

# ***LAURA JEFFREY ACADEMY***

## ***2015-2016 ANNUAL REPORT & WORLD'S BEST WORKFORCE REPORT***



***Practicing Mutual Responsibility and Individual Accountability***

***Searching for Truths***

***Building Empathy***

***Developing Generosity of Spirit***

***Becoming Competent***

***Acknowledging Paradox and Dilemma***

***Recognizing Strength in Vulnerability***

ASKING QUESTIONS • MAKING CHOICES



**LAURA JEFFREY ACADEMY**  
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## SCHOOL INFORMATION

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**YEAR OPENED:** 2008

**GRADES SERVED:** 5 – 8

**OUR PROMISE** – To provide an environment in which students are free – to explore their potential, discover their brilliance, and develop their intellect.

**OUR MOTTO** – Asking questions, making choices



Laura Jeffrey Academy (LJA) is named after Laura Jeffrey, a long-time Minnesota resident whose life exemplified the love of learning and service to community that are the goals of our school. Ms. Jeffrey came of age when there were few career choices available to women and African-Americans. Despite the limitations imposed on her, Ms. Jeffrey was an honors graduate of Macalester College and the only African-American in her class. After earning a master's degree in library science in night school, she became one of the first African-American librarians in the St. Paul library system, rising to branch librarian. Ms. Jeffrey built a life that exemplified personal strength, intelligence and a passion for her beliefs. In the spirit of Laura Jeffrey, LJA provides a stimulating learning environment that will foster confident young women – women with the skills to be a positive force in their communities. Serving a culturally diverse student body, LJA exemplifies that people thrive most when they work with others and take responsibility for their own learning. At LJA, students learn from their successes, failures, and experiences.

LJA is a Twin Cities tuition free charter school offering a unique STEM-focused, girl-focused educational experience, grades five through eight. Students learn through rigorous study, by asking questions, solving problems, and participating in the community. LJA's interdisciplinary learning and teaching model provides students with the experiences and skills that result in academic and personal success - students who are critical thinkers and leaders.

Our School Framework is based on a holistic approach to education, addressing teaching and learning, resiliency, school climate and organizational effectiveness. We provide a stimulating learning environment with clear expectations and opportunities to celebrate student learning. LJA's Interdisciplinary Power Standards and assessment process ensure that personal, school, state and federal standards are achieved.

LJA incorporates interdisciplinary learning in Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM), and Language Arts and Social Studies (LASS). The STEM focus is arts and wellness-infused with courses offered in Visual Arts, Music, Physical Education, and Health. Academic success is supported through an inclusive special education program, social workers, behavioral staff, educational assistants, and math and literacy specialists.

## ***Starting Middle School in 5<sup>th</sup> Grade***

LJA's founders created our school "from scratch" and did so by taking into account what works best for kids, rather than simply replicating the traditional model.

When students begin at Laura Jeffrey Academy in their fifth grade year, they enter developmentally as children, and when they graduate after the 8th grade, they leave as teenagers. The early adolescent (sometimes called "tween") years, ages 10 to 14, are a time of major changes. These changes require all children to learn new ways of relating to peers and adults, and adapt to a continuously changing self-concept. Bodies and brains are developing at a rapid pace and peer relationships generally become highly influential. Sometimes academic focus can be overshadowed as students become focused on who they are and how they fit in the world.

In a traditional co-ed school setting, early adolescents can lose interest in academics, particularly in math, science, technology and physical activity. Research shows that this loss of interest begins right around the age of nine or ten, and this is what compelled the school's founders to begin our middle school in 5th grade. Starting in fifth grade ensures time for staff to get to know each individual scholar and their family before the rate of developmental change and challenge increases in sixth grade. Learning about every student's unique interests, strengths, hopes, and dreams beginning in fifth grade creates an enhanced opportunity to develop authentic relationships and assess each individual student's needs and interests as they move through their middle school years. In fifth grade, your child is developing a sense of belonging to a larger community and opportunities for contributing at Laura Jeffrey Academy begin as students create their social contract together. Teacher Emily Barnes comments, "Each year I see students come from all around the city, from a wide variety of prior learning experiences, to create a new and outstanding fifth grade class. Students quickly form friendships, and I hear them say over and over again that they've found their people here.' Students and parents tell me that they see a new sense of confidence in their child, as well as a new or increased love of learning. 'My child is actually excited to go to school now!' is a common report from parents of fifth graders over the years. This positivity and energy is carried into our classrooms and enhances the learning experience for the entire class."

