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Lake Oconee Academy  
1021 Titan Circle  
Greensboro, GA 30642

## CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL APPLICATION COVER PAGES

Check One:  Start-up Renewal  Conversion Renewal

When was the original charter term start date? July 2007

How many charter terms has the school been in existence? 2

Name of Charter School: Lake Oconee Academy

Name of the Georgia nonprofit corporation that currently holds the charter:  
Lake Oconee Academy, Inc.

Local school system in which charter school is physically located: Greene County School District

### Contact Information for the Governing Board Chair

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**CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL APPLICATION**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Name of Charter School: Lake Oconee Academy

Proposed Charter Term Length: 5 years

Current Grade Range: K-12                      Grade range at the end of the charter term: K-12

Expected enrollment at the end of the charter term: 1144

This application was approved by Greene County Local Board of Education on xxxx,xx,2023

For each year of the NEW charter term, indicate the number of students the charter school plans to serve.

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
<b>Year 1</b>	88	89	88	92	88	88	88	94	88	90	89	74	74	1130
<b>Year 2</b>	88	88	89	88	92	88	88	88	94	88	90	89	74	1144
<b>Year 3</b>	74	88	88	89	88	92	88	88	88	94	88	90	89	1144
<b>Year 4</b>	83	81	88	88	89	88	92	88	88	88	94	88	90	1144
<b>Year 5</b>	89	83	82	88	88	89	88	92	88	88	88	94	88	1144

*\*The previous table is a best estimation of the population breakdown per grade. Projections in year 1 are based on the current enrollment and current number of priority students (30) on the waiting list. Priority students are siblings of students already enrolled. 1144 is the maximum number of students that will be enrolled and funded by the Greene County School System during the life of this 5-year charter.*

1. State the charter school’s mission and describe why this initiative is important to the community it serves. Also provide a brief description of any defining features of the school. Include how stakeholders were involved in the petition process and how they will continue participating. (350 words or less)

Lake Oconee Academy’s mission is to increase student achievement by building a culture of high expectations both behaviorally and academically. The Academy was built by dedicated leaders who relentlessly seek opportunities for all of the students, highly-qualified faculty who believe and expect that all students can and will learn, and parents who willingly give of their time and resources.

Prior to LOA, in a study completed by Dr. Barbara Pulliam-Davis (2012), it was estimated that approximately one-third - 1000 students - sought education outside of Greene County. Once LOA was established, some students from Greene County returned. The first year LOA received only 11 applications. Since then, 4589 applications have been submitted with the last six years averaging over 485 applications per year. Families from across the world have stated they returned to the area because of LOA as an educational option. As of the November 6, 2023 LOA board meeting, there are 362 students on the waiting list.

The idea for LOA started with a group of citizens who were advocating for school choice in the area. LOA continues to encourage community involvement by holding routine board meetings and encouraging parental involvement through our Parent Teacher Committee, with time set aside for community comment. The diverse board voices perspectives from across the county. While the LOA Foundation Board is tasked with fundraising for LOA extracurricular activities, it is also a forum for comments for the Greene County residents who constitute the board. The school, along with the new hospital, has been instrumental over the past 16 years in bringing large scale construction to the area. This increase in construction supports significant increases in the tax base and the gross value of ESPLOST initiatives.

Evidence of student achievement including standardized test scores, graduation rate, and college admission rates proves that small rural communities can have schools that can compete with larger suburban and urban schools. The efficient use of funds allows it to work with a local foundation and the Greene County School Board to develop an aesthetically pleasing campus that presently consists of ten educational buildings, state of the art athletic equipment, two turf fields, and a fine arts building. Community support, strong leadership, and dedicated faculty and staff commit daily to provide the students with comprehensive educational and extracurricular opportunities comparable to larger schools across the nation.

2. *Describe the charter school's academic program, specifically focusing on why it is innovative in your school district(s). Include mention of any waivers of state law and SBOE rule that are needed to implement the academic program. Be sure to describe any special characteristics of your charter school, such as a special population or some other feature or features which enhance educational opportunities. (350 words or less)*

LOA was founded as a Core Knowledge school. Knowledge-Based Schooling posits that knowledge builds on knowledge and that a broad, content-rich knowledge of history, science, geography, literature and the arts are the keys to reading comprehension. Recently, LOA recommitted its instructional focus to fully implement Core Knowledge's language arts curriculum with fidelity: CKLA in the elementary school and Amplify in the middle school. These research-based programs weave background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures, verbal reasoning, and literacy knowledge to produce skilled readers.

However, reading comprehension starts with strong phonemic awareness and explicit phonics instruction. With a focus on reading research and the science of reading, LOA commits to educate all of its primary teachers through LETRS, a professional development opportunity that provides a deep knowledge in literacy and language.

For math, LOA has partnered with the NEGA RESA to provide staff development focused on supporting problem solving and critical thinking. Teachers trained on the Georgia Numeracy Project which focuses on developing students' understanding of numbers and their ability to solve problems. One key component of the project is personalized student plans to target skill gaps during dedicated intervention times every day.

In high school, LOA adopted the Pre-AP curriculum for students. The Pre-AP curriculum uses the basic AP pedagogical constructs to expose students to the rigor of AP courses. This builds confidence and further prepares them for the independent and analytical assignments embedded in each of the 25 AP courses the school offers. It also fosters self-reliance, accountability, and grit; all characteristics required for success.

LOA is committed to developing the whole child. Extensive research supports the importance of including academic, creative, and physical electives to support a child's intellectual, social-emotional, and

physical development. LOA works with the Greene County School System to incorporate Social Emotional professional development in grades 6-12. LOA requires all elementary students to take piano, band, or chorus. Students are exposed to foreign language, fine arts, studio arts and computer science. The school offers competitive extracurricular opportunities like cross country, football, softball, basketball, theater, volleyball, baseball, tennis, golf, and soccer. Many of which have received state recognition.

- 3. Describe the charter school's organizational structure, specifically focusing on its innovation and need for flexibility, its general partnership structure with an educational service provider (ESP) if any, and the school's community interest and need. (350 words or less)*

LOA is governed by a board of directors that includes a president (chair), vice-president (vice-chair), secretary, and treasurer. During the first sixteen years of the Board's operation, its governors have been able to rationally and professionally discuss the issues that arise from the operation of the school in order to make the best decision for the students' education. Board members represent diverse stakeholders from the whole county including parents, business people, and financial and legal advisors.

The Executive Director has oversight over all operations. Three division directors report directly to the CEO who oversees grades Pre-K through 4, 5 through 8, and 9 through 12. Directors oversee all instructional and student affairs. Working collaboratively with the directors are two curriculum coordinators whose roles include curriculum selection, implementation, and staff development to ensure the proper presentation and evaluation of the selected resources.

Other administrative positions include the athletic director, IT director and assistant, our dean of students (mostly discipline related duties), and our three division counselors who work to meet the social and emotional needs of the LOA students.

One hundred eight teachers, teachers' assistants, and contracted services practitioners support the instruction of students daily. The role of these individuals is instruction and evaluation of student learning. They report directly to the curriculum coordinators and the grade level directors.

Externally, LOA has contracted with a back-office company to assist with the day to day and long-range financial forecasting. LOA contracts out its cleaning and landscaping. Greene County Schools serve breakfast and lunch.

All of these entities work collaboratively to serve the children of Greene County. There is a great deal of interest and need for LOA as demonstrated by the over 360 students on the waiting list. Many members of the community wish to have access to the school because it serves a distinct need for those seeking a college preparatory education.

### **PAST PERFORMANCE**

1. *Complete and attach as Exhibit 5 the Accountability Report available on the GaDOE's Charter Schools Division website to show the school's performance during each year of your current charter term and include with your charter school renewal application. This Accountability Report will be presented to the State Board of Education with your charter petition, so please ensure it is accurate.*

See Exhibit 5

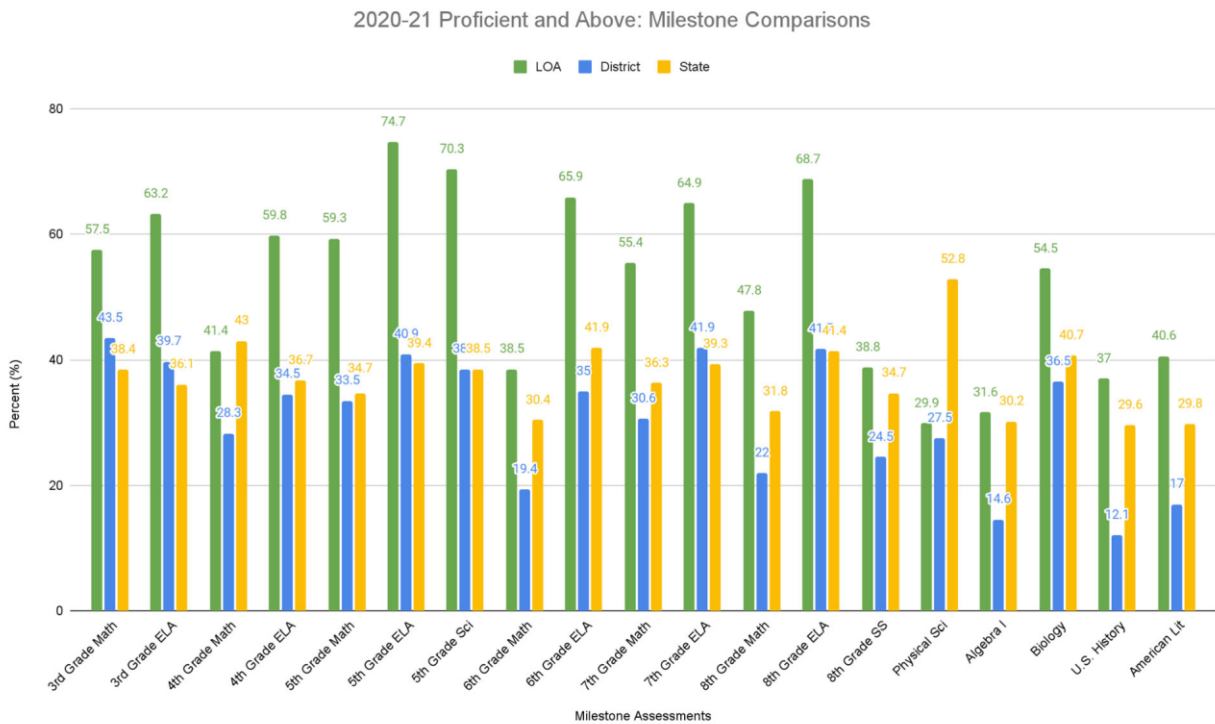
2. *Provide a narrative describing how the charter school performed in meeting the academic and organizational goals set forth in its current charter contract. In your narrative:*
  - *Address the school's performance in each year of your current charter term.*
  - *You are urged to include any supporting charts, tables, or graphs that provide quantitative data.*
  - *If your charter school did not meet all of the goals in its charter contract, explain any mitigating factors to which this can be attributed, and explain how the school plans to address them in the upcoming charter renewal term requested.*

### Academic Goals:

LOA consistently outcores the district and state averages for College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI). In 2017-2018, LOA earned an overall CCRPI score of 87.7 which is approximately 20% higher than both the district's and state's scores of 71.5 and 72.3 respectively. This trend was consistent for the 2018-2019 school year as well.

