



Learning in a Family Environment  
Minnesota Charter School District #4035

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## Learning in a Family Environment

### Background

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

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

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

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

LIFE Prep is entering our 21st year with a strong commitment to providing a nurturing, family-like learning environment. Our core values, LOVE, LEARN, ACHIEVE, SUCCEED are at the heart of our daily work and show the strength of our commitment to our students success.

## District Name, Number, and Address

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

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

## Mission

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

## Vision

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

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

## Purpose

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



## **Instructional Leadership Team**

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

## **DuFour Team**

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

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

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

## **Standards Alignment**

Three members of the teaching staff attended training on the Minnesota English Language Arts standards at the Minnesota Department of Education during a yearlong series 2 years ago. The team continues to share their knowledge and train teachers to read and plan units and lessons using the standards.

The teaching corps also began a three-year process of mapping the standards using Atlas Curriculum Mapping software.

## **Response to Intervention**

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



with students who were below grade level. The goal was for students to exit the intervention being caught-up to grade level.

## Program Model

During the 2018-2019 school year, 82% of our students were eligible for free or reduced price school meals. We serve many students from families with limited resources to support learning in the home. LIFE Prep welcomes all students regardless of background and seeks to provide a learning environment that meets the child where they currently are to help them progress and succeed throughout their tenure at LIFE Prep and beyond. Some of the school's important features are:

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

In 2018-2019 school year, LIFE Prep was open from September 4, 2018 -June 5, 2019. The school offered an extended learning year (ESY) program during June 2019.

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

## School Governance

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

## Board Composition

### 2018-2019 School-Year Charter Public School Board

2018-2019 Annual Meeting Date: May 20, 2019

Name	Title	Membership Type	Term Start Date	Term End Date
Leah Jones	Executive Director	Ex Officio		
Emma Mangano	Board Chair	Community Member	5/1/2016	5/1/2019
Rachel Paulson	Member	Teacher	5/1/2016	5/1/2019
Doug Hepper	Vice Chair	Community Member	5/1/2018	5/1/2020
Nou Yang	Member	Parent	5/1/2016	5/1/2019
Lesley Walton	Secretary	Community Member	5/1/2018	5/1/2021
Beth Kleiter	Member	Parent	5/1/2018	5/1/2021
Beau Junker	Treasurer	Teacher	5/1/2018	5/1/2020
Megan Williamson	Member	Teacher	5/1/2018	5/1/2020

## Committees of the Board

### Executive Committee

The members of the executive committee were, Emma Mangano, Leah Jones, Qiana Mazique, and Pang Vang.

### Policy Committee

The members of the policy committee were Rachel Paulson, Myla Johnson, and Emma Mangano.

## Finance Committee

The members of the finance committee were Beau Junker, Doug Hepper, Kelsey Nelson, Dawn Jenkins, and Leah Jones.

## School Board Trainings

During the 2018 -2019 school year, the following members received board training:

Member	Date
Julie Yang	11/20/18
Beth Kleider	11/20/18
Rachel Paulson	11/20/18
Lesly Walton	11/20/18
Emma Mangano	11/20/18
Doug Hepper	11/20/18
Corrie Knudson	11/20/18
Pang Vang	11/20/18
Nou Yang	11/20/18
Beau Junker	9/18, 10/18
Megan Williamson	3/19

Leah Jones	Did not receive training
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### Board Practices, Processes, and Performance

The board reviewed the bylaws at its annual meeting of the membership in May 2019.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Administrative Team

Name	MDE File Folder #	Assignment	Years Employed at LIFE Prep
Leah Jones	388976	Executive Director & Principal	14

Myla Johnson	438780	Assistant Director	13
Lori Steider	x	Admin. Asst.	11
Carrie Vue	x	Finance Asst./Food Program Coordinator	5
Megan Radmer	465894	Special Education Coordinator	5
Kelsey Nelson	x	Chief Operating Officer	5
Mike Johnson	x	Facilities Manager	8
Lucas Balfant	x	Facilities Manager	<1

At the close of the 2018-2019 school year Myla Johnson, Assistant Director left the employ of LIFE Prep School. Mike Johnson, Facilities Manager, left the employ of LIFE Prep School.

**Evaluation of the Administrative Team**

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

All other members of the administrative team are periodically coached and evaluated by the executive director. The exception is the finance assistant/food services coordinator and the food services assistant, who are evaluated by the chief operating officer.

