fourth grade, and we also invite students in all grades to explore the arts with an after school photography club.

Lead Academy has a strong social-emotional curriculum to facilitate emotional literacy, self-control, social competence, positive peer relations, and interpersonal problem-solving skills. Scholars receive daily SEL instruction during the morning block and those skills are revisited and reinforced throughout the day. Our educators also receive extensive training in trauma-informed teaching to respond to behavior struggles in order to preserve the physical safety, sense of belonging, and relational trust of students and adults. Our goal is to support the development of the whole child in order to set our students up for long-term success.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

We have a Response to Intervention (RTI) process which relies heavily on consistently collecting and analyzing data; we target gap skills using small group instruction and modified blended learning curriculum. RTI is a monitoring and specific intervention tool to identify students not making adequate progress. Based on this data, we prescribe specific interventions for support and monitor students' gradual release back into independent learning. Scholars who do not show progress, particularly in reading, within 8-10 weeks progress to more intensive support from our reading interventionist and Literacy Lab corps member.

We have a robust Student Support Team to help address proficiency gaps and give necessary support to all

learners. Our extended schedule ensures that students can get the extra support they need without sacrificing important experiences in other areas.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Since every scholar has a Chromebook, we leverage blended learning to differentiate for scholars who are performing above grade level, moving their blended learning content to higher grade-level content once grade-level content has been mastered. These opportunities are woven into the school day to make it accessible for all students. Our goal is to utilize learning and education to ignite passions within students.

3c. Special education

Instruction for special student populations is individualized through our continuum of services. General education and special educators review data to determine a student's least restrictive environment (LRE) to receive services which range from specialized instruction being delivered in the general education classroom to tailored, researched-based interventions that occur outside the general education classroom. Lead Academy believes that special student populations are best served with their non-disabled peers and uses a variety of inclusive practices to provide specialized instruction inside the general education setting. Such inclusive practices include unpacking specialized instruction practices through content meetings, data analysis meetings, co-planning meetings, push-in academic and behavioral support, and multiple co-teaching models.

Instruction for students with identified disabilities is determined both on their area of deficit (where we need to add additional scaffolds to allow access to curriculum) and areas of strength (where we can leverage the current strengths to gain additional understanding). For example, a student with a verbal processing deficit may receive additional visual aids for vocabulary that is being taught in a whole group setting. A student with an impacted working memory but strong verbal comprehension may have the addition of pre-teaching and repetition of information within the lesson to allow for multiple opportunities to practice the material. A student who has an attentional deficit may receive preferential seating within the classroom next to a high-achieving peer to remind them of the expectations while the teacher ensures that they check in with the student frequently throughout independent work time to keep the student engaged and on task.

Our special education team works tirelessly to ensure that instruction is continuously adapted to best serve our students by means of:

Data Analysis: Data analysis of both grade-level assessments (ANet) and individual intervention data is routinely reviewed to determine where the breakdown of student learning is occurring and how to craft lessons that will allow for foundational skills to transfer back into the general education classroom.

Aligned Interventions: Research-based interventions are chosen that align with a student's area of concern. For example, students are enrolled in Seeing Stars when a deficit with decoding is identified while students are enrolled in Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) when a deficit in reading comprehension is identified. Ensuring that intervention programming is aligned to areas of deficits is essential in making sure that students are receiving tailored intervention services.

Blended Learning: Students are exposed to grade-level content, intervention programming, and computer-based programming to approach foundational skills from a blended learning approach. Computer programming is chosen based on area of deficit and grade-level accessibility and includes program such as Lexia, ST Math, iReady Reading, iReady Math, and Read Naturally.

Professional Development: The KIPP DC network hosts a variety of professional development opportunities for special education teachers at Lead Academy. Teachers have participated in a close reading development series focusing on foundational literacy skills as well as unpacking writing standards. Teachers also participate in other professional development opportunities held within the District of Columbia.