LOA strives to score better than, or at least as well as, similar schools in Georgia similar to LOA. The state refers to this comparison as Beating the Odds (BTO) analysis; the results of which hold charter schools, systems, and SWSS contracts accountable. According to the 2017-2018 BTO report, LOA beat the odds. The following year, LOA did not beat the odds; however, the school did fall within the expected range, and the CCRPI score still exceeded that of the district and state. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, BTO data is unavailable for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years.

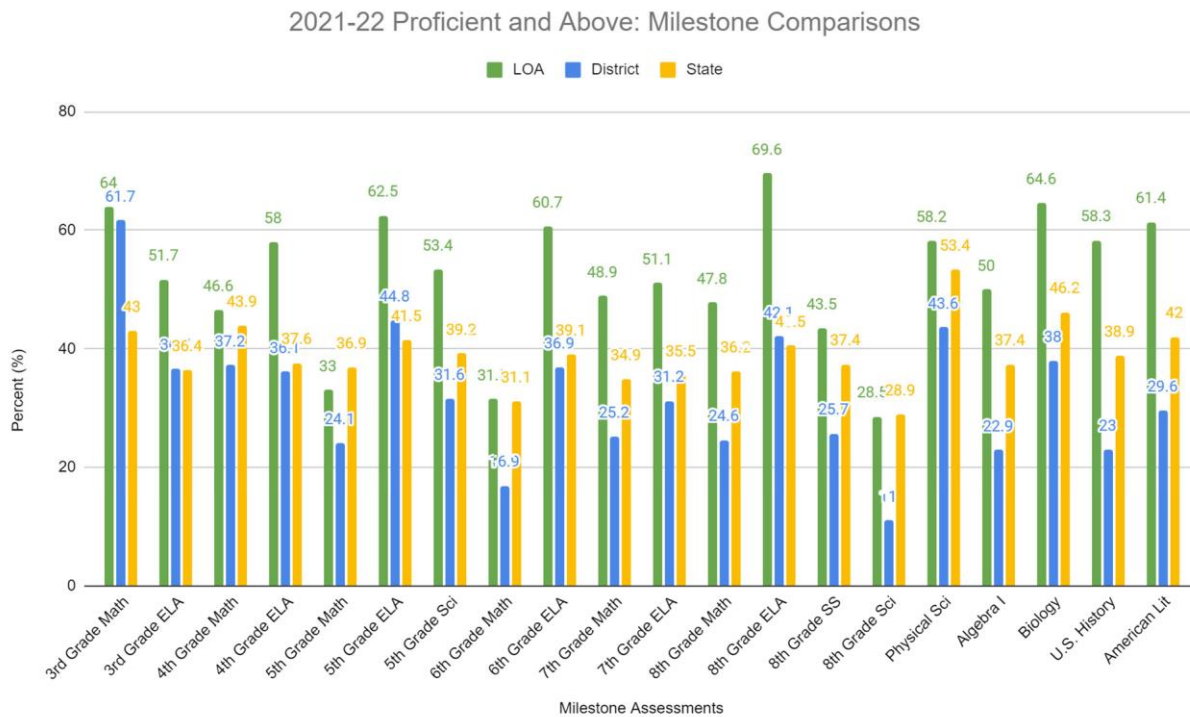
During the pandemic LOA’s primary focus was to ensure the safety of students and their families with a secondary focus on ensuring students still had access to a high-quality education. Because there are no CCRPI scores to compare for the following years, Georgia Milestones Assessment data is used to evaluate the academic performance of students. Students earn an achievement score of 1(-a beginning learner who does not demonstrate proficiency of grade-level standards); 2 (a developing learner who demonstrates partial proficiency of grade-level standards); or a 3 or 4 (learners who demonstrate proficiency and advanced proficiency, respectively). While the district and state views learners with 2s as eligible for promotion, LOA measures success based on students receiving 3s and 4s. According to the Georgia Department of Education, in the 2020-2021 school year, LOA significantly outperformed the district in all areas. LOA outperformed the state in all areas except for fourth grade math and Physical Science. *See the graph below.*



This data prompted the school to implement meaningful changes that positively impacts student achievement. For elementary math through Algebra I, the school adopted the research-based Math in Focus curriculum which develops strong algebraic concepts and problem solving skills through direct

instruction, cooperative learning, and guided independent practice. Each unit begins with a pre-test to help teachers identify and address the individual needs of each learner.

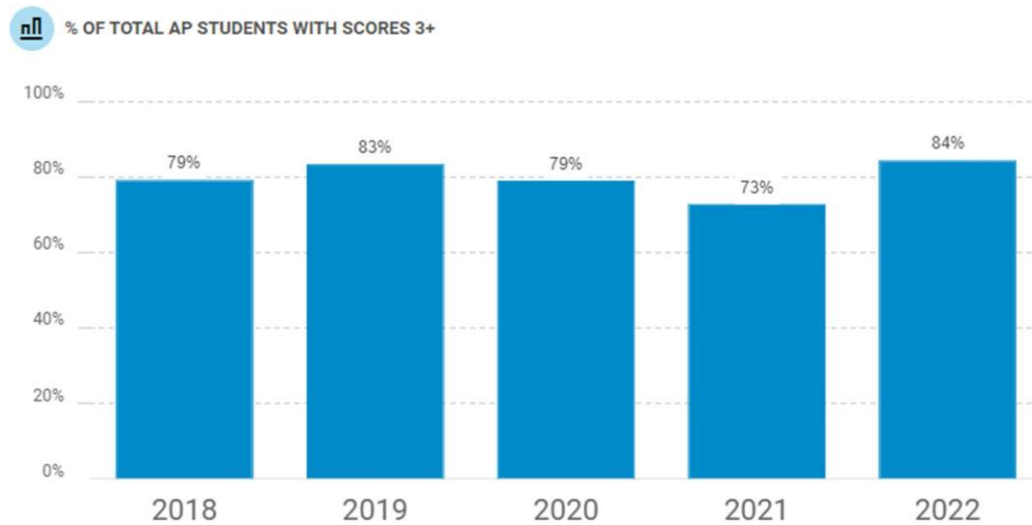
The data also indicated an error in an LOA organizational decision. During the 2020-21 school year, all eighth-grade students took the high school Physical Science course. However, the testing data for Physical Science indicated that not all eighth-grade students were ready to take the high school Physical Science course. Again, to meet the needs of all learners, two separate science pathways were established; both of which offer AP sciences as a future option. With two exceptions, the changes resulted in LOA's 2021-22 percentage of 3s and 4s, once again, outscoring the district and state. Fifth grade math continued to be an area of weakness. Particular attention has been given to this cohort of students including reduced class sizes, a dedicated math interventionist, and mandatory after school tutoring.



Currently, LOA offers over 20 AP courses which provide students with opportunities to earn college credit upon scoring well on the AP exam. Scoring for AP exams range from 1-5 with most colleges accepting a score of a 3 or above for college credit in the corresponding course. LOA requires all



students enrolled in an AP course to take the AP exam. As shown in the bar graph below, consistently from 2018 to 2022, 73% to 84% of AP students scored a 3 or above on their exams. Students in these courses performed with approximately 20% to 30% more scores of 3, 4, or 5 than the Georgia, the US, or the international average.



### Organizational Goals

Regarding promoting a positive school experience that engages students, parents, and teachers, the percentage of students absent 6 days or more was as follows: 2017-9.16%, 18-8.91%, 19-9.31%, 20-5.56%, 21-11.26%, 22-22.18%, 23-13.40%. These percentages were affected by Covid-19. LOA has employed a full time school social worker, attendance clerk and counselors at the elementary, middle, and high school level to support increased school attendance. These staff members work in conjunction with LOA administrators to remove any individual barriers to increased school attendance. LOA's Climate Star Ratings as a part of CCRPI were all above 3 stars during the charter term: 2016-4 stars; 2017-4 stars; 2018-5 stars; 2019-5 stars; 2020-2021-unavailable due to COVID; 2022-not released.

LOA has administered the Georgia Student Health Survey to families and educators at the end of each year of the charter, except for years where these surveys were not mandated by GADOE due to Covid-19. These surveys yielded results regarding the goal of 90% of parents and 90% of educators indicating they are at least "satisfied" with their child's education (parents) or at least "satisfied" with

their overall job quality (educators). A response rate for these surveys is currently unavailable, except for the most recent administration (March 2023). The response rate for families was 30% and the response rate for educators was 70%.

In 2016-2017, 84.21% of parents indicated they were at least “satisfied” with their child’s education. In 2017-2018, this percentage was at 77.59%, and in 2018-2019, the percentage was 80.96%. From 2019 to 2022, the surveys were not administered due to Covid-19, and the most recent of these survey results are unavailable at this point. The response rate for the most recent administration of these surveys was 30% for parents, and 70% for educators. In September of 2022, LOA administered an additional survey to establish a baseline in preparation for accreditation through Cognia, and to administer a survey that may more adequately assess whether families and educators were “satisfied”. For families, 90.4% of LOA parents indicated they are at least “satisfied” with their child’s education, and 98% of LOA educators indicated they are at least “satisfied” with their overall job quality. The response rate for families was 28% and the response rate for educators was 100%. A summary of these results is provided in the attached spreadsheet. Additionally, LOA plans to implement another Cognia survey in the coming weeks and prior to the end of the school year. This is a different type of survey that more accurately assesses the perceptions of our families and educators.

It should be noted that there are concerns regarding the language of the previous charter goals related to parent and educator surveys. First, the language is ambiguous regarding a specific survey that should be used, including the identification of a survey that is valid and reliable in providing data, or answers, that speak to the question posed. Second, the survey does not specify certain parameters for the administration of the survey. Last, the response rate threshold for parents and families is well above average/acceptable.

Moving forward, LOA suggests working with GCSS to specify a survey to be used. For example, LOA plans to work with the University of Georgia Research Center to develop a survey that is valid and reliable when seeking parental and teacher satisfaction rates. LOA also proposes working with GCSS to identify how the data yielded from surveys will be used. For example, is it to inform practice to make

improvements, as was mentioned is common in goal setting for charter schools? Or is it to determine whether a charter will be approved or denied? Regardless of the agreed upon use of data, LOA feels strongly that they are transparent regarding the personal impact that the survey may have on those constituents who are asked to take the survey. This is in keeping with best practices for data collection with many IRB's across the nation. Lastly, LOA suggests working with GCSS to adjust the response rate threshold to one more in line with other surveys. A recent metanalysis of peer reviewed on-line surveys yielded that the average response rate over recent years for surveys reviewed is at 44.1%.

Regarding organizational goal 4, LOA is still a growing school and the number of students being added in the early years of the charter is significant. This makes it very difficult to grow a given population. As one group grows significantly, and the total grows it reduces the impact of the group growth compared to the total population. Also, siblings of present students receive preference and the percentage of seats available are very limited (usually less than 5% and consistently less than 10%, which is a very low rate in any schools public, private, or charter). LOA also has a waiting list of on average over 350 students each year, which is 40 to 50 percent of the population of students in the past 8 years. This makes it so that typically, students are replaced by the priority siblings. Students who are not siblings or employees' children have a 1 or 2 percent chance of entry.

