



Learning in a Family Environment  
Minnesota Charter School District #4035

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## Learning in a Family Environment

### Background

At LIFE Prep, we consider ourselves a family -- one in which ALL students are important to us. Our name says it all... LIFE Prep stands for Learning In a Family Environment.

Our core values are "LOVE, LEARN, ACHIEVE, SUCCEED." These values guide us in providing the loving and encouraging atmosphere our students need to thrive in their learning. We challenge all students to grow as learners and expect the best from them. Our goal is to prepare students for success, not just while at school, but also in their communities and in their lives and for their futures.

We believe all students can learn. Students build success through all the supports LIFE Prep offers. At the core of our academic program are Individual Learning Plans for all students. Each student learns through a plan designed to support their specific needs. Both accelerated learning and supported learning are a part of our daily academic programming. Minnesota Math and Reading Corp provide instructional support along with Title Reading services and University of Wisconsin, River Falls, Falcon Tutors.

LIFE Prep's goal is to prepare each and every student to be career and college ready. Our students learn strong 21st century skills and each student is prepared to take the next steps through middle school, high school and beyond.

LIFE Prep is entering our 22nd year with a strong commitment to providing a nurturing, family-like learning environment. Our core values, LOVE, LEARN, ACHIEVE, SUCCEED are at the heart of our daily work and show the strength of our commitment to our students success.

## District Name, Number, and Address

LIFE Prep, Minnesota School District #4035, is a charter school in the Payne-Phalen neighborhood of St. Paul. The school's address is 930 Geranium Ave. E., St. Paul, MN 55106.

LIFE Prep served students from Pre-K through sixth grade during the 2019-2020 school year. The school was established in 1998 and in June of 2018, completed its 21st year. Located in the complex owned by St. Casimir's Church of the St. Paul Catholic Dioceses, LIFE Prep inhabits the space formerly used by St. Casimir's School. The website for LIFE Prep is [www.lifeprepschool.org](http://www.lifeprepschool.org).

## Mission

LIFE Prep School believes all students can learn and our students are at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to strong, standards based and differentiated instruction for all students. Our commitment to closing the achievement gap comes from a dedication to academic accomplishment through the delivery of a rigorous curriculum. The inclusive multicultural community is a safe place to learn and overcome adversity. Learning In a Family Environment empowers students to own their success.

## Vision

LIFE Prep ignites a desire to achieve and inspires students' hope for a bright future.

Students develop self-confidence through their accomplishments and are empowered to pursue their dreams. We provide encouragement and a foundation for perseverance; preparing students to thrive as individuals on a successful life path.

## Purpose

LIFE Prep is focused on improving pupil learning and student achievement in the following areas.

*1. Increasing learning opportunities for **all** pupils. This includes: strong advocacy for each student and small learning environments; flexible grouping based on learning needs; Response to Intervention (RtI) for reading and math tutoring both during and after school, and 6:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. extended day programs.*

LIFE Prep uses a Daily 5 model to provide all students with small group, differentiated instruction. Student learning is guided by Individual Learning Plans for each student based on their current assessments and needs. Both Reading and Math Corp provide individual and small group instructions for students. Wisconsin River Falls University Tutors also provide daily tutoring during the school day and during after care.

LIFE Prep's RTI is a 3 tiered process for both academic and behavioral components. A final referral to the Special Education Child Study Team is completed if necessary.

## LIFE Prep Response To Intervention (RtI) Process: Academic & Behavioral Intervention Pathway



**NOTES:**  
 The goal of each step in the process is to either find interventions that move the student back toward a lower tier, keep them at a tier in which they are experiencing success, or move them up to the most appropriate level of support and intervention. Students may make progress at tier II or tier III and stay there for several rounds of interventions.  
 Student Assistance Team (SAT) handles tier II and III behavioral interventions and some tier III academic interventions, if appropriate. If two complete academic interventions have been completed, the SAT may choose to review the interventions and recommend for child study or they may offer up another intervention for the student.  
 Child study is the team who ultimately approves testing for special education. If our process is working well, nearly every student who is recommended for child study will be eligible for special education.

The before and after school program is available for students beginning at 6:00am and ending 6:00pm.

2. Measuring learning outcomes and creating different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes by engaging multiple measures of proficiency and growth, including DIBELS, Star Assessments for Math, NWEA MAP testing, the OLPA, MCA testing, and progress monitoring during interventions.