3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

Lead Academy has an ELL teacher who provides push-in and pull-out support to allow our bilingual scholars to better access content. Our ELL teacher works with bi-lingual scholars to help them acquire fluency in English, both spoken and in the written word. Language is often not the only hurdle that our bilingual scholars have to overcome, and our ELL teacher also works to build students' understanding of cultural and societal identities as they adjust to a new environment. Our ELL teacher is an integral part of the school community and invaluable supporter of our bilingual scholars in empowering them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to be successful.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

The core to our students' academic and personal success is our strong, caring, and joyful culture. We say and fully believe that every child is known, loved, and celebrated as a reader, writer, mathematician, thinker, and growing human being. These are more than words on a paper– they are a philosophy that the adults in the building strive to model in every interaction with a child. In turn, we see our students recognizing and valuing each other as peers and fellow learners. We believe that when presented with appropriate, rigorous, and relevant academic content, students will be engaged in the learning process. Furthermore, when they have a trusting and caring relationship with their teachers, they are ready and prepared to receive information and be engaged in their education. Coupled with celebrations, sharing academic progress with students and families, and having conversations about where a strong education can take you, we create drive students use to succeed and excel in academics and in life.

Lead Academy teachers transform students' lives, setting the bar for what others see as possible. Together they tackle complex challenges and become more than just colleagues. We create a strong environment for staff to feel valued and supported in three ways: first, we seek to deliver unparalleled development and opportunities for them to grow as professionals. Second, we seek to create a culture at our school that is successful, ambitious, intentional, and full of joy. We are purposeful about hiring great people and fostering an environment that celebrates and recognizes the incredible work they do. Finally, we strive to increase sustainability and communication wherever possible, and to value our team for the leaders and professionals they are. We have found that this trifecta has created a culture of collaboration and excellence that has fueled our school's success.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We believe that our parents are our students' first teachers. At KIPP DC Lead Academy, we use a two-generation approach to support our children and families. We recognize that no two families are alike and their needs often vary. Our goal is to create opportunities for and address the needs of both children and the adults in their lives. We expect teachers to keep an open line of communication with families. Formally, we meet with parents at least twice a year during parent-teacher conferences to discuss their child's academic achievements and challenges. In practice, our staff connects with families on a weekly, if not a daily basis to update them on their child's progress. We also have the Lead Parents as Partners organization, whose members serve as volunteers and collaborative planners for school events.

Teachers send home family newsletters, are available before and after school to meet in person and provide all families with their cell phone numbers to text or call. Our communication with parents focuses on ensuring that they understand our vision for their child's education as well as learning more about their own goals and dreams for their child. Our school's leaders are regularly available to families in person, via email, and by phone to further support their child's success.

While the nature of our work is predominately centered on child-parent approaches such as partnering with parents to help support student learning at home, we also place significant emphasis on building internal structures to implement parent-child approaches. For example, families have access to school mental health practitioners, and we partner with other D.C. non-profits to connect our families with after-school and summer programming opportunities. For example, we have a strong partnership with AlphaBest aftercare to provide affordable before- and after-school care for our families. We also partner with external stakeholders such as social work agencies to help provide families with the resources necessary to combat poverty, housing instability, and mental anguish.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

KIPP DC Lead Academy is committed to its teachers, ensuring that they have the resources and support they need to excel. We seek to deliver unparalleled coaching and development to our teachers so that they can

maximize their impact on student achievement. Professional development is a vital practice for our staff members and for the growth of our school. All teachers participate in at least two weeks of development each summer before the start of the school year, including all-school, grade-level, and content-specific sessions. Throughout the year, teachers receive one-one-one coaching for both personal leadership and instructional development from the principal, vice principals, instructional coaches, and teacher leaders within our school.

KIPP DC is committed to personalizing development and seeking teachers' input about content and delivery. Teachers are empowered to have a voice and a role in shaping their own development throughout their journey at KIPP DC. This focus on developing instructional excellence extends beyond teachers to include social workers, student support staff, and school leaders. We also ensure that teachers have enough time during the school day for planning, as well as time for collaboration with their peers. At Lead Academy, teachers meet at least twice a week with their subject-area and grade-level peers to maximize their impact and capacity.