However, due to marketing campaigns in the paper, visits to a diverse area of the county where high numbers of minority students reside, and excellent recommendations from our minority parents, the percentage of minority students accepted have been higher than the percentage of minority students attending. Thus, increasing the population in those grades where acceptances were available and adding more minority students to the sibling preference list for future acceptances.

Over the four years before Covid and when the GCSB was allowing additional growth due to community demand the minority student population grew at a range of 39 to 51 percent of the population of new students. Over that same period, the minority grew at an average of 16.5% per year. Then two things happened. First, Covid hit, and people were not moving. That meant no new seats were opened for incoming students. Also, if the seats had opened the seats were filled with siblings of students already on

the waiting list. Second, LOA was not permitted to fill seats beyond the number of students projected in the charter renewal.

In 2015, the last year of the previous charter, LOA had 14 employees of color. In 2023, LOA has 24 of employees of color. These employees serve as assistant teachers to curriculum coordinators and as members of our administrative team. They are valued members of our faculty and staff. They have a direct impact on the operation of the school. LOA is also assisting some of these professionals as they seek Masters, Specialists, and Doctoral degrees. This computes to a 71.4% increase in the number of employees serving LOA and being of color. LOA has contracted with a minority owned company to provide services daily for the school. Nineteen employees (100% of their staff) that work here at LOA are people of color. Another company that LOA has contracted with is not minority owned but all of its employees are people of color. These adjustments over the years exceed the goal set in the charter renewal.

Presently the LOA Board of Governors has two members of color and one person of international descent that gives the college prep school more worldly component. In this world of diversity, limiting the board due to skin color is shortsighted and lacks the real essence of the term diversity. However, looking back over the years from 2016 to the present multiple times the LOA Board has had three persons of color and persons of international descent at multiple times. This meets the goal and shows the effort of this board to meet the goal now and in the future. LOA is always searching for board members who meet one or more of the desired characteristics as stated in the bylaws.

3. *Describe the school's current financial situation. In your description:*

- *Include an explanation of financial results.*

All audits including the 2022-23 audit have no adverse findings. Over the past 16 years, LOA has completed its requirements for audits using Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards including annual budgets, complying with GASB and GMP, in a timely manner and without audit exceptions. LOA is a high performing charter school and financially sound, as noted by its monthly financial reports. Its reserve fund meets the needs for school operation for 60 to 90 days (the GADOE recommendation for a catastrophic

event). It pays all debts in a timely manner, and all financial expectations have been met. With that performance record, LOA is allowed maximum flexibility and autonomy by the state. LOA will use an approved auditor who serves several other charter schools, who provides timely service, and has specialized knowledge of charter schools. LOA will continue to exercise this maximum flexibility and autonomy granted by state code which allows the charter school to select an approved auditor to complete the LOA audit. The school is aware that it will be responsible for any fees incurred by using this auditor and will be prepared to meet those expenses.

- *Detail any financial successes or struggles the school experienced during the current charter term. Include any instances of fraudulent behavior or accusations of fraudulent behavior by school staff, governing board members, or anyone else associated with the school.*

During the present charter term, LOA financed the expansion of a new high school academic building that will educate 400 students, an athletic facility with a gym, weight room, cafeteria, offices, locker rooms, laundry, and training room, as well as, an arts complex with a black box theater, video/TV production studio, chorus, band, and spaces for 2D and 3D art. The school met these needs with a sound long-term financial plan, budgeting each new year off actual costs from the previous year, and using the USDA rural development loan program for the lowest interest rates (2.375%) and a long-term payoff.

For almost three years, LOA was legally engaged with the Greene County School District over a discrepancy with funding for students who were attending LOA. The suit was settled with the Greene County School District making a financial settlement with LOA.

- *Explain how the school will address any struggles discussed above as well as any outstanding debts. Explain how the school will allocate any surplus funds.*

LOA has ample enrollment to meet the lease payment to the LOA Foundation for the use of the new facilities. Soon, LOA will need a new middle school facility. LOA is already reserving funds that will be applied to that building project. LOA may enlist a capital campaign with the revenue from the campaign to meet a portion of the financial obligation and may secure a USDA loan for the remainder. As the need grows near, LOA will begin the design process to better estimate the cost of the new facility.

4. *Provide a brief overview of the school's current governance structure. In your description, you must include:*

- *Specific examples of decisions the governing board has made on behalf of the school;*

The current governing board, the LOA Board of Governors, consists of six members: two males, four females; one African American member, four Caucasian members, and one with an international background; three parents; and community members business associates. One African American board member recently resigned, and the Board is searching for his replacement. The board has permanent committees such as the financial committee and the strategic plan committee. The Board Chairman develops ad hoc committees based on current issues and needs. One example of a decision made by the governing board was to design a reporting model which provided clarity and transparency to the stakeholders.

All but one of these people have been a part of the expansion of the LOA facilities. Two have been involved in all the building projects. All board members consistently govern in the areas of academic achievement, fiscal health, legal and regulatory compliance, policy development, and enforcement. Five of the board members were involved with the settlement of the recent lawsuit between the Board and the School District.

- *Specific examples of decisions the school leader has made on behalf of the school*

The school leader, Dr. Brad Bowling, has been the leader of the school for the present year after the retirement of Dr. Otho Tucker. Dr. Tucker was the founding CEO and led the school for 16 years. He has been involved in building and designing of all the construction projects, developing curriculum, supporting and retaining personnel to maintain a positive school culture, managing legal issues, community relations, and any other aspect of the school on a day-by-day basis. For the 2023-2024 school year, he continues to operate in a consulting capacity at the direction of the LOA Board of Governors, which includes an advisory role to the incoming Executive Director, Dr. Brad Bowling.

One specific example of a decision that was made was the re-structuring of administration at LOA as a result of the transition to a new head of school. LOA administrative staff, under the direction of Dr. Bowling, now includes a Lower School Director (Pre-k through 4th grade), and an Upper School

Director (5th-12th grade). LOA employs a Lower School Assistant Director/ Instructional Coordinator, a Middle School (5th -8th grade) Assistant Director/ Instructional Coordinator, and a High School (9th-12th grade) Assistant Director/ Instructional Coordinator. This group of administrators is responsible for staff evaluations, oversees the continuous improvement plan and curriculum and instruction, and plans, implements, and monitors LOA's professional development initiatives.

Operationally, LOA employs a Dean of Students who oversees student discipline, a Director of Technology, who oversees facilities and technology, and an Athletic Director who oversees all student extracurricular activities and opportunities. These administrators, in collaboration with teacher leaders from each grade level and/or content area and special education representatives make up the LOA Leadership Team. This team, under the direction of Dr. Bowling, works collaboratively to provide input and leadership in carrying out the mission and vision of LOA.

- *How the governing board holds the school leader, any charter partners (ESP/CMO/EMO), and any independent contractors accountable*

The leader is responsible for the day-to-day school operations, long-range planning, personnel, policy, and finances. All contracted services - builders management groups, independent contractors, etc report directly to the school leader. The governing board chair has been trained in the LKES evaluation system. The Executive Director evaluation committee, in conjunction with the Board of Governors will use the LKES or other appropriate tool for the evaluation of the Executive Director. The board will provide the executive director with any information pertinent to the review. The governing board holds the school leader accountable via data progress reports that are analyzed each board session. Test scores, financial reports, construction updates, enrollment changes, academic review, and athletic highlights are presented in an open forum, regularly-scheduled public meeting. Board members, as well as, the public are invited and encouraged to ask clarifying questions.

- *The governing board's training program for the current and proposed charter term. Attach as Exhibit 6 a copy of the board's Governance Training Plan.*

The LOA board of governors uses the GA Charter School Association to supply board training. The board, including any new members, reviews policies and training procedures in February. New board members meet with the executive director and the board attorney for basic induction training. The board may also attend additional training through the GA Charter School Conference or online programs to meet accountability expectations. GA DOE is used for financial governance training for new members of the LOA Board. See Exhibit 6.

5. *Describe how the school provides state- and federally mandated services to **students with disabilities**. Reciting the requirements of law and rule is insufficient. Your description must include the school's practices and procedures to:*

Children and their parents who attend public charter schools retain all rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Lake Oconee Academy works with the Greene County School System to ensure adherence to state board rules and regulations to ensure compliance with IDEA. LOA shall not discriminate against any students on the basis of need for special education services. LOA has agreed to adopt the GCSS special education handbook.

- *Evaluate and identify students with disabilities;*

Lake Oconee Academy incorporates the Response to Intervention (RTI) and the Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) processes to identify students with disabilities. A student who does not respond to increased support systems is referred for a comprehensive evaluation. When students are referred for comprehensive evaluation, a GCSS school psychologist evaluates students, and LOA teachers and staff collect necessary data to inform the evaluation. LOA, in collaboration with GCSS and *Babies Can't Wait*, incorporates *Child Find* to identify, locate, screen, and evaluate children and youth (birth to age 21) who are suspected of, or have a disability or developmental delay for children enrolled in the LEA school district. A *Child Find* referral is made by anyone who is concerned about a child's development, and each year *Child Find* screenings for preschool age children are completed in collaboration with GCSS. LOA employs a Special Education Coordinator who collaborates with the LOA directors and the GCSS Special Education Director to oversee the process for evaluating and identifying students with disabilities.



- *Develop, review, and revise Individualized Education Programs (IEPs);*

Special education teachers at LOA serve as case managers and develop, review, and revise Individualized Education Plans (IEP) per the timeline and other requirements of IDEA. IEP teams meet to determine services for individual students at least annually. Services in the IEP accommodate, modify, and adapt the general curriculum to meet the individualized needs of each student. LOA's Special Education Coordinator oversees the development, review, and revision of the school's IEPs and collaborates with the LOA Directors and the GCSS's Special Education Director to implement the IEP process in accordance with the GCSS Special Education Guidebook for Best Practices and Procedures and federal mandates.

- *Integrate special education into the general education program;*

LOA adheres to the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) provision of IDEA. Students with IEPs are integrated into the general education program in all content areas, with the exception of a small group of students who are in a resource setting for core content areas in elementary and middle school. Many students, including special education students graduate with a high school diploma, which is awarded to students certifying they have satisfied the attendance requirements, unit requirements, and the state assessment requirements of the general education program. LOA employs a Special Education Coordinator, who collaborates with the LOA Directors and the GCSS Special Education Director to oversee the process for adherence to the LRE provisions of IDEA.

- *Ensure that the school facility meets the requirements of other related laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504;*

The *Americans with Disabilities Act* prohibits discrimination against disabled Americans by ensuring equal access to opportunities. Students eligible for a section 504 plan under the ADA include any child who has a disability that substantially limits and interferes with the child's ability to learn in a general education classroom. In accordance with federal law, once a student is identified as potentially having a limiting disability, a team is formed to determine if a 504 plan is needed. The team is composed

of individuals who are knowledgeable about the child and who understand the evaluation data and special services options. For LOA, this includes the child's parent, general and special education teachers, and division directors, as well as other staff who can contribute to discussion about a student's need like the school counselor or nurse. All plans contain specific accommodations, supports, and/or services for the child, as well as who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the plan. Although federal law suggests 504 plans be reviewed every three years, LOA evaluates students' 504 plans every year.