Sixth grade is a challenging year for most students, as they begin to mature physically and gain an emerging sense of sexuality, at the same time the role of friends becomes increasingly more important as they figure out their interests and their own sense of agency and power as an adolescent. Even the most resilient child may struggle with this time in their educational experience. Although this can be a challenging time for both caregivers and student, starting 5th grade with a supportive learning environment can help your child move through this critical phase of development -- as they explore their potential, develop their intellect and discover their brilliance.

We are now able to look back at years of quantitative and qualitative data and conclude that students who begin Laura Jeffrey Academy in 5th grade and graduate in 8th grade make significant gains in academic, social, and emotional development. When comparing students who have been with LJA since 5th grade and graduate in 8th grade to others in local urban districts, LJA students outperform in math, reading, and science. Teachers who teach LJA alum, as well as LJA alum caregivers, and alumnae themselves share stories describing LJA graduates as articulate, thoughtful and critical thinkers, conscientious citizens, and eager participants in their own learning and growth.

**OUR PRINCIPLES-** are overarching guides for habits of mind and actions we are developing in and out of the classroom. They guide student and adult behavior and interactions.

***Practicing Mutual Responsibility and Individual Accountability***

- *We work together to solve problems and are accountable for our own choices and our impact on the community and the environment as a whole.*
- *We know we are all responsible together for solving problems.*
- *We each do our part to solve problems and create a strong community.*
- *We follow through with our responsibilities.*

***Searching for Truths***

- *We build communities of inquiry capable of supporting free and open conversation on the most important issues.*
- *We are always looking for new important things to think about.*
- *We ask questions to try to know more, and we encourage others to ask questions.*

***Building Empathy***

- *We try to be aware of the situations and experiences of other people so we can act in ways that are sensitive to the way they see the world.*
- *We understand that people experience life differently.*
- *We try to learn more about the ways other people experience things.*

***Developing Generosity of Spirit***

- *We assume each of us tries to do what we believe is right and just.*
- *We recognize it is difficult to have consistency between what we value and how we practice those values.*
- *We try to help each other build the skills to practice our values.*

***Becoming Competent***

- *We help each other become increasingly able to bring about the results we each desire. Effort creates competence and competence helps build confidence.*
- *We help each other to be better.*
- *We know everyone can improve.*

***Acknowledging Paradox and Dilemma***

- *We make progress at LJA by opening our minds to complexity while continuing to take action in response to paradox or dilemma.*
- *Difficult or challenging ideas do not frustrate us. We know life (especially important things!) can be complex.*
- *We are persistent: we don't give up when things are hard or complicated.*

***Recognizing Strength in Vulnerability***

- *We value help from others in seeing our shortcomings and potential as we continue to evolve and grow.*
- *We remember everyone is a work in progress and improving all the time.*
- *We try to be honest with ourselves and others about the help we need.*
- *We know asking for help is a sign of strength.*

## **OUR AUTHORIZER**

Laura Jeffrey Academy was originally sponsored by Audubon Center of the North Woods in 2007 and we have been partnering with them ever since. Many Laura Jeffrey Academy students, board members, and staff have participated in environmental activities over the years at Audubon Center of the North Woods. We are in our third year of our five-year renewal.

The authorizing mission of the Audubon Center of the North Woods (ACNW) Charter School Division is to ensure quality academic and environmental literacy outcomes for students in Minnesota by conducting effective oversight and evaluation of its authorized schools, providing strategic support to schools, and making informed and merit-based decisions about its portfolio of charter schools.

The authorizing vision of ACNW is to authorize a portfolio of high performing charter schools that instill a connection and commitment to the environment in their school communities, while working towards a healthy planet where all people live in balance with the Earth.

David Greenberg, Director of Charter School Authorizing  
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School administration posts this report on the official website ([www.laurajeffreyacademy.org](http://www.laurajeffreyacademy.org)) and distributes this report and incorporated information to LJA's authorizer, school employees, parents and legal guardians of students, and stakeholders. This annual report serves to satisfy Minnesota Statute 124E.16, subd. 2: Annual public reports. (a) A charter school must publish an annual report approved by the board of directors. The annual report must at least include information on school enrollment, student attrition, governance and management, staffing, finances, academic performance, innovative practices and implementation, and future plans. A charter school may combine this report with the reporting required under section 120B.11. A charter school must post the annual report on the school's official Web site. A charter school must also distribute the annual report by publication, mail, or electronic means to its authorizer, school employees, and parents and legal guardians of students enrolled in the charter school. The reports are public data under chapter 13.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIMARY AND ADDITIONAL STATUTORY PURPOSES**

The primary purpose of Laura Jeffrey Academy is to improve pupil learning and student achievement. In the following pages of this annual report, you will find outlined in detail how we implement, measure and report these processes and outcomes.