LIFE Prep student achievement is tracked and measured in a variety of ways. Each student's learning goals are documented on their Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and progress is monitored on these goals. The ILP is a tool used by our Cities Connect Counselor and monitored for both support and enrichment opportunities. Formative and summative assessments are conducted in classrooms by a student's primary teacher based on state standards. Students are assessed using standardized testing with the NWEA a minimum of 2 times a year. Students who fall in the yellow and red zone are assessed a 3rd time to determine if progress is being made. All students participate in the MCA or MTAS as appropriate.

3. Creating new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program. The School operates on a shared decision-making model and distributive leadership.

LIFE Prep practices shared decision making through an Instructional Leadership Team structure.



## **Instructional Leadership Team**

The instructional leadership team (ILT) is the overarching leadership group overseeing the five constituent leadership groups within the continuous improvement (CImp) team. The ILT met weekly and made important decisions about instruction, assessment, and curriculum. These decisions were informed by the work of the five leadership teams of the CImp team: DuFour, Q-Comp, standards, response to intervention, and student assistance team.

## **DuFour Team**

In order to examine grade level data and come to consensus on how to best teach the important skills and concepts of the grade level, LIFE Prep formed horizontal, or grade level, learning teams that worked from the four essential questions of a PLC as defined by Richard DuFour, et. al. in *Learning By Doing* (2010):

1. What is it that we want students to learn?
2. How will we know if they have learned it?
3. What will we do if they did not learn it?
4. What will we do if they did learn it?

Teachers looked at student work and decided how to make instructional decisions as a team for the betterment of student achievement.

## **Standards Alignment**

Three members of the teaching staff attended training on the Minnesota English Language Arts standards at the Minnesota Department of Education during a yearlong series 3 years ago. The team continues to share their knowledge and train teachers to read and plan units and lessons using the standards.

## **Response to Intervention**

LIFE Prep began a school-wide response to intervention (RtI) program in 2014-2015. This was spurred by the hiring of two Title I teachers, who recorded and analyzed student data and developed comprehensive strategies for students to improve in math and reading skills. During the school year, there were four six-week intervention cycles with students who were below grade level. The goal was for students to exit the intervention being caught-up to grade level.



## Program Model

During the 2019-2020 school year, 77.8% of our students were eligible for free or reduced price school meals. We serve many students from families with limited resources to support learning in the home. LIFE Prep welcomes all students regardless of background and seeks to provide a learning environment that meets the child where they currently are to help them progress and succeed throughout their tenure at LIFE Prep and beyond. Some of the school's important features are:

- High academic standards
- Data driven decision-making policies
- Academic achievement supported by assessments
- School-wide Response to Intervention (Rtl) services
- Standards-based instruction
- Low student to staff ratio
- Free breakfast and lunch
- Building is open from 6:00 A.M through 6:00 P.M.
- After-school tutoring
- Family and community involvement
- Diverse student population
- Music, art and physical education each day
- Reading Corps for grades K-third grade
- Math Corps for grades 3-6
- Q-Comp teacher growth program
- Student teachers from University of Wisconsin River Falls
- Weekly college tutoring cadre from the University of Wisconsin River Falls

In 2019-2020 school year, LIFE Prep was open from September 3rd, 2019 -June 3rd, 2020. The school offered an extended learning year Distance Learning (ESY) program during June 2020.

LIFE PREP continues to welcome and celebrate diversity with a wonderfully diverse population. This diversity allows for the understanding, honoring, and learning of cultures through direct interaction and learning together.

## School Governance

An organizational chart showing the governance and management responsibilities of individuals and groups of LIFE Prep can be found in Appendix A of this document.

## Board Composition

## 2019-2020 School-Year Charter Public School Board

2019-2020 Virtual Annual Board Meeting Date: May 18th, 2020

Name	Title	Membership Type
Kara Kerr	Executive Director	Ex Officio
Kyle Newsome	Board Chair	Teacher
Doug Hepper	Vice-Chair	Community Member
Laura Mueller	Member	Teacher
Beau Junker	Member	Teacher
Christine Obermueller	Secretary	Teacher
Larry Noble	Member	Parent
Katie Schlosser	Treasurer	Teacher
Beth Kleiter	Member	Parent
Helen Stoeckel	Member	Community Member
Lesly Walton	Secretary	Community Member
Megan Williamson	Member	Community Member

### Committees of the Board

#### Executive Committee

The members of the executive committee were, Kara Kerr, Kyle Newsome, and Beau Junker, Doug Hepper, and Lesly Walton

### Policy Committee

The members of the policy committee were Christine Obermueller, Kara Kerr, Kelsey Nelson, Laura Mueller, and Kyle Newsome.