- *Address student discipline;*

Special education students are disciplined per State Board Rule [160-4-7-.10 DISCIPLINE](#).

Students with disabilities should be expected to follow the rules that are in effect for all of the students in the school. The Code of Student Conduct for LOA applies to all children unless a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) specifically states otherwise. LOA ensures that the parents and the child with a disability receive notice of the rules and regulations applicable to children with disabilities with respect to child management, discipline and suspension/expulsion upon the child's entry into a special education program or at the annual IEP review. Lake Oconee Academy is a PBIS-Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports-School System. LOA administrators and PBIS team leaders work with the administrator over PBIS in GCSS to implement this program with fidelity to all GADOE requirements. LOA administrators review discipline data monthly, and work to ensure there is no disproportionality or discrepancy in the discipline of students with IEPs. This includes data provided in Educator's Handbook, as well as data in Infinite Campus.

Within 10 school days from the beginning of a disciplinary action that either exceeds 10 school days in a row or that constitutes a pattern of removals (a change in placement), the student's IEP team must meet to determine whether the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability, or whether the conduct was a result of the district's failure to implement the student's IEP.

In supporting students in crisis or conflict, LOA provides *Mindset* training and certification to teachers and administrators. "The purpose of this training program is to facilitate insight, raise awareness,

enhance skills, and ultimately certify professionals in a system of preventing and managing aggressive behavior.” The *Mindset* program emphasizes the process of behavior de-escalation through a crisis communication model, which includes the promotion of choice and trust, avoiding power struggles, being proactive rather than reactive, and by setting everyone up for success.

LOA prioritizes the use of restraint as a last resort, and only in crisis situations, where students are in danger of harm to self or others. LOA employs a Special Education Coordinator, who collaborates with the LOA Directors and the GCSS Special Education Director to oversee the process for the disciplining of students with disabilities.

- *Handle programming disputes involving parents*

LOA works with the Greene County School System to adhere to State Board Rule [160-4-7-.12 DISPUTE RESOLUTION](#) in handling disputes involving parents of students with disabilities. LOA and the GCSS collaborate to ensure procedures are established and implemented to allow parties processes to dispute any matter relating to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to resolve such disputes through a mediation, impartial due process hearing, or formal complaint. All parties are encouraged to contact the LOA Special Education Coordinator and LOA Directors as a first step in resolving questions or concerns. If any party wishes to engage in a dispute resolution process, they are encouraged to contact the GCSS Director of Special Education.

Parents are offered Parent Rights per the requirements of State Board Rule [160-4-7-.09 PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS/PARENT RIGHTS](#). These safeguards outline the process for any programming disputes. The Parent Rights in Special Education (Parent Rights) notice provides the foundation for ensuring that a child with a disability has access to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). The Parent Rights notice provides parents with the opportunity to understand their rights, the rights of their child and the procedures for resolving differences. This document will also help to facilitate communication between parents and system personnel. The Parent Rights are given to parents at a minimum of once per year and should be given to parents when they are asked to sign Consent for

Evaluation form, Consent for Placement form, and at the initial IEP meeting and each IEP annual review meeting.

- *Ensure confidentiality of special education records;*

LOA ensures confidentiality of special education records pursuant to State Board Rule [160-4-7-.08](#)

[CONFIDENTIALITY OF PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION](#). All LOA personnel (including contracted employees) are governed by confidentiality requirements and receive training each year and information regarding the law. Written and dated parent consent must be obtained before personally identifiable information can be disclosed to unauthorized individuals, organizations, or agencies (unless otherwise authorized to do so under FERPA).

1. All records are kept confidential and housed at the Greene County BOE SPED department.
2. All student records are maintained electronically through the password protected Go-IEP platform. The Go-IEP platform has scaffolded levels of access depending on an employee's role within a school or at the district level.
3. The provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) apply to any institution that receives federal education funds. The information about a child being a child with a disability eligible under the IDEA, his or her special education and related services, and other related information is confidential and is not released to others within the system unless they have a legitimate need to know nor is it released to other agencies or groups except under limited circumstances. Written and dated parental consent must be obtained before personally identifiable information can be disclosed to unauthorized individuals, organizations, or agencies.

- *Purchase services from special education vendors or to contract with your local district to provide a continuum of special education services and how this arrangement will work; and*

The LOA Special Education Coordinator and Administrators collaborate with the GCSS Director of Special Education to purchase services from special education vendors and to provide a continuum of special education services. LOA receives IDEA federal funding per the formula in the charter. Through

collaboration, both LOA and GCSS divide expenses. Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, and Physical Therapists are contracted by the Greene County School System, and provide services to students at LOA, for example, and LOA employs a full-time Speech Language Pathologist.

Both LOA and the GCSS adhere to all purchasing regulations of IDEA. Any funds supporting special education services are used to supplement and not supplant state, local, and federal funds used for all students. All IDEA costs are allowable under the Education Department of General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).

Federal grant reimbursement eligibility for a high-needs special education student must be at least three times the average per pupil expenditure as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 611 (e) (3) of the IDEA 2004. GADOE defines a “High Needs Child” as a “child who has been identified as eligible for special education and related services and has a current Individualized Education Program (IEP). The intensity, frequency and diversity of the special education and related services needs of the child exceed the typical needs of a child with a disability.” GADOE establishes that a child may be considered a “High Needs Child” when that student’s special education and related services cost in excess of \$27,000.

In the event that a student is deemed as being a “high needs child,” is eligible for federal grant reimbursement as defined above, and is served at Lake Oconee Academy, Lake Oconee Academy and the Special Education Director for Greene County Schools will work in good faith to complete the High Cost Grant Application through the Georgia Department of Education in an effort to offset the financial burden of accrued costs on an individual student basis.

- *Secure technical assistance and training.*

The LOA Special Education Coordinator, LOA Administrators, and the Greene County School System Special Education Director provide ongoing technical assistance and training to special education teachers and staff at LOA concerning all special education processes and procedures. When concerns arise or any violation is claimed, these leaders collaborate to investigate, and provide necessary technical assistance. Technical assistance is provided through training, one-to-one conferences, webinars, and or Professional Development Plans. If teachers continue to have difficulty despite technical assistance, LOA

administrators determine next steps to ensure remediation and compliance. LOA has agreed to adopt the GCSS special education handbook.

6. *Describe how the charter school provides state- and federally-mandated services for English Learners (ELs). Reciting the requirements of law and rule is insufficient. Your description must include the diagnostic methods or instruments that are used to identify and assess those students, as well as the instructional program that is provided to ELs.*

Identification of English Learners at Lake Oconee Academy follows WIDA guidelines for initial screening within the first 30 days of enrollment in U.S. schools. Families complete a Home Language Survey, provided in both English and a language in which they understand, upon enrollment. The surveys are collected by the Admissions office and given to the elementary school ESOL teacher. The ESOL teacher reviews the Home Language Surveys to determine if the student is enrolling in a U.S. school for the first time and each student's home language. WIDA English language proficiency screeners are administered to K-12th students and determine initial eligibility. Kindergarten student, and students in the first semester of first grade are administered the Listening and Speaking sections of the Kindergarten WIDA Screener. Kindergarten screeners are scored by the test administrator and entered into the WIDA Secure Portal to generate a report of the student's test performance. Students with an Oral Proficiency score less than a 5.0 are eligible for ESOL services. Students entering after the first semester of their first grade year, and students in second through twelfth grades, are administered the grade level WIDA Screener Online. Students are screened for English proficiency in Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking domains. The test administrator scores the Speaking and Writing sections of the WIDA Screener Online, and students scoring less than a 5.0 Overall Composite Proficiency qualify for ESOL services. The ESOL teacher reviews prior records for student transfers to determine eligibility and placement in the ESOL program and honors prior EL identification for out of state transfer students. After placement in the ESOL program, EL students receive daily ESOL instruction adhering to instructional minutes by grade level and class size recommendations (SBOE 160-4-5-.02 and SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.08).

ESOL teachers complete annual training and assessments through the WIDA Secure Portal to maintain certification to administer and score WIDA Screeners. ESOL teachers also complete annual training and assessments to become familiar with updates, testing procedures, and to maintain certification to administer the annual WIDA ACCESS test. The ACCESS test is administered to EL students in grades K-12th grade each year to monitor progress, guide instruction, and determine reclassification in the ESOL program. The ACCESS test consists of language tasks in all four domains of Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking to determine a student's Overall Composite Proficiency Level. English learners with an Overall Composite Proficiency Level greater than 5.0 are exited from the ESOL program. English learners scoring between 4.3 and 4.9 Overall Composite Proficiency Level may exit the ESOL program with documentation from an EL Reclassification Team Decision. After exiting the ESOL program, EL students are monitored for the next four academic years.

EL students are also administered NWEA during the Fall, Winter, and Spring administration periods in order to monitor academic progress and qualify for additional services such as: early interventions, MTSS, and gifted services. Students qualifying for additional support services are served dually through both the ESOL program and the additional services deemed appropriate. EL students served dually through both the Special Education program and the ESOL program, receive services designed to best meet their needs through a team decision at the student's annual IEP meeting. Annual Test Participation Committee meetings are held individually on each EL student. The Test Participation Committee team consists of the ESOL teacher, classroom teacher(s), an administrative representative, and parents are invited to attend. Committee members review language proficiency scores in each domain to determine state allowable classroom and testing accommodations for each EL student.

ESOL instruction emphasizes academic and social language development using the WIDA standards and frameworks in combination with Georgia Performance standards. Classroom teachers and ESOL teachers collaborate to ensure the needs of our diverse EL population are met within the classroom setting. Vocabulary instruction, scaffolding techniques, and instructional strategies are collaboratively

planned and implemented according to ELL student's language proficiency. ESOL instruction is given by qualified ESOL teachers using a variety of delivery models (push-in, pull-out, and scheduled class period) to ensure the needs of our diverse English Learner population is met across Kindergarten through 12th grade. ESOL teachers design instruction based on proficiency levels to target growth in both social and academic language in the areas of Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking in English. Lake Oconee Academy's ESOL instruction includes a focus on activating prior knowledge, content vocabulary instruction, and engaging thematic units using culturally relevant topics and literature. Lake Oconee Academy ESOL teachers participate in continuing education and professional development to adjust to the changing needs of our culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

7. *Provide the number and percentage of students receiving In-School Suspensions, Out-of-School Suspensions, or Expulsions during the current charter term (e.g., the past 5 years). How does this discipline and dismissal data compare to the [Office of Civil Rights data](#)?*

The Office of Civil Rights offers data for comparison to the Greene County School System for full-year 2017, and for the state of Georgia for full-year 2018. These percentages are included in the tables below to compare LOA over several years, as other comparable data from the Office of Civil Rights is unavailable. Generally, percentages of students receiving In-School Suspensions and Out of School Suspensions at LOA correlate with demographics of our student population. For example, the highest percentage of students receiving suspension is among our white students for all years, which correlates with our highest percentage of students enrolled at LOA (White demographic). The only time this is not applicable is for the 2021-2022 school year. For that year, 47% of students receiving out of school suspension at LOA were Black, while 44% of students receiving out of school suspension at LOA were White.