**Food Program**

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

## Teaching Faculty & Licensed Staff

### Teachers & Licensed Staff

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>File Folder #</b>
1	Andrea Knox	Pre-Kindergarten	180150
2	Leslie Ashback	Pre-Kindergarten	471544
3	Michael Kleven	Pre-Kindergarten	471544
4	Beth Larson	Kindergarten	371109
5	Kuturah (Kate) Roth	Kindergarten	402221
6	Megan Williamson	1	498069
7	Helen Stoeckel	1	180100
8	Cassandra Sprandel	2	493806
9	Paul Webber	2	492089
10	Samantha Harms	3	180100
11	Emily Evans	3	470894
12	Rachel Paulson	4	459780
14	Brittany Pierce	4	470821

15	Jeanna Manning	5	496304
16	Beau Junker	5	492766
17	Camie Johnson	6	447658
18	Laura Hart	Title I	488076

19	Ellie Karr	Title I	474609
20	Christine Brinkman	ELL	444374
21	Rochelle Molde	Special Education	387167
22	LeAnn Moore	Special Education	429683
23	Anna Loe	Music	502250
24	Sarah Johnston	Science	428860
25	Leah Harris	Art	480837
26	Sophie Kruse (Moore)	Social Worker	483661
27	Heidi Wilson	Physical Education	385693

## Teacher Coaching, Supervision, and Evaluation

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

## Instructional Support Staff

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
Ashbach	Leslie	Pre-K SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Chris	Hoskins	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Diaz	Colleen	2 <sup>rd</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Ochoki	Cassie	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Gharrity	Katie	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Ping	Tatania	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Walker	Traci	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Jamma	Christyna	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional



Hilpisch	Becky	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
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Omar	Hanna	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Weems	Marcus	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade SpEd Student Paraprofessional
Omar	Hanaa	Kindergarten SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Schlosser	Katie	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Vue	Lue	SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Walker	Traci	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Weems	Marcus	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Xiong	Cee	Kindergarten SpEd Program Paraprofessional
Xiong	Peter	SpEd Program Paraprofessional

## Student Enrollment and Demographic Data

	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19
Total Enrollment as of October 1st	400	417	323	306	300	317	312
Black	40%	42.9%	42.1%	44.6%	40.6%	44%	47.8
White	23%	21.1%	16.4%	11.5%	6.3%	5%	5.1
Latino	10%	6.5%	9.3%	10.3%	8.8%	8.5%	8.7
Asian	26%	27.8%	30.7%	32.4%	37.6%	40%	36.
Native American	1%	1.7%	1.5%	1.3%	.1%	.1%	1.3
Eligible for Free/Reduced	76%	71.5%	76.8%	72.46%	81.7%	88.2%	81.1
English Learner	6%	4.8%	5.6%	20.8%	5.6%	10%	11.2

Receive Special Education Services	11.5 %	11.0%	9.0%	6.4%	10.3%	8%	10.9
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## Attrition Rates

LIFE Prep began the 2018-2019 school year with 312 students (as of September, 2018). At the end of the school year, the enrollment was 285 students (as of June, 2019). This is a loss of 27 students and an -8.5% attrition rate for the school year.

## Offerings

Students from grades kindergarten to sixth grade study English language arts, mathematics, and social studies in the classroom. In grades 2-8, students studied science as a special offering from a science specialist teacher. Grades K-2 received science instruction in the regular classroom setting. Physical education classes occurred each day for all students; while art, and music classes were offered multiple times each week for all students.

## Instructional Leadership Goals from 2018-2019

### Achievement Goal 1: Reading Growth

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

### Reading

Grade	# Students	# Grade Level	% at grade level
1	31	3	9.6
2	36	7	19.4
3	33	11	33.3
4	36	5	13.8
5	31	8	25.8
6	33	9	27.2