### Finance Committee

The members of the finance committee were Kara Kerr, Katie Schlosser, and Doug Hepper

### School Board Trainings

During the 2019-2020 school year, the following members received board training:

Member	Date
Beth Kleiter	12/16/19
Lesly Walton	11/16/19
Doug Hepper	12/16/19
Beau Junker	12/16/19
Megan Williamson	12/16/19
Christine Obermueller	12/16/19
Laura Mueller	12/16/19
Katie Schlosser	12/16/19

Kyle Newsome	12/16/19

## **Board Practices, Processes, and Performance**

The board reviewed the bylaws at its annual meeting of the membership in May 2020.

Open meetings laws are followed by posting meeting times on the school website and on the exterior door of the school. Minutes of past meetings are posted on the website.

Prior to each board meeting, agenda items are collected by the vice chair and organized by the chair. During the meetings simple, parliamentary procedure is followed with motions, discussion, and voting. The secretary records votes in the minutes.

The board has three active committees in perpetuity: executive, finance, and policy. Key decisions are made by the board in committee or in general or special sessions. Each committee delivers a report at the general meetings of the board. The board is briefed on the monthly financial report by Dawn Jenkins of the Anton Group.

A written executive director's report is delivered during each meeting. Topics included are the following

1. Enrollment
2. Attendance
3. Finances
4. Instruction & Culture
5. Student Behavior
6. New Considerations

The board approves an annual budget and revises it as necessary.

## **Administrative Team**

Name	MDE File Folder #	Assignment	Years Employed at LIFE Prep
Kara Kerr		Executive Director & Principal	1
Carlo Galeazzi		Director of Student Support	1
Lori Steider	x	Admin. Asst.	12
Mechelle Lund		Special Education Coordinator	1
Kelsey Nelson	x	Chief Operating Officer	6
Lucas Balfant	x	Facilities Manager	1

**Evaluation of the Administrative Team**

The executive team of the board of directors supervises the executive director. At the end of the school year, the board reviews the goals and the progress made toward the goals. Based on the performance of the executive director, the board may decide to renew the contract of the executive director or decline renewal of the contract for the following school year.

All other members of the administrative team are periodically coached and evaluated by the executive director.

**Food Program**

The food service program was coordinated by Thang Nyugyn. He organized the menus, the sales of meals, and the school staff. He teamed with the staff hired by our caterer, Caravan Kids Catering (CKC). CKC staff prepares and distributes the food and cleans trays and kitchen surfaces. They load and help with storage.

## Teaching Faculty & Licensed Staff

### Teachers & Licensed Staff

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>File Folder #</b>
1	Colleen Diaz	Pre-Kindergarten	508960
2	Emily Carver	Pre-Kindergarten	508161
3	Beth Larson	Kindergarten	371109
4	Kuturah (Kate) Roth	Kindergarten	402221
5	Maggie McInerney	1	509283
6	Christine Obermueller	1	474811
7	Cassandra Sprandel	2	493806
8	Brittany Hughes	2	480937
9	Emma Lindley	3	498276
10	Madison Wiederhoeft	3	499233
11	Leah Jones	4	430650
12	Brittany Pierce	4	470821
15	Jeanna Manning	5	496304
16	Beau Junker	5	492766
17	Katie Schlosser	6	470935

18	Kyle Newsome	6	484268
19	Laura Mueller	Title I	488076

20	Ellie Karr	Title I	474609
20	Christine Brinkman	ELL	444374
21	Renee Nord	Special Education	487070
22	Garth Kirkham	Special Education	479783
23	Andrea Wickman	Special Education	318051
24	Anna Loe	Music	502250
25	Rebekah Nysetvold	Social Worker	1003759
26	Halle O'Falvey	Art	485888
27	Amanda Koenen	Social Worker	1002248
28	Renee Hendrickson	Special Education Teacher	503572
29	Heidi Wilson	Physical Education	385693

## Teacher Coaching, Supervision, and Evaluation

At LIFE Prep, teachers are observed at least three times per school year. One formal observation is conducted by the principal and two are conducted by teacher leaders on the Q-Comp team. Feedback and scores are reported to the principal and a professional

development plan is made for each teacher with advisement by the Q-Comp coaches and the principal.