Total numbers of both-in school suspensions and out of school suspensions for LOA students consistently are lower than comparison schools, suggesting the implementation of a variety of strategies to address student behavior and discipline. This includes positive reinforcement and positive relationship building between staff and students while maintaining high expectations for student behavior. There have been zero expulsions during the current charter term at Lake Oconee Academy.



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2022-23

	In-School Suspensions		GCSS/GA	Out-of-School Suspensions		GCSS/GA	Expulsions		GCSS/GA
<b>Ethnicity/Race</b>	<b>Number &amp; Percentage of Total Population</b>								
Latino Hispanic	2	17%	5.1% 12.7%	1	4%	2.2% 9.4%	0	0%	0% 9.2%
American Indian	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .2%
Asian / Pacific Islander	1	8%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .8%	0	0%	0% .9%
Black / African American	4	33%	88% 52.5%	7	30%	87% 66%	0	0%	100% 60.4%
White	5	42%	5.1% 29.8%	14	61%	9.2% 20.6%	0	0%	0% 26%
Two or More Races	0	0%	0% 3.8%	1	4%	0% 3.4%	0	0%	0% 3.7%
<b>Total Population</b>	12			23					

2021-22

	In-School Suspensions		GCSS/GA	Out-of-School Suspensions		GCSS/GA	Expulsions		GCSS/GA
<b>Ethnicity/Race</b>	<b>Number &amp; Percentage of Total Population</b>								
Latino Hispanic	2	5%	5.1% 12.7%	2	6%	2.2% 9.4%	0	0%	0% 9.2%
American Indian	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .2%
Asian / Pacific Islander	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .8%	0	0%	0% .9%
Black / African American	7	17%	88% 52.5%	16	47%	87% 66%	0	0%	100% 60.4%
White	32	76%	5.1% 29.8%	15	44%	9.2% 20.6%	0	0%	0% 26%
Two or More Races	1	2%	0% 3.8%	1	3	0% 3.4%	0	0%	0% 3.7%
<b>Total Population</b>	42			34					

2020-21

	In-School Suspensions		GCSS/GA	Out-of-School Suspensions		GCSS/GA	Expulsions		GCSS/GA
<b>Ethnicity/Race</b>	<b>Number &amp; Percentage of Total Population</b>								
Latino Hispanic	6	9%	5.1% 12.7%	2	8%	2.2% 9.4%	0	0%	0% 9.2%
American Indian	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .2%
Asian / Pacific Islander	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .8%	0	0%	0% .9%
Black / African American	13	20%	88% 52.5%	4	16%	87% 66%	0	0%	100% 60.4%

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White	44	68%	5.1% 29.8%	18	72%	9.2% 20.6%	0	0%	0% 26%
Two or More Races	2	31%	0% 3.8%	1	4%	0% 3.4%	0	0%	0% 3.7%
<b>Total Population</b>	65			25			0		

2019-2020

	In-School Suspensions		GCSS/ GA	Out-of-School Suspensions		GCSS/ GA	Expulsions		GCSS/ GA
<b>Ethnicity/Race</b>	<b>Number &amp; Percentage of Total Population</b>								
Latino Hispanic	2	5%	5.1% 12.7%	2	8%	2.2% 9.4%	0	0%	0% 9.2%
American Indian	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .2%
Asian / Pacific Islander	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0	0% .8%	0	0%	0% .9%
Black / African American	15	36%	88% 52.5%	10	38%	87% 66%	0	0%	100% 60.4%
White	23	56%	5.1% 29.8%	12	46%	9.2% 20.6%	0	0%	0% 26%
Two or More Races	2	5%	0% 3.8%	2	7%	0% 3.4%	0	0%	0% 3.7%
<b>Total Population</b>	42			26			0		

2018-2019

	In-School Suspensions		GCSS/ GA	Out-of-School Suspensions		GCSS/ GA	Expulsions		GCSS/ GA
<b>Ethnicity/Race</b>	<b>Number &amp; Percentage of Total Population</b>								
Latino Hispanic	2	6%	5.1% 12.7%	0	0%	2.2% 9.4%	0	0%	0% 9.2%
American Indian	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .2%
Asian / Pacific Islander	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .8%	0	0%	0% .9%
Black / African American	10	30%	88% 52.5%	5	22%	87% 66%	0	0%	100% 60.4%
White	21	64%	5.1% 29.8%	16	70%	9.2% 20.6%	0	0%	0% 26%
Two or More Races	0	0	0% 3.8%	2	9%	0% 3.4%	0	0%	0% 3.7%
<b>Total Population</b>	33			23			0		

2017-2018

	In-School Suspensions		GCSS/ GA	Out-of-School Suspensions		GCSS/ GA	Expulsions		GCSS/ GA
<b>Ethnicity/Race</b>	<b>Number &amp; Percentage of Total Population</b>								
Latino Hispanic	2	7%	5.1% 12.7%	1	6%	2.2% 9.4%	0	0%	0% 9.2%

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American Indian	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .2%
Asian / Pacific Islander	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .8%	0	0%	0% .9%
Black / African American	7	25%	88% 52.5%	5	29%	87% 66%	0	0%	100% 60.4%
White	19	68%	5.1% 29.8%	11	65%	9.2% 20.6%	0	0%	0% 26%
Two or More Races	0	0%	0% 3.8%	0	0%	0% 3.4%	0	0%	0% 3.7%
<b>Total Population</b>	28			17			0		

2016-2017

	In-School Suspensions		GCSS/ GA	Out-of-School Suspensions		GCSS GA	Expulsions		GCSS GA
<b>Ethnicity/Race</b>	<b>Number &amp; Percentage of Total Population</b>								
Latino Hispanic	0	0%	5.1% 12.7%	1	14%	2.2% 9.4%	0	0%	0% 9.2%
American Indian	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .2%
Asian / Pacific Islander	0	0%	0% .2%	0	0%	0% .8%	0	0%	0% .9%
Black / African American	1	25%	88% 52.5%	1	14%	87% 66%	0	0%	100% 60.4%
White	3	75%	5.1% 29.8%	4	57%	9.2% 20.6%	0	0%	0% 26%
Two or More Races	0	0%	0% 3.8%	1	14%	0% 3.4%	0	0%	0% 3.7%
<b>Total Population</b>	4			7			0		

8. Describe in detail how the charter school's students, governing board, faculty, and staff reflect the sociodemographic diversity of the community served by the charter school. If the charter school does not reflect the community's diversity in one or more areas of the areas listed above, provide a comprehensive plan to address this need for diversity. Included in such a plan could be, for example, the use of targeted recruitment or the use of a weighted lottery to provide an increased chance of admission for educationally disadvantaged students pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1) and State Board Rule 160-4-9-.05(2)(g).

The demographics of Greene County are as follows: 61% White, 33% Black, 6% Hispanic, less than 1% Asian, 2% Multi-racial, and less than 1% American Indian. Greene County Schools current percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch is 95%. Lake Oconee Academy's demographics are as follows: 70% White, 12% Black, 10% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 4% Multi-racial, and less than 1% American Indian. Lake Oconee Academy's current percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch has increased to 33% .

LOA continues to use a variety of recruitment options which includes town hall meetings across the county, the newspapers, and social media. This approach has been very successful and shows a consistent and constant trend to increasing diversity despite that very few seats are available due to the enrollment cap. LOA continues to receive on average over 400 new applications each year. In fact, with the exception of grades 11 and 12, there are more than enough applications to add another class of students in each grade level. Out of county targeted recruiting of both staff and students historically has not been effective and has not resulted in increased minority recruitment.

Minority students have been accepted at a higher level than the minority population demographics of Greene County for four of the last six years thus consistently increasing the minority population.

- 2016-17: 51% of the new students were minority students.
- 2017-18: 39%
- 2018-19: 40%
- 2019-20: 42%
- 2020-21: 36%
- 2021-22: 32%

These numbers decrease as the number of admissions decrease. With consideration to the aforementioned limits set on growth by the enrollment cap, these increases should be seen as significant. As such, one student can cause significant percentage changes. Currently 43% of students in our Pre-K program are minority students. The overall trend demonstrates a steady increase in the minority population of students at LOA.

9. *Describe in detail any difficulties faced during the charter term that were not already addressed above, how the school dealt with such difficulties, and if they remain an issue for the school. Also explain how the school plans to avoid these difficulties during the upcoming charter renewal term.*

As a school that has expanded grade levels for most of this charter term, there were issues of growth that were experienced. It is known that LOA had a disagreement with the Greene County School District over which document controlled, the charter renewal petition or the Charter Contract in connection with continued funding for already matriculated students. That disagreement included a lawsuit that eventually was settled. An understanding needs to be reached that defines which document

should lead both parties in the decision-making process - the renewal application or the Charter Contract. Clarification of which document overrides that other would be beneficial to the success of all charter school and authorizer relationships. This charter petition was the result of clarification or negotiation of over 60 individual provisions which will mitigate disputes in the future. We find some help on this issue in the wording of the charter contract. A provision of the current Charter contract clarifies the stipulation that new or amended laws or state board rules, upon the effective date of any such change should, “result in the correlative ~~and immediate~~ modification of this Charter without the necessity for executing a written amendment; *“This Charter is subject to applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations and shall be deemed amended to reflect applicable changes to those laws upon the effective date of any such change” (GA DOE 2016 Executed Charter Contract- Application of Amended Law). ~~The Code and Rule must be followed and respected in all negotiations. Second, the Renewal Application must be viewed as an estimated projection of what will happen over a five year period.~~* If changes needed were substantive, a charter amendment ~~could~~ shall be considered. If LOA and GCS can adhere to these two premises, disagreements will be reconcilable.

COVID created a situation that no one could have imagined seven years ago. LOA rose to the challenge by implementing effective distance learning tools while children were out of school, and effective infection mitigation tools when the students returned. As a result students lost a minimum of time compared to most other schools and districts in the state and nation.

All parties should now be cognizant of the possibility of dramatic changes and be prepared to make appropriate changes for the betterment of all the stakeholders, especially students and teachers. New programs and faculty have been added to meet the needs of the students most impacted by COVID. Other programs, travel, and experiences offered students have been put on hold or eliminated.

According to the data, math seems to be the most impacted; therefore, LOA added support staff, reduced class sizes, additional focused instructional time, and mandatory extended day are some of the ways students are being served to enhance performance.

Funds that were appropriated after the funding allotments were calculated and released, were an issue when they happened during this charter term. It is the understanding that all schools will be adhering

to the State Code for Charter funding and funding LOA in the current operating year. Though being funded one year in arrears has its benefits, as was the case for LOA in the previous eight-year renewal, the problems outweigh the benefits. Therefore, funding using actual funding numbers and any cuts or increases in that funding during the year would impact LOA to the same proportional extent as the remainder of the school district. When actual numbers are different from projected numbers in the yearly budget calculations, these numbers will be adjusted at the end of the third quarter (on or around March 12th of each year) to ensure accurate funding has happened per Georgia Law 160-4-9-.06

### **PROPOSED CHANGES**

*10. If the answers given above to questions 1 - 9 reflect a change to any of the following, please provide the rationale for the change:*

#### **A. ACADEMIC CHANGES:**

- *The academic program and curriculum.*

A new five-year strategic plan is under development. The plan will include a combination of the school's self-assessment, instructional improvement plan, and Cognia accreditation review, and will inform academic changes in the life of the new charter. The strategic plan will be provided to the Greene County BOE as soon as it is complete, no later than June 30, 2024. Already, LOA has adopted several new curriculums. The reading curriculums have been adopted to ensure compliance with Georgia's new Dyslexia law and in order to address each of the five pillars of literacy: phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The Heggerty curriculum has been adopted in grades K-2 in order to address phonological awareness. This research-based curriculum systematically and explicitly addresses phonological awareness skills essential for reading success. University of Florida Literacy Institute (UFLI) has been adopted in grades K-2 in order to address phonics instruction. This curriculum systematically and explicitly teaches phonics skills, while consistently revisiting and reinforcing learning skills. Additionally, the middle school interventionist trained through the Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction program which targets phonics deficits in older students. LOA rededicated its efforts to implement Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) with fidelity in grades K-8. CKLA is a research-

based knowledge building curriculum that addresses vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Units and topics are content-rich, often relating to science and social studies units. Topics build across the years, allowing students to grow a depth of knowledge and vocabulary on a variety of topics.