Goal: 70% Result: 21.5%

### Achievement Goal 2: Mathematics Growth

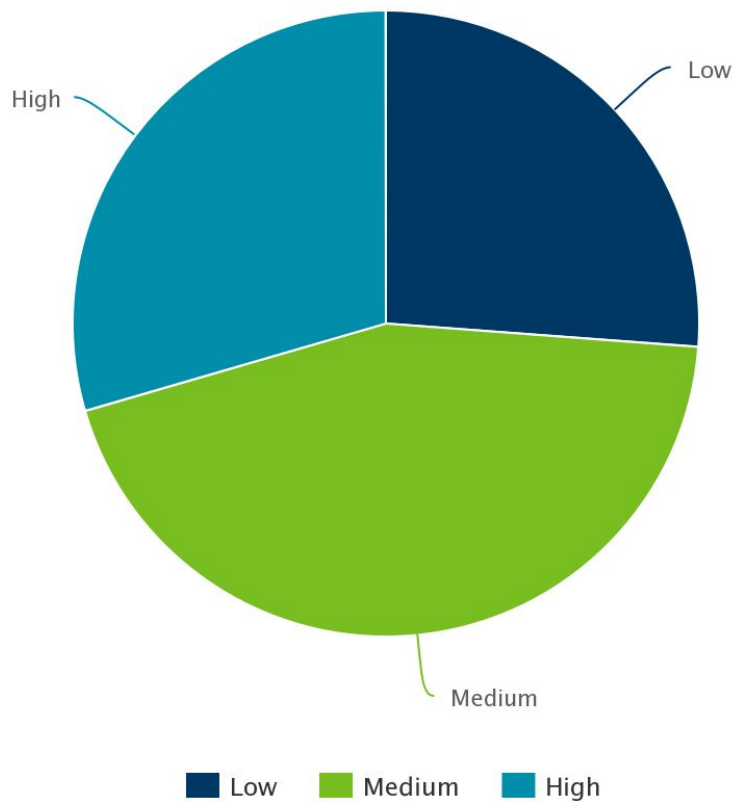
76% of students who have been continuously enrolled from 1 October, will be at grade level in the spring as measured by the NWEA MAP mathematics test or show at least one-year's growth on the NWEA MAP reading test.

#### Math

Grade	# Students	# Grade Level	% at grade level
1	31	10	32.2
2	36	10	27.7
3	33	14	42.4
4	36	5	13.8
5	31	8	25.8
6	33	11	33.3