## Instructional Support Staff

Last Name	First Name	Assignment
Ashbach	Leslie	Pre-K SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Hoskins	Chris	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Kleven	Michael	Kindergarten SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Ochoki	Miya	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Ochoki	Cassie	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Smith-Brewer	Asiyah	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Ping	Tatania	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Walker	Traci	Pre-K Paraprofessional



Jamma	Christyna	School Counselor
Flood	Greg	In-house Substitute

Omar	Hanna	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Weems	Marcus	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade SpEd Student Paraprofessional
Morales	Yvette	Float Paraprofessional
Harris	Christina	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade SpED program paraprofessional
Vue	Lue	Part-time SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Drake	Lee	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessionaol
Fulford	Jevone	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Xiong	Cee	Kindergarten SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Nesja	Dawn	6 <sup>th</sup> grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional/Substitute SpEd Teacher
Anderson	Rachel	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Watson	Katy	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional

Navy	D'Angelo	SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Daily	Chelsie	3rd SpEd Program Paraprofessional

## Student Enrollment and Demographic Data

	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20
Total Enrollment as of October 1st	400	417	323	306	300	317	312	266
Black	40%	42.9%	42.1%	44.6%	40.6%	44%	47.8	52.6 %
White	23%	21.1%	16.4%	11.5%	6.3%	5%	5.1	4.9 %
Latino	10%	6.5%	9.3%	10.3%	8.8%	8.5%	8.7	9%

Asian	26%	27.8%	30.7%	32.4%	37.6%	40%	36.	31.2 %
Native American	1%	1.7%	1.5%	1.3%	.1%	.1%	1.3	1.5%
Eligible for Free/Reduced	76%	71.5%	76.8%	72.46 %	81.7%	88.2 %	81.1	77.8 %
English Learner	6%	4.8%	5.6%	20.8%	5.6%	10%	11.2	13.5 %
Receive Special Education Services	11.5 %	11.0%	9.0%	6.4%	10.3%	8%	10.9	11.7 %

## Attrition Rates

LIFE Prep began the 2019-2020 school year with 272 (as of September, 2019). At the end of the school year, the enrollment was 280 students (as of June, 2020). This is a gain of 8 students which is a 2.85% increase.

## Offerings

Students from grades kindergarten to sixth grade study English language arts, mathematics, and social studies in the classroom.. Physical education classes occurred each day for all students; while art, and music classes were on an AB schedule for all students.

## Instructional Leadership Goals from 2019-2020

### Achievement Goal 1: Reading Growth

70% of students who have been continuously enrolled from 1 October, will be at grade level in the spring as measured by the NWEA MAP reading test or show at least one-year's growth on the NWEA MAP reading test.

\*Due to COVID-19, NWEA was not administered in Spring 2020 to LIFE Prep students; no data

available

### **Achievement Goal 2: Mathematics Growth**

76% of students who have been continuously enrolled from 1 October, will be at grade level in the spring as measured by the NWEA MAP mathematics test or show at least one-year's growth on the NWEA MAP reading test.

\*Due to COVID-19, NWEA was not administered in Spring 2020 to LIFE Prep students; no data available

Student Growth

### **Achievement Goal 3: Academic Achievement-Proficiency Reading**

53% of students who have been continuously enrolled from 1 October will be proficient (meeting or exceeding the standard) on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment for reading.

Results: \*Due to COVID-19, MCA's were not administered in Spring 2020 to LIFE Prep students; no data available

### **Achievement Goal 4: Academic Achievement-Proficiency, Mathematics**

61% of students who have been continuously enrolled from 1 October will be proficient (meeting or exceeding the standard) on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment for reading.

Results: \*Due to COVID-19, MCA's were not administered in Spring 2020 to LIFE Prep students; no data available

### **Achievement Goal 5: Racial Achievement Gap Reduction**

Reading for students who have been continuously enrolled from 1 October, the School will post proficiency achievement gap reductions (meeting or exceeding the standard) on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment for reading by race: 2% for Asian students, 14% for Latino students, and 9% for Black students.

Result: \*Due to COVID-19, MCA's were not administered in Spring 2020 to LIFE Prep students; no data available

**Achievement Goal 6: Special Education Achievement Gap Reduction**

Reading For students who have been continuously enrolled from 1 October, the School will post proficiency achievement gap reductions (meeting or exceeding the standard) on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment for reading by protected class of 5% for Special Education Students.

Result: \*Due to COVID-19, MCA's were not administered in Spring 2020 to LIFE Prep students; no data available

**Achievement Goal: 7 Attendance**

The School will have a measurable goal of 95% average daily attendance every year.