Math in Focus has been adopted in grades K-8 as the core math curriculum. Math in Focus is a research-based and high quality curriculum. It is based on the concrete, representational, and abstract (CRA) model, which requires students to think critically and problem solve.

LOA has adopted the College Board Pre-AP Curriculum for High School Courses. Pre-AP offers 12 courses across multiple domains: English, math, science, world history and geography, and the arts. All share a focus on the critical thinking skills that will prepare students for future AP courses, college, and careers. Through Pre-AP, students engage in reading for evidence, crafting sentences that support claims, interpreting data, and making sense of the world with quantitative information. All give teachers the ability to customize the courses to meet the needs of their students. Teachers use a focused framework supported by engaging, grade-appropriate content.

## LETRS

*Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling* is a 120 hour professional development program focused on providing teachers with knowledge about reading and literacy instruction. As LOA continues to make shifts towards the science of reading, all kindergarten to third grade teachers and assistants will enroll in *LETRS*. This provides background about reading science, best instructional practices, short video clips of instructional practices in action, and chances to apply new knowledge with small groups of students.

## RESA Math

LOA has partnered with the local RESA partner, Northeast Georgia RESA, for additional math professional development. All math teachers and inclusion teachers in grades kindergarten through fifth grade attended these professional development sessions during the 2022-2023 school year. Teachers attended six days of training, with additional coaching support. The purpose of this professional

development was to consider new ways for teachers to challenge students to think critically in problem solving. A large focus was placed on modeling mathematical strategies and ensuring understanding of mathematical concepts.

GRE4T, iTeach, GLISI

Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, LOA began a partnership with the *GRE4T Initiative*. The *GRE4T Initiative* also provided LOA access to additional resources and partnerships, including *iTeach*, a division of Kennesaw State University's College of Education and the *Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI)*.

*iTeach* assisted LOA in the brief transition to online learning in the 2020-2021 school year and continued to provide support to all staff in the following years. *iTeach* partnered with LOA to provide on demand coaching, professional development, and extensive coaching with a flagship of ten teachers. Additionally, LOA's administrative and instructional teams continue to meet with GLISI on a regular basis for goal setting and long term planning.

- *The use of waivers/innovations.-Use of state/local funds without restrictions for categorical funding*

The flexibility with categorical funding positively impacts our academic, organizational, and financial goals by allowing us to adapt midstream to meet the immediate needs of our faculty, staff, and students. LOA uses the flexible funding model that allows charter schools to receive its state and local dollars unencumbered by categorical spending, and allows dollars to be spent where needed. All federal dollars are spent categorically as expected. LOA uses the flexibility options to ensure the school continues to be successful for current and future students. AS an example, because of the lack of funding restrictions, the school was able to purchase seats in a virtual program to meet the academic needs of non-traditional students.

- *School programs – this includes Students with Disabilities, Gifted and Talented, English Learners, etc.*

*Students with Disabilities*



A charter school's legal identity with respect to the Local Education Agency (LEA) is important to identify the programmatic and financial responsibilities for compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). When considering special education services at a locally approved charter school, the linkage between the Local Education Agency (LEA) and the Charter School must be established. The "linkage" between Lake Oconee Academy (LOA) and the Greene County School System (GCSS) is identified as a "Partial Link."

A partial link is defined as, "the connection between a charter school and an LEA when there is a required or negotiated connection, e.g., the charter school has responsibility for services, but the child's home LEA carries out evaluation team tasks, or the charter school is responsible for only those services that can be delivered in the school and the LEA resumes responsibility when the child needs more specialized day or residential placement." ([National School Resource Center, US Department of Education](#)). This legal status is determined by the authorization of the charter by a Local Education Agency (GCSS) and the State Board of Education rather than by the State Board of Education and the Charter School Commission ([GADOE](#)).

LOA will provide a continuum of services to disabled students to the same extent as other schools in the district; however, a student's IEP team may determine that a specific setting is needed that may not be available at the charter (LOA), but that is available at another school within the district (Greene County School System), as agreed upon by the IEP team to provide the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) (IDEA 2004).

Since the Greene County School System is the LEA, and the district's Director of Special Education is the LEA representative at IEP meetings, if LOA is involved in mediation, a formal complaint, or a due-process hearing that is within the scope of the student's IEP, any associated due process costs will be the responsibility of the school district (GCSS).

To ensure all of the students with IEPs in the Greene County School System are placed in the most appropriate environment to receive services, IEP team meetings will take place as soon as possible for students with IEPs who are drawn in the lottery to attend LOA. An IEP team, having representatives

from LOA and the Greene County School System, as well as the parent(s) of the student, will meet to determine necessary services. IEP teams will consider the continuum of services, and where the student will receive the special education services in the IEP.

During transition years (PK, 5th grade, 8th grade), an IEP team meeting will take place to consider a need for more specialized services, and/or an adapted curriculum, or a more restricted environment. If the IEP team determines that such a need exists, a transition plan will be put into place to help support the student in transitioning to a more restrictive environment, either at LOA or in another school within the Greene County School System.

The Greene County School System and Lake Oconee Academy will continue to collaborate on a number of items including High Cost Grant students, the proportionate share of cost of needed services, PBIS, the use of Educator's Handbook, Mindset, required trainings for teachers and staff, and to provide Career-Based Instruction (CBI) and Career and Technical Instruction (CTI) for all students with disabilities in Greene County. Additionally, GCSS and LOA will collaborate to provide extracurricular programs for students with disabilities. These programs include the Special Olympics, recognition programs, and parent and family engagement.

- *Gifted Students*

The State of Georgia defines gifted education as “students who demonstrate a high degree of intellectual, creative, and/or artistic abilities, possess exceptional leadership skills, or excel in specific academic fields and who need special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with their abilities.”(Code: IDDD Georgia Department of Education, Gifted Regulations 160-4-2-.38 EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR GIFTED STUDENTS). In order to better support our gifted and talented learners, we have created a gifted program. Students beginning in kindergarten are tested based on an achievement indicator with the NWEA/MAP standardized test. Testing continues in the categories of motivation, intellectual ability and creativity. Children who become identified as gifted learners, based on a culmination of scores in the mentioned areas of giftedness, are served in the cluster

grouping delivery model in the regular education classroom that is recognized by the Georgia Department of Education.

- *English Learners*

LOA agrees to use the Infinite Campus Electronic Registration LOU that includes the electronic version of the Home Language Survey. LOA will continue to collaborate with GCSS in the provision of services to ELL students. Reference page 15 for current information regarding programs and models.

- *Any assessments being used.*

LOA utilizes a variety of assessments to inform instruction as well as measure growth over the course of the academic year. To inform writing instruction, teachers in grades 2-5 administer *Write Score*, which is an assessment used to assess student writing. This assessment is administered twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring as a means to improve writing instruction based on the data collected from the Write Score assessment. With guidance from the state of Georgia, LOA will adopt and implement a Dyslexia screener for students in grades K-3 once the state releases an appropriate assessment.

Acadience Reading is aligned to the Science of Reading and assess phonemic awareness, phonics and fluency. This benchmark assessment is given to students in grades K-5 three times a year to determine specific reading deficits. Students requiring additional help in any of these areas receive interventions and are regularly progress monitored to ensure student growth.

The Georgia Numeracy Project (GNP) is used with struggling students, as determined by NWEA, in grades K-5. GNP focuses on developing students' understanding of numbers and their ability to use numbers to solve problems. The GNP benchmark is given three times each year. Students identified as at risk using this assessment receive interventions and are regularly progress monitored to show growth and numeracy progression.

For both reading and math, LOA administers the NWEA MAP (Northwest Evaluation Association - Measure of Academic Progress) assessment to grades K - 11. This assessment is administered three times a year. In the fall, the assessment is administered within the first two to three

weeks of school as a baseline assessment. Teachers use this assessment to begin addressing student gaps during intervention time and accelerate student learning in certain areas/domains where data shows acceleration is warranted. In the winter, before the first semester concludes, the assessment is administered again. The data gathered from this administration not only provides teachers with information pertaining to student growth, but it also provides teachers with the opportunity to adjust and adapt unique and differentiated instructional strategies and practices to respond to the needs of the students. The final administration of NWEA in the Spring is used by teachers to address student gaps prior to Georgia Milestones. All three assessment administrations aim to provide a picture of student growth and progression over the course of the student's academic school year. Additionally, as students take this assessment each school year, this data is added to the students' previous NWEA data, which allows for observed growth over the course of the students entire academic experience from grades K-11.

In the spring, LOA administers the Georgia Milestones to grades 3 - 8 and to students who are enrolled in Algebra I, Biology, U.S. History, and American Literature. Students in grades 3, 4, 6, and 7 take both the English Language Arts and Mathematics Georgia Milestones. Students in grade 5 take English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. Students in grade 8 take English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

All students taking AP courses must also take the AP assessment to receive the AP signification on their transcripts. By taking the assessment our staff and administration are better able to evaluate the AP class and the instruction offered in the class in our constant effort to give students the best possible education.

#### ***B. GOVERNANCE CHANGES***

- *The school's governance structure.*

As per the bylaws (See Exhibit 2), the governing board has five to seven members. Each member represents a role that is seen as important to the balance and functions the board oversees - policy and finance. The Board does seek to create a list or "bench" of those people who meet the needs of a vacant position.

- *The school's governing board composition, including its diversity.*

LOA has increased diversity on the board over the period of the renewed charter. The board continues to be vigilant in its process to identify board members with the needed skill set. In the past years LOA has diligently sought diversity in the board makeup. Presently 26% are minority, 14% international origin, 57% female, and 43% male.

- *The school's relationship with an Educational Service Provider or other Charter Partner*

Prestige School Solutions, LLC has been hired to assist with the back-office accounting services. The company has a lengthy and successful history of assisting schools with financial oversight in North and South Carolina. They have an expanding footprint in Georgia. The company brings with it the acting CFO. As personnel at LOA retire, having a consistent outside source for financial oversight was considered a benefit for consistent financial success. The group has the authority to make suggestions and input but has no final decision-making authority.

- *The relationship with the local district.*

LOA is working to strengthen the relationship with the district by a collaborative effort to redesign the special education program so that students with special needs are in the location that best serves the needs of a particular student. Those discussions are ongoing.