Goal: 74% Result: 29.2%

#### Student Growth



Low-26% Medium- 44.3% High: 29.5%

Achievement Goal 3: Academic Achievement-Proficiency,

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

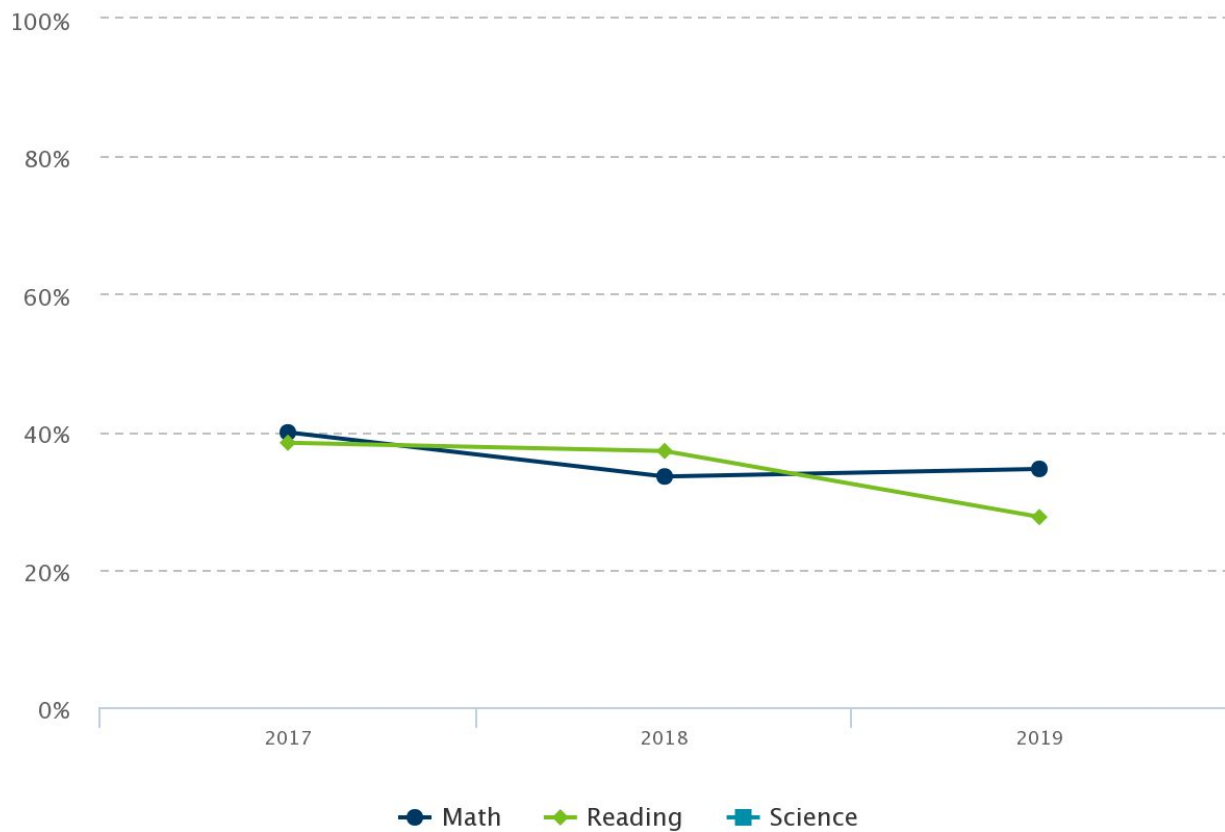
Results: 14%

Achievement Goal 4: Academic Achievement-Proficiency, Mathematics

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

Results: 20.5

**The number of students meeting standards in math, reading, and science over time**

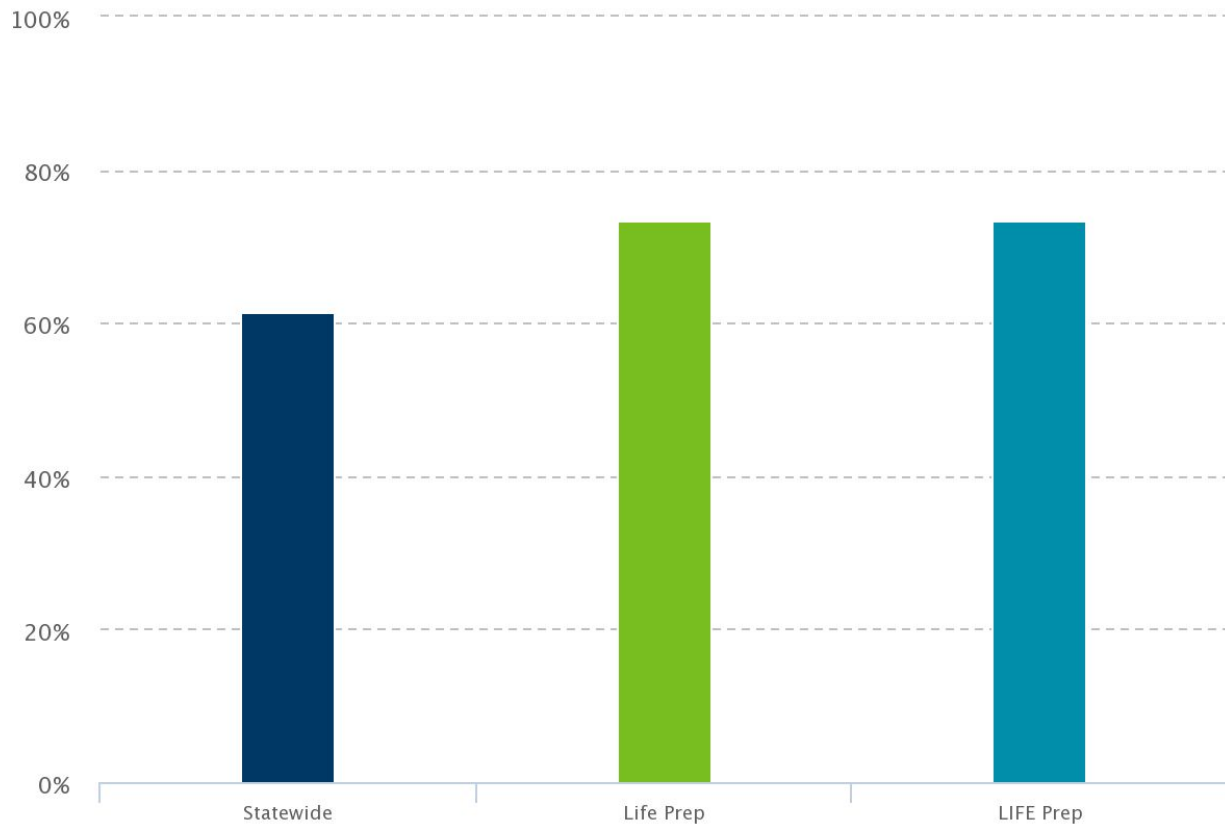


#### Achievement Goal 5: Racial Achievement Gap Reduction

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

Result: Racial discrepancy can not be calculated due to low white student population.