This report will provide examples of the actions taken by the Laura Jeffrey Academy (LJA) that show how LJA improves all student learning and student achievement including increasing learning opportunities for all students through small classroom settings, help for students with specialized learning needs, and systematic structure of academic curriculum. Teachers at LJA use innovative curriculum and instruction methods to deliver relevant and standards-based instruction. Small class sizes, individualized interventions, and inquiry-based learning are but a few of the ways we support student success. The report will show in more detail ways we are striving for the best education for students, what our data shows, and our plans for future success.

## **STUDENT ENROLLMENT & DEMOGRAPHICS**

Chartered in 2008 as the first and only school with a girl-focused curriculum – and one of few public schools with a gender focus in the United States, Laura Jeffrey Academy (LJA) is an innovative, urban charter school in St. Paul, Minnesota, offering a unique education experience for grades 5-8. Learning from the best parochial and private schools, we chartered to expand opportunities for ALL students and provide access to families who would not otherwise be able to afford available private options. We are committed to serving a diverse group of families from different socio-economic, racial and ethnic backgrounds.



### ***Student Enrollment***

In the 2015-16 school year, we enrolled a total of 152 students. As we have seen in the past few years, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment is lower than our capacity and is related to St. Paul Public Schools elementary model shift from grades K-6 to K-5. We will continue to offer 5<sup>th</sup> grade, as research shows that girls decrease their academic motivation in science, math, and technology around the age of 10 and our mission calls us to help reduce the gender gap in STEM-related fields. In grades 6-8, we have settled into an enrollment level allowing us to focus on creating a well-supported, strong classroom experience with low student to teacher ratios.

	2014-2015	2015-16	2016-17 (est)
<i>5th Grade</i>	29	28	17
<i>6th Grade</i>	40	44	33
<i>7th Grade</i>	50	43	38
<i>8th Grade</i>	38	37	40
<b><i>Total</i></b>	157	152	128*

Although student enrollment is lower than in previous years, we are able to maintain the same number of teachers and staff. Our staffing structure is designed to remain stable while other factors may shift. This is largely due to our special education inclusion model that allows teachers who have unscheduled class periods to be in peer classrooms assisting in academic support and behavioral management. Students benefit from smaller class sizes, more individualized attention, and the opportunity to develop relationships with staff in varied settings.

### ***Student Demographics***

Our goal is to maintain a diverse community serving a population consisting of approximately 50% free and reduced meal recipients, and 50% of students who identify as being from an ethnic/racial background other than white. This is intentional to create a learning environment where we can hear multiple perspectives and learn from one another's experiences and viewpoints.

	<i>2014-2015</i>	<i>2015-2016</i>	<i>2016-2017 (est.)</i>
<i>Total Enrollment</i>	157	152	128
<i>Male</i>	0	0	1
<i>Female</i>	157	152	127
<i>Special Education</i>	36	28	18

<i>LEP</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>African American</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Latino</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Asian/PI</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>American Indian</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>White</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>F/R Lunch</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>58</i>

*\*2016-17 Special Education numbers do not include incoming students who have not yet been assessed.*

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE, ATTRITION & MOBILITY**

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### ***Student Attendance***

At LJA an Attendance Team met bi-weekly to discuss student needs around attendance. This team is in place to review attendance issues and determine the level of action that is necessary. This can be a conversation with a student, a review of our process, or meeting with the family to talk about how to resolve the issue. Our team made efforts to ensure that all students and families had an understanding about state laws regarding school attendance and how those laws shape our attendance policy at LJA. Team members also met with specific students and families to guide them to the necessary resources to get their students to school regularly and on time.

We developed a relationship with Ramsey County staff, our legal truancy authority for most of our students, to work together both about our process and about specific students.

We work hard as a community to ensure that school is safe and engaging environment where students look forward to learning and friendships.

	<i>2013-14</i>	<i>2014-15</i>	<i>2015-16</i>
<i>Overall Attendance Rate</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>92%</i>	<i>92%</i>

### ***Student Attrition***

For all new families, we do a series of new family events, in an attempt to both orient the new families about our processes and to also develop relationships with both the students and their families. Students are scheduled for a fun learning activity with their peers while the parents/caregivers meet with one of

the administrative team to learn about our academics (curriculum/grading/schedules, etc), understanding “T(w)een” Development and Social-Emotional Learning, culture and discipline at LJA.