LOA and Greene County County's College and Career Academy are in discussions that would allow students from either high school the opportunity to take classes at the other school. For example, LOA has a highly successful AP program that is readily available to students from Greene County secondary schools. Combining the classes would also increase funding since some of the classes are small. Combining those classes would promote effective and efficient operations. Additionally, LOA students would benefit from taking CTAE classes at the Career and College Academy.

### C. *FINANCIAL CHANGES*

- *The school's financial structure.*

During the past renewal LOA was funded one year in arrears so actual funding numbers could be used by GCS and LOA for budgeting purposes. During this renewal period (FY'24 - FY'29) LOA will be

funded using the state funding formula that is part of state law. Budgeting will be replaced by actual revenues as those numbers are available. A reconciliation will occur within 30 days of the county funding being available. In the past, LOA has been given the midterm allotment, if LOA generated the growth that caused the state to forward additional funding. Starting with this charter renewal in August of 2024, LOA will no longer receive midterm allotment funds for the school's growth. GCS will retain those funds regardless of where the growth comes from, LOA or the School District.

Moving forward, and beginning in FY 2025, LOA and GCSB agree to follow the proposed enrollment caps as follows:

GCSB will fund all current LOA students which return for FY 25. There are currently 1092 students on campus at LOA as of the date of this memo. With the expected matriculation of the current students on campus, this number is expected to be 1102 for FY 25 (Note: the matriculating students described above are those students matriculating through the system which increase each grade level from three classes to four classes per grade level). In addition, LOA would be allowed to admit all sibling priority students only on its FY 25 priority waitlist where that is possible, given available space at each grade level. The FY 25 waitlist will be filled utilizing the state and federally required lottery each year where there are more students requesting enrollment than seats available. Using the FY 24 priority waitlist as an indicator, this would be approximately 28 students, for an expected total student population of 1130.

In FY 26, the enrollment will increase to 1144 students, its current stated capacity, and 1144 will remain the maximum number of students to be enrolled and funded for the life of this 5-year charter.

Understanding regarding ESPLOST funds.

LOA understands that ESPLOST funds are distributed solely by the GCSB. LOA students are GC public school students. The Greene County School Board, LOA, its parents, and students feel it is appropriate for the students at LOA to receive a ~~proportional~~ share of these funds to purchase eligible items. The GCSB will make fair decisions about funding legally eligible items at LOA. ~~in an equitable manner~~. LOA will receive no less than \$2.5

million for the life of this ESPLOST. ~~not including any facilities at LOA funded at the discretion of GCSB.~~

Federal funds will be forwarded to LOA as designated by law. If the state reclaims austerity funds, LOA would be eligible to receive its portion of those funds upon reimbursement by the state. LOA will continue to comply with federal funding and accountability guidelines.

Meal service will be provided by the school district (breakfast and lunch). GCSS will service and maintain the equipment used, and upgrades needed to serve the student meals, since the district retains all the proceeds from this function. LOA will be responsible for the utilities needed for these services to be rendered.

- *The school's CFO.*

The CFO is hired as part of a contract with the back-office company - Prestige.

- *The school's relationship with any major creditors (e.g., landlords, investors etc.)*

LOA has a solid relationship with its lenders. Construction bridge loan financing has been with Bank South. That relationship is strong. This USDA Rural Loan office has worked with LOA on two major projects - the high school/Titan Center and the Arts building. That relationship is strong and may be used in other building projects.

*D. OPERATIONAL CHANGES:*

- *The school's facilities – this should include any proposed expansion or renovations*

LOA Middle School Building - Within the life of this renewal, LOA should design and construct a new middle school building. **The building plans must be approved by the Greene County School System Governance Team.** The present modular facilities have been well maintained but are showing normal wear. It is important that a plan is implemented to meet the future needs of the students.

LOA agrees to make the GCSB aware of pending facilities needs prior to completing construction plans for a building project. All facilities shall be designed and located by LOA, to meet LOA's needs, at the discretion of LOA. During the development of the plans, GCSB may, at its discretion, ~~and subject to agreement of the LOA Foundation,~~ purchase the land, build the building, furnish the facility, and own the facility. GCSB will have 6 months from notice to enter into a binding agreement with LOA to construct

and furnish the facility as designed by and on the timeframe of LOA, or waive the same. If GCSB chooses not to build and finance the building ~~that was approved by the Greene County Governance Team,~~ then LOA will, at its discretion, build and finance the building using other resources. The building and process, will comply with all applicable governmental laws, statutes, and regulations.

- *The school's attendance zone and any enrollment priorities being used (see O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1)).*

At the time of the last renewal in 2016, LOA reconstructed its attendance zone to include the entire county. This renewal does not attempt to change the attendance zone.

- *Understanding and Clarification regarding the autonomy granted under Georgia Law § 20-2-2066 - Admission, enrollment, and withdrawal of students..*

As per 20-2-2066(a)(1)(A), LOA will give priority to these students in this order:

- a. A student whose parent or guardian is a member of the governing board of the charter school or is a full-time teacher, professional, or other employee at the charter school;
- b. A sibling of a student enrolled in the Charter School; and
- c. Children who matriculate from a pre-kindergarten program which is associated with the school.

Regarding Section (a). above, LOA interprets the code section to give an enrollment preference to the following students:

1. A student whose parent or guardian is a member of the governing board of the charter school;
2. A student whose parent or guardian is a *full-time* teacher, paraprofessional, or administrator;
3. ~~A student whose parent or guardian is an "other employee" at the school. An "other employee" may be either a full-time or part-time employee. "Other employees" shall not include a teacher, paraprofessional or administrator. No student whose parent is a part-time employee of LOA will be given priority enrollment.~~

~~LOA agrees to limit, during the charter term, the number enrollment preferences of part-time "other-employees", to thirty three (33), the current number of part-time "other-employees" at LOA.~~

All present employees' children, both full and part-time, are grandfathered into the school and eligible for funding, ~~as long as they reside in Greene County, or their parent is an employee of LOA.~~

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<sup>4</sup>~~The ability to enroll their children at LOA often provides the main, if not singular, incentive for professionals in careers other than teaching or school administration to accept lower paying roles at our school (e.g. technology, library sciences, fundraising). Currently, there are thirty three (33) part-time employees at LOA where this applies. LOA proposes the number of positions of part-time employees whose children are eligible to receive priority enrollment will not exceed 33 employees, for the life of the renewed charter.~~



- *Understandings Regarding Enrollment Cap Funding.*

~~The “Enrollment Cap” will be the number of students matriculating at LOA at any particular time, to which the parties agree, is set out hereinabove, and is the number of students which the GCSB is obligated to pay for pursuant to the State Funding Formula. The Enrollment Cap may, at the discretion of LOA, increase to the extent LOA allows for priority admittance for eligible priority students, as limited above (please see above clarification regarding the autonomy granted under Georgia Law § 20-2-2066 Admission, enrollment, and withdrawal of students under any enrollment priorities being used (see O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1)) of this document (p.40). Notwithstanding the foregoing, while LOA is entitled to enroll and matriculate additional students under the priority enrollment statute, GCSB shall not be required to fund the local portion for any student over the Enrollment Cap, required under the State funding formula, but shall pay LOA the State portion for such students. 1144 is the maximum number of students to be enrolled and funded during the life of this 5-year charter.~~

- *Whether the school’s students, faculty, and staff reflect the diversity of its attendance zone*

The county-wide attendance zone has a demographic breakdown of: White: 60.6%, Black: 33.2%, Hispanic: 6.4%, Asian: 0.3%, Multiracial: 1.5%, and American Indian: 0.5%. The student breakdown for LOA is: White: 70%, Black: 12%, Hispanic: 10%, Asian: 2%, Multiracial: 4%, and American Indian: <1%. The student population is mirroring the population of the county. LOA has increased diversity within the faculty and staff by 71% since 2016.

- *Whether the school will utilize a weighted lottery to provide an increased chance of admission for educationally disadvantaged students pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1) and State Board Rule 160-4-9-.05(2)(g)*

Since the LOA school population is steadily moving toward the overall county students population and the county population is increasingly Caucasian, factors are right for LOA to mirror the county population within this charter term, if the GCSB will assist by allowing LOA to grow. The number of minority students is growing at a rate that meets or exceeds the percentage applying in the lottery; therefore, it seems the lottery is giving all students a fair chance to be enrolled in LOA.

- *Any services provided to students such as transportation, food service, etc.*

The school system provides breakfast and lunch. The system retains all funding for serving the students. LOA does not provide transportation for students to and from school. However, if a family is experiencing difficult times, LOA works with families to find solutions.

- *The grades the charter school will serve. Please note this includes adding additional grades or reducing current grades*

LOA serves grade K-12. The 501(c)(3), Lake Oconee Academy, Inc., also serves four sections of Bright from the Start Pre-K as allowed by law.

### **LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

*Briefly describe how the school has and will continue with its proposed changes to serve the needs of its students for the upcoming (renewed) charter term.*

Lake Oconee Academy has been and remains a very successful charter school. With the exception of one neighboring system which has a less diverse student population, LOA is the highest performing school in Greene County and the highest in the surrounding counties. LOA takes pride in developing a diverse population of students into contributing members of society who are academically prepared for success in post-secondary endeavors.

The administration firmly believes in this formula of success for all students and is committed to continuing on this path while constantly seeking ways to improve student achievement. Academically, LOA has dedicated its efforts to implement the science of reading with fidelity in order to counterbalance the effects of structured literacy. The same is true of the mathematics program with Math in Focus, problem solving, number sense instruction, tutoring programs, and additional staff development with RESA and other focused initiatives. LOA strives to meet the needs of all students individually, while great care is also taken to meet the needs of grade-bands of students. Flexible scheduling ensures that each group of students receives the time and resources needed to identify gaps in learning and intervene, as well as encourage growth through enrichment. The adoption of the AP Prep curriculum further supports the vision and mission LOA has clearly defined. Financially, LOA has found the formula necessary to save funds for future expansion projects. It has used its rural status to its advantage

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using USDA Rural Development funds at low interest rate and longer loan term. The formula allows LOA to have modern facilities with the cash flow to maintain them, as well as direct more funding to instruction, which is antithetical to the actions of many traditional school systems.

Over the last sixteen years, Lake Oconee Academy has firmly established itself as a premier college-prep school and serves as a model for other charter schools, with over 95% of the students being accepted to colleges across the country, the military academies, and abroad. Through high expectations of its leadership, faculty and staff, families and support of the community, LOA seeks to continue serving the students of Greene County while supporting economic development and future jobs for the entire community.

## EXHIBITS

The following Exhibits are required to complete your Charter School Renewal Application Package. Please tab the Exhibits to match the item numbers below. Exhibits should be as limited in size as possible.