Result: Inadequate data due to Covid-19

**Financials**

**LIFE PREP  
CHARTER SCHOOL NO. 4035  
BALANCE SHEET  
GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2020  
(WITH SUMMARIZED FINANCIAL INFORMATION AS OF JUNE 30, 2019)**

	General Fund	Food Service Fund	Community Service	Total Governmental Funds	
				2020	2019
<b>Assets:</b>					
Cash	\$ 167,229	\$ 6,392	\$ 15,913	\$ 189,534	\$ 461,631
Receivables					
Due from MDE	872,952	5,219	-	878,171	509,504
Due from Federal Government through MDE	38,095	3,209	-	41,304	46,056
Other Receivables	-	-	-	-	3,346
Due From Other Funds	-	-	-	-	101
Prepaid Items	-	-	-	-	25,450
Total assets	1,078,276	14,820	15,913	1,109,009	1,046,088
<b>Liabilities and fund balances:</b>					
<b>Liabilities:</b>					
Salaries and Benefits Payable	277,760	-	15,913	293,673	333,380
Accounts Payable	72,706	14,820	-	87,526	35,243
Due To Other Funds	-	-	-	-	101
Total Liabilities	350,466	14,820	15,913	381,199	368,724
<b>Fund Balance</b>					
Nonspendable	-	-	-	-	25,450
Reserved-Safe School Crime	9,696	-	-	9,696	-
Reserved-Medical Assistance	2,525	-	-	2,525	-
Unassigned	715,589	-	-	715,589	651,914
Total Fund Balances	727,810	-	-	727,810	677,364
Total Liabilities and Fund Balances	\$ 1,078,276	\$ 14,820	\$ 15,913	\$ 1,109,009	\$ 1,046,088
				<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Total fund balance - governmental funds</b>				\$ 727,810	\$ 677,364
Amounts reported for governmental activities in the Statement of Net Position are different because:					
Capital assets used in governmental activities are not current financial resources and, therefore, are not reported as assets in the funds.					
Leasehold Improvements, Net of Accumulated Depreciation				-	86
Furniture and Equipment, Net of Accumulated Depreciation				37,802	38,474
Long-term liabilities are not due and payable in the current period, and, therefore, are not reported as liabilities in the funds.					
Long-term liabilities at year-end consist of:					
Net Pension Liability				(2,480,894)	(2,258,840)
Deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources are created as a result of differences between actual and expected contributions and earnings on plan investments as well as changes in proportion and are not recognized in the governmental funds					
Deferred Outflows of Resource Related to Pensions				1,847,874	2,524,409
Deferred Inflows of Resource Related to Pensions				(2,646,065)	(3,396,054)
<b>Total Net Position - Governmental Activities</b>				\$ (2,513,473)	\$ (2,414,561)

## Challenges for the Upcoming Year

### ***Decreasing Enrollment***

LIFE Prep faces the same challenges as most charter schools in St. Paul. As the choice options grow in the city, the student population is more widely dispersed. Attracting and keeping students becomes a major focus for our school for the next year and for years to come.

LIFE Prep offers classes for students through grade 6. The Local middle school starts classes at 6 grade and students continue there until 8th grade. Many upcoming 6th grade students leave LIFE Prep to start at the middle school with their neighborhood peers after 5th grade. Providing a compelling reason for upcoming 6th graders to remain at LIFE Prep is a challenge.

### ***Student Achievement***

Student achievement on standardized tests often drive parental decisions as to where to place their students. Keeping pace with the state average on student achievement can be challenging. LIFE Prep will be challenged to grow student achievement scores on state standardized testing to meet this parental expectation.

### ***21st Century Education***

Core competencies such as collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving are at the heart of educational needs for the future success of all our students. LIFE Prep will need to be able to keep pace with the expectations and to be able to provide opportunities for students to gain these skills.

## Future Goals

### **Professional Development For All Staff**

*Dare to Lead-* The goals are to create leaders within LIFE Prep's staff members. Administration will also receive specific training in regards to Dare To Lead for leadership development.

*Equity/Diversity Training-* Our staff will be focused on working towards providing racial/equity/and culturally competent learning for all staff at LIFE Prep.

### **Technology**

Providing technology to ALL students. Each student in grades Pre-K through 6th will have a device for the 2020-2021 school year. Our curriculum will be solely based on

Distance Learning, due to the pandemic. Access to online curriculum will be a top priority going forward.