We work diligently to retain families and students at LJA. At the beginning of each year, teachers make home visits to answer questions, ease anxiety, get to know the student and family, and talk about expectations for the upcoming year. This is maintained throughout the year by building strong relationships between students and staff and striving to understand academic as well as social/emotional needs of each individual. In our fifth year of using Developmental Designs, a framework for building LJA’s community and culture that aligns well with our philosophies on learning, we are finding success with our diverse group of students.

Some of the factors we see with attrition are:

- Students looking at high school options may move to that school when openings occur during middle school years. These are schools that provide middle school and high school grades.
- Our extended year calendar differs from other schools in the area. It may become a scheduling issue when siblings are attending other schools.
- We offer sports on a competitive, but recreational level. We welcome all students to participate and do not have travelling or higher level teams.
- Expectations of the family are not aligned with the vision or mission of the school. The Parent Engagement Network (PEN) has been formed to help understand and communicate these expectations.

<i>Percentage of students who continue enrollment in the school from Spring 2015 to October 1, 2015.</i>	<i>80%</i>
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*“My daughters have grown so much at LJA .Interacting with LJA’s diverse community has made them more aware of the environment around them, the social inequities and lack of thoughtful decision making in the world. Their questioning of everything doesn’t just stay at school. They bring it home and into our life. This is most clear when they press me and challenge me with difficult questions.*

*Because of LJA they offer new thoughts to others at school, in the community, and most of all, to me and our family.”*

*Parent of three LJA graduates*

## ***Student Mobility***

Transfers can be attributed to a few key factors: families moving, transportation issues, dissatisfaction either at another school or within LJA.

	<b><i>Number of students on Oct. 1</i></b>	<b><i>Mid-year Transfers In</i></b>	<b><i>Mid-year Transfers Out</i></b>	<b><i>Total Mid-year Transfers</i></b>	<b><i>Mobility Index (as a percent)*</i></b>
<b><i>2013-14</i></b>	162	15	22	37	23%
<b><i>2014-15</i></b>	135	18	27	45	33%
<b><i>2015-16</i></b>	125	24	8	32	26%

*\* Total mid-year transfers divided by Number of students on Oct. 1.*

	<b><i>2013-14</i></b>	<b><i>2014-15</i></b>	<b><i>2015-16</i></b>
<i>Percentage of students who were enrolled for 95% or more of the school year.</i>	88%	80%	85%

## **EDUCATIONAL APPROACH & CURRICULUM**

Laura Jeffrey Academy is the first and only STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) middle school in Minnesota, with a comprehensive girl-focused liberal arts curriculum.

In June 2016, LJA graduated its sixth class of 8<sup>th</sup> graders and students transitioned to 19 different district, charter, and private high schools. Alumni are confident in their experiences in high school, involved in extracurricular activities and enrolled in challenging honors and AP courses.

### ***Curriculum and Instruction: Subordinating Teaching to Learning***

Teachers create quarterly units of instruction using the UbD (Understanding by Design) format. Units include learning targets which are based in the Minnesota State Standards and the Common Core standards for English/Language Arts. Units explicitly articulate the processes, skills, concepts, and knowledge that students must understand for proficiency. The Education Director reviews units each quarter and unit overviews are displayed outside classrooms and can be found on classroom pages for quick reference.

*Learning Targets:* outline skills and dispositions that help develop career and college ready students and all learning targets are based on MN State standards or Common Core standards for English/Language Arts.

Students work towards mastery of learning targets rather than an overall class grade. This allows students, teachers, and families to gauge learning based on specific skills and/or concept.

*Student Ownership:* students know their year long and quarter learning targets and are graded based on their mastery of each learning target. Embedded in Units are formative and summative assessments.

*Critical Literacy:* Learning to critique texts and deconstruct raced, classed, and gendered cultural expectation leads to increased competence and thus confidence in learning. Students identify multiple viewpoints when confronted with issues and identify different perspectives and the factors that impact those perspectives.

*Relevant and Rigorous Classroom Time:* In LJA's inquiry-based learning environments, scholars solve complex problems that have no obvious answer by making inferences, supporting arguments with evidence, conducting research and interpreting results, and analyzing conflicting explanations. Papers must be well reasoned, well organized, and well documented from credible sources. Teachers encourage discussion and dialogue and critical thinking as defined by the MN State standards.