Progress towards EL proficiency:

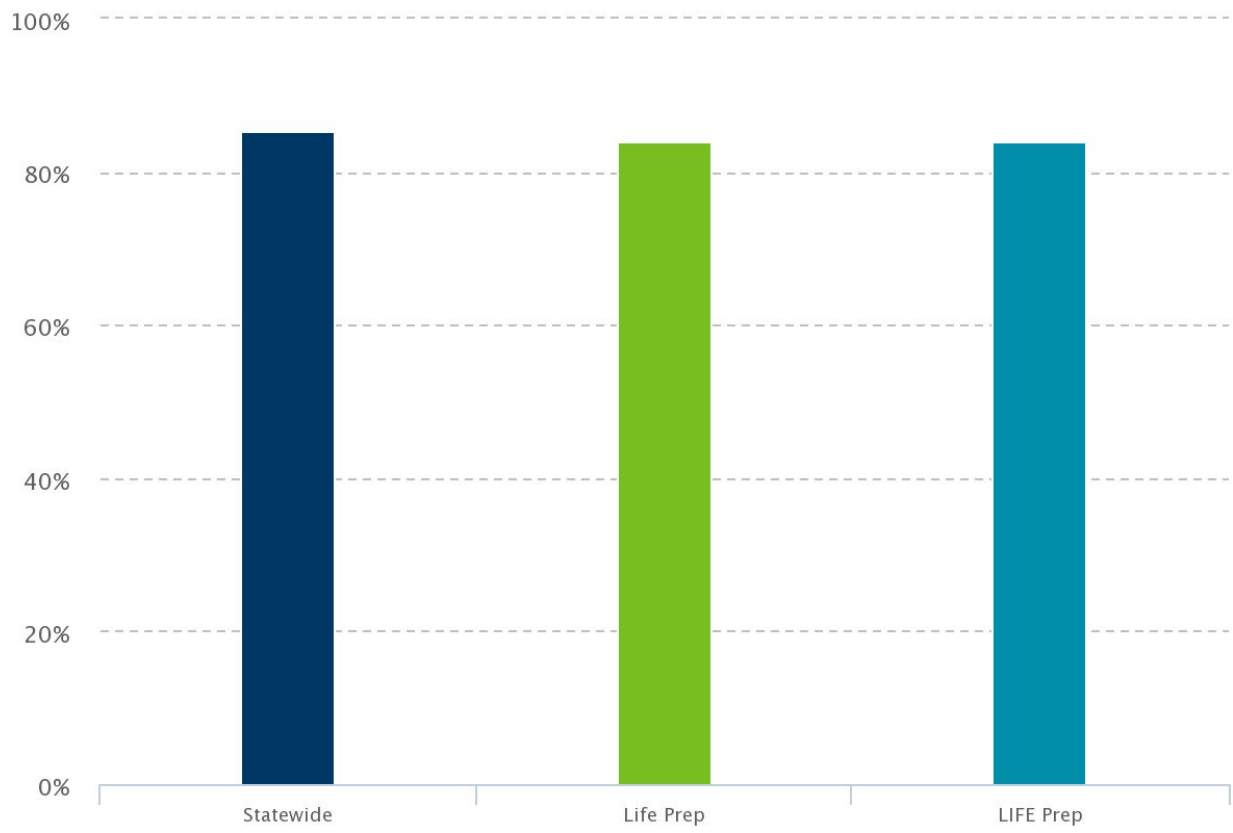


Achievement Goal 6: Special Education Achievement Gap Reduction, Reading For students who have been continuously enrolled from 1 October, the School will post proficiency achievement gap reductions (meeting or exceeding the standard) on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment for reading by protected class of 5% for Special Education Students.

Result: no decrease in achievement gap was obtained

Achievement Goal: 7 Attendance The School will have a measurable goal of 95% average daily attendance every year.

Result: 2018-2019



### **Challenges for the Coming Year**

Decreasing Enrollment



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

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

### Student Achievement

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

### 21st Century Education

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