1. Attach an official copy of the certificate of incorporation for the required Georgia nonprofit corporation from the Georgia Secretary of State. Please Note: All charter school contracts—including those of start-up and conversion charter schools—must be held by a Georgia nonprofit corporation.
2. Attach a copy of the by-laws for the nonprofit corporation.
3. Attach a copy of the governing board's Conflict of Interest Policy.
4. Attach a copy of the governing board's Conflict of Interest Form.
5. Attach a completed Accountability Report.
6. Attach a copy of the governing board's Governance Training Plan using the governance training memo available on GaDOE's website.
7. Attach a completed Locally-Approved Charter School Partners Roles and Responsibilities chart. This chart shows the balance of authority between the charter school's board and management, as well as the autonomy of the charter school from the district.
8. Attach a copy of any admissions (pre-lottery) application the charter school proposes to use. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066 and SBOE Rule 160-4-9-.05, any admissions application must conform to the open enrollment requirement. Therefore, admissions applications should be limited to a student's name, contact information, home address for the purpose of verifying the student's residence within the school's attendance zone, grade level, and information required for any enrollment preference, such as identifying a sibling already enrolled at the charter school. If the charter school proposes to utilize a weighted lottery for educationally disadvantaged students, the admissions application may also include questions tailored to the subgroup(s) the school will offer an increased chance of admission according to the weighted lottery guidance available on GaDOE's website.
9. Attach a copy of the policy setting annual enrollment, re-enrollment, and lottery deadlines, including a description of the lottery procedures detailing how enrollment priorities will be applied and an assurance of complete transparency in its procedures.
10. Attach the charter school's annual calendar and the charter school's daily school schedule.
11. Attach a copy of a sample scope and sequence for a proposed course/grade level.
12. Attach a copy of the charter school's Student Code of Conduct.
13. Attach a copy of the charter school's Student Discipline Policy and Procedures, including any Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports (PBIS).
14. Attach a copy of the rules and procedures concerning how the school will address grievances and complaints from students, parents, and teachers. Include the role the governing board will play in resolving such grievances and complaints. If this included in another response, please indicate that.
15. Attach a copy of the charter school's Employee Policies and Procedures.
16. Attach proof of the school's insurance coverage, including the terms, conditions, and coverage amounts.
17. Attach a copy of any intended education service provider contracts or arrangements for the provision of education management or support services, including with any EMO, CMO, ESO, etc. Such contracts shall describe the specific services for which the contracting organization is responsible. Such contracts should clearly delineate the respective roles and responsibilities of the management organization and the governing board in the management and operation of the charter school. Such contracts must also include the fee structure.
18. Attach a copy of any agreements with your local school district or Board of Education.

19. Attach a copy of any Letters of Intent and/or agreements detailing any proposed partnerships, including agreements with other local schools/systems for the charter school students' participation in extracurricular activities such as interscholastic sports and clubs.
20. Attach a copy of any MOU/lease/proof of ownership for the school's facility.
21. Attach a copy of the school's Certificate of Occupancy.
22. Attach a copy of the facility's Emergency Safety Plan.
23. Complete and attach the budget template located on the Charter Schools Division's website:  
Please note that the budget template includes:
  - A monthly cash flow projection detailing revenues and expenditures for the charter school's first two (2) years of operation;
  - A spreadsheet projecting cash flow, revenue estimates, budgets, and expenditures on an annual basis for the first five (5) years of the charter term.
  - Back-up documentation proving the legal reality of additional sources of revenue included in the budget template – i.e., funds other than state and local funding, including bank statements and/or signed grant award letters
24. Attach the résumé for the charter school's Chief Financial Officer.
25. Attach the charter school's signed Assurances Form (see below).
26. Attach the charter school's signed and notarized Affidavit (see below).
27. Attach the charter school's signed Local Board of Education Resolution approving the charter school's application.
28. Attach the charter school's signed Governing Board Resolution approving the charter school's application. This will serve as the formal petition to the SBOE.
29. For conversion schools only, attach the charter school's Confirmation of Teacher and Parent Vote.



*Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent*  
*"Educating Georgia's Future"*

**O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1(e)(2) Affidavit**

By executing this affidavit under oath, as an applicant for a charter school contract from the State Board of Education, as referenced in O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1, the undersigned applicant verifies one of the following with respect to my application for a public benefit:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ I am a United States citizen.
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ I am a legal permanent resident of the United States.
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ I am a qualified alien or non-immigrant under the Federal Immigration and Nationality Act with an alien number issued by the Department of Homeland Security or other federal immigration agency.

My alien number issued by the Department of Homeland Security or other federal immigration agency is: \_\_\_\_\_.

The undersigned applicant also hereby verifies that he or she is 18 years of age or older and has provided at least one secure and verifiable document (e.g., driver's license, passport, birth certificate), as required by O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1(e)(1), with this affidavit.

The secure and verifiable document provided with this affidavit can best be classified as:

\_\_\_\_\_.

In making the above representation under oath, I understand that any person who knowingly and willfully makes a false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation in an affidavit shall be guilty of a violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-10-20, and face criminal penalties as allowed by such criminal statute.

Executed in \_\_\_\_\_ (city), \_\_\_\_\_ (state).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Governing Board Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Governing Board Chair

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN  
BEFORE ME ON THIS THE  
\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
NOTARY PUBLIC  
My Commission Expires:

### ASSURANCES FORM AND SIGNATURE SHEET

Georgia law and State Board of Education Rule requires your school to provide assurances that it will do certain things and comply with certain laws. This Assurance Form enumerates all of these requirements and, when you submit this signed Signature Sheet with this Assurance Form as part of your Charter School Application Package, you are providing the legal assurance that your charter school understands and will do these things. This form must be signed by the school's governing board chair.

As the authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for a charter for Lake Oconee Academy located in Greene County is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; I also certify that if awarded a charter, the school:

1. Shall be nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations;
2. Shall be subject to the control and management of the local board of the local school system in which the charter school is located, as provided in the charter and in a manner consistent with the U.S. and Georgia Constitutions;
3. Shall not discriminate against any student or employee on the basis of race, color, ethnic background, national origin, gender, disability, age, or sexual orientation;
4. Shall be subject to all federal, state, and local rules, regulations, court orders, and statutes relating to civil rights; insurance; the protection of the physical health and safety of school students, employees, and visitors; conflicting interest transactions; and the prevention of unlawful conduct;
5. Shall be subject to the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1050 requiring a brief period of quiet reflection;
6. Shall ensure that the charter school and its governing board are subject to the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 *et seq.* (Open and Public Meetings) and O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 *et seq.* (Open Records);
7. Shall ensure that the charter school's governing board members may only receive compensation for their reasonable and actual expenses incurred in connection with performance of their duties;
8. Shall ensure that the charter school's governing board members receive initial training and annual training thereafter, provided by a SBOE-approved vendor pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2072 and State Board of Education Rule 160-4-9-.06;
9. Shall ensure that the charter school's governing board adopts and abides by a conflict of interest policy;
10. Shall comply with O.C.G.A. §20-2-210(b)(1) and implement an evaluation system as adopted and defined by the State Board of Education for elementary and secondary school teachers of record, assistant principals, and principals;
11. Shall comply with the accountability provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-14-30 through § 20-14-41 and federal accountability requirements, and participate in statewide assessments;
12. Shall adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students with disabilities, including the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as applicable;
13. Shall provide state and federally mandated services for English Language Learners, as applicable;

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14. Shall provide for supplemental educational services as required by federal law and pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.03, and for remediation in required cases pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.01;
15. Shall notify the state of any intent to contract with a for-profit entity for education and/or management services;
16. Shall notify the state of any changes in for-profit entity contracted with for education and/or management services;
17. Shall be subject to the requirement that it shall not charge tuition or fees to its students except as may be authorized by local boards by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-133;
18. Shall comply with federal due process procedures regarding student discipline and dismissal;
19. Shall be subject to all laws relating to unlawful conduct in or near a public school;
20. Shall have a written grievance procedure to resolve student, parent, and teacher complaints;
21. Shall have a written procedure for resolving conflicts between the charter school and the local board of education;
22. Shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-211.1 relating to fingerprinting and criminal background checks;
23. Shall remit payments to TRS on behalf of employees and shall employ teachers in accordance with TRS;
24. Shall ensure that if transportation is provided for its students, the school shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws;
25. Shall ensure that if the charter school participates in federal school meals programs, then it shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws and rules;
26. Shall prepare a safety plan in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185 and submit and obtain approval from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency;
27. Shall comply with the state facility requirements regarding site codes, facility codes, the submission of architectural plans for any new facility that the school may build or occupy during the charter term and all other facility requirements as established by the Department;
28. Shall be subject to all reporting requirements of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-160, subsection (e) of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-161, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-320, and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-740;
29. Shall be subject to an annual financial audit conducted by the state auditor or by an independent certified public accountant licensed in this state;
30. Shall designate a Chief Financial Officer that meets all requirements as established by the Charter Schools Rule 160-4-9-.05(2)(h)(1);
31. Shall secure adequate insurance coverage prior to opening and shall maintain such coverage throughout the charter term in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia;
32. Shall acknowledge that all criteria used to calculate QBE funding may not be waived;
33. Shall ensure that 90% of QBE funds earned for out-of-system students enrolled in a virtual school must be spent on their instruction pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-167.1; and



- 34. Shall follow any and all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations that pertain to the applicant or the operation of the charter school.
- 35. This charter application will be incorporated into the final charter contract.

This Charter School Application, Assurance Form, and attached Exhibits were approved by the Charter School's Governing Board on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_.

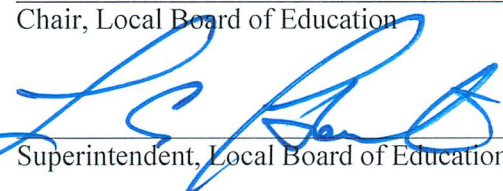
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Governing Board Chair, Charter School

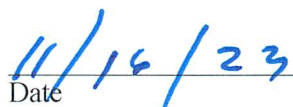
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

This Charter School Application, Assurance Form, and attached Exhibits were approved by the Board of Education on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Local Board of Education

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent, Local Board of Education

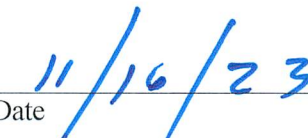
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

If a Charter is granted, Petitioners assure that the proposed charter school's programs, services, and activities will operate in accordance with the terms of the Charter and all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations.

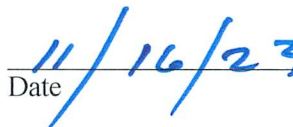
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Governing Board Chair, Charter School

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Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Local Board of Education

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent, Local Board of Education

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**DOCUMENTATION OF VOTE (CONVERSIONS ONLY)**

This petition has been agreed to, by secret ballot, by a majority of the faculty or instructional staff members at a meeting called with two weeks advance notice during which time a complete petition draft was available for review.

Date of Vote \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Faculty and Instructional Staff \_\_\_\_\_

Number Approving \_\_\_\_\_ Percent Approving \_\_\_\_\_

Number Disapproving \_\_\_\_\_ Percent Disapproving \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

This petition has been agreed to, by secret ballot, by a majority of the parents or guardians of the students enrolled in the school who were present at a meeting called for the purpose of deciding whether to submit the petition. A student's parent(s) or guardian(s) shall collectively have one vote for each student enrolled in the school although parents of students at the school who are eligible to vote as faculty or instructional staff shall also have a single vote in the vote. Two weeks advance notice of the meeting published during which time a complete petition draft was available for review.

Date of Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Parents Attending Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Number Approving \_\_\_\_\_ Percent Approving \_\_\_\_\_

Number Disapproving \_\_\_\_\_ Percent Disapproving \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date