*Peer conferences:* Teachers use information from one-to-one conferences to pair students for learning from each other during peer conferences.

*Real-world learning:* Students engage in many relevant world topics through STEM, LASS, and Wellness to name a few. The LASS curriculum in FY16 focused on the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Through a lens of this declaration, students explored world geography and the ways in which children's rights are validated or violated. They created Zines to inform the public about issues regarding children's safety in our own local society. In STEM, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders learn that race is not a genetic fact but rather a social construct created to oppress groups of people and that pseudo-science can be very convincing, bringing home the idea that a student's own scientific literacy is very important to be able to participate in society.



*Showcase Learning:* Students have a variety of different opportunities to prepare and perform during class time, practicing and developing their editing, speaking, listening, and collaborative competencies. Students showcase learning at the end of the quarter three times per year. Community members, families, and students share in the progress and learning through an assembly of performances and a gallery walk through classrooms.

## ***Teaching and Learning***

### ***Social Constructivism and Experiential Education with Equity in Mind***

Teachers at LJA tackle important topics while pushing all students further in their learning. LJA is Social Constructivism and experiential education with equity in mind. Because of this, learning is a collaborative, social and cultural experience at Laura Jeffrey Academy. LJA was started to create access to a learning environment for students who wouldn't otherwise have such an opportunity.

Teaching and learning at LJA is evaluated in a variety of ways, using data from state and MAP testing, rubrics and classroom performance, and teacher evaluation process. Teachers are evaluated at LJA using the State Model. Because we are a Q-comp school, teachers are evaluated on performance rubrics three times each year. Teachers work with the Education Director to create performance goals to support individual practice. Teachers at LJA also receive professional development in the areas of classroom management (Developmental Designs approach to student discipline), creating effective UbD units, using Assessment for Learning and standards-based grading, and team teaching.



### ***Standards-based, Interdisciplinary, Multi-Age Learning***

LJA applies the principles of interdisciplinary learning where students explore a question from several different perspectives. This enables students to develop a broader and more complex understanding of the subject. Classes are structured as multi-age with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade and 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade groups in all subjects except Math. Multi-age classrooms allow for peer mentoring, individual differences are expected and celebrated and student leadership is nurtured. A two year curriculum cycle ensures students are challenged and meet academic standards without repeating content.

### ***Pedagogy, Assessment and Curriculum***

LJA is committed to assessment for learning and developing an increasingly precise planning, assessment and instructional process. Teaching is subordinated to learning at LJA where teachers use formative assessment including student self-assessment, rubrics, teacher made assessment and careful observation. Teachers write curricula using the UbD (Understanding by Design) planning methodology to explicitly

articulate standard based learning targets and assessments. Students “own” their own learning at LJA and work toward mastery of concepts, knowledge, and skills.

Learning targets are made explicit to students and learning is carefully scaffolded for student understanding. Students showcase their learning at the end of each quarter through a performance, project, or portfolio piece. As students work toward mastery they have the opportunity to revise their work for improved grades.

### ***Remediation and Acceleration Practices or Programming***

LJA was awarded an ADSIS grant for the 2015-16 school year and began to develop more specific reading, math and socio emotional evidence based interventions. Students were assigned interventions based on teacher observations/feedback, NWEA and MCA Data and office referrals. The math and reading interventions occurred during the mid day classes (classes met twice/week in 40 minute class periods). The mid-day interventions replaced our after school tutoring program, as transportation and other factors were barriers for student participation in tutoring. With the ADSIS grant, we were able to move much needed interventions into the school day so all students who had academic or socio-emotional needs could participate fully. Our partnership with St. Kate’s was also able to continue through a schedule change, as 8 tutors from the University of St. Catherine work with students in math and reading tutoring two days a week.

Data was reviewed regularly and students were shifted into other interventions or accelerations as needed. Unlike the reading and math interventions, the behavioral interventions occurred throughout the day in classes and also during the lunch/recess portion of the school day.

Specific interventions included: PLATO/Study Island (math), HELPS, REWARDS and Reading Engagement (reading), socio emotional groups, Check In /Check Out, and Check and Connect (socio-emotional).

Teachers and staff were trained in the interventions and implementation as well as making data driven decisions. An ADSIS leadership team met weekly to analyze student data, develop processes and support teacher learning. A reading and math team met bi weekly to develop reading/math interventions, progress-monitoring systems and to analyze the data. An attendance and behavioral team meet bi weekly as well to support socio-emotional interventions. Additionally, a student support team met bi weekly to review