Each year, we send several teachers to Columbia University's Teachers College Summer Institutes for a week of in-depth workshop seminars to better implement the Readers and Writers Workshop curriculum. Another example of development is our network's Fellowship in Special Education. This is a yearlong teacher development program housed within KIPP DC's Capital Teaching Residency program. Fellows who complete the program gain licensure in Special Education: General Knowledge K-12 and also gain intensive professional development in working with students with exceptionalities. The components include regular coursework, assignments, observations, and feedback. Teachers are also invited to apply for a multitude of grants throughout the school year intended to enhance their impact in the classroom and broaden the student experience.

4. School Leadership:

Lead Academy's principal embodies the values and vision of the school, and her leadership philosophy is firmly guided by both. She puts students first in every decision she makes. She embraces her role as a tone-setter and leader by modeling the behavior she wants to see from her students, teachers, and staff. She not only talks the talk but also walks the walk, never asking a teacher or staff member to do something she would not. She listens and is accessible to every student, parent, and staff member and expects the same commitment from her teachers. She is not only a leader at Lead Academy but across the KIPP DC network. She loves everything about teaching and pedagogy and understands the challenges our teachers go through, having been in their shoes as a founding third grade teacher in 2011. There is a strong culture of pride in learning at Lead Academy and students genuinely show up each day eager to learn and support each other.

Lead Academy's two vice principals support the principal. The vice principals focus predominately on instruction and spend much of their day in classrooms. They coach teachers, lead content teams, and foster student achievement. They keep a close eye on student data and overall academic progress. The leadership team at Lead Academy checks in with each other constantly on matters pertaining to staff, students, and events happening around school. There is strong camaraderie within the leadership team which helps ensure Lead Academy has a school environment that is joyful, positive, and intentional. A majority of the leadership staff started as teachers at Lead Academy, so there is a strong sense of togetherness within the group, which trickles down to our students, staff, and families.

In addition, Lead Academy's school leaders are supported by KIPP DC's chief academic officer, deputy chief academic officer for primary schools, a network-wide student support team, and literacy and math instructional coaches. A central school operations and compliance team, as well as other "back office" leaders enable the principal, her leadership team, and teachers to focus their attention on student achievement.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At Lead Academy, there are two key drivers to academic success. A high level of teacher internalization and intellectual preparation, paired with instructional responsiveness, allow teachers to push scholars towards the desired results.

We are only able to prepare scholars for academic success if we, the teachers, are first prepared. A large portion of teaching actually happens “behind the scenes” or before scholars enter the classroom. In order to deliver the best instruction, teachers must internalize lesson plans, prepare exemplars, and anticipate student misconceptions in order to ensure that all scholars are set up for academic success. This work is done collaboratively in the three content team meetings that teachers attend each week. We know that every scholar in a given classroom is unique and prepared to tackle content at different levels. Teachers at Lead Academy know their scholars’ strengths and focus areas and use this knowledge in their lesson preparation.

It is not enough to just know the lesson standard, teaching point, and the approach to guided practice. Teachers must prepare the exemplar answers that they are looking for and anticipate areas where they expect scholars may stumble. From there, they are able to plan probing questions, strategic student pairings, and other teaching strategies to push all scholars to a full understanding before the lesson’s close. Lastly, they are able to plan their “laps,” or stopping points, during independent practice. Planning “laps” allows teachers to determine the order in which they will stop at scholars’ desks or tables for feedback, prioritizing the students needing the most support first, as well as what they are looking for on scholars’ papers at each stop. This level of preparedness allows teachers to be precise and purposeful at every stage of lesson delivery. It also gives teachers ample opportunities to collect real-time data on student performance and deliver in-the-moment feedback as scholars are practicing.

Instruction does not stop at the exit ticket or the end of a lesson cycle. In order to fully support scholars, teachers at Lead Academy habitually review lesson data in order to respond to students’ misconceptions quickly. The final forty-five minutes of every day are called “Power Hour.” This block is purposefully built to support instructional responsiveness across all classrooms. Teachers use this time to pull small groups in response to misconceptions identified during lessons from that day so that scholars are not left feeling unsuccessful before tackling the next day’s teaching point. These small groups will look different in every classroom because they are truly responsive to the needs of the scholars in each individual classroom. Teachers are equipped to conduct rapid data collection and analysis because they have fully internalized the standards and developed exemplars in content team meetings. They know what they are looking for in student work, the most common misconceptions, and the scaffolds necessary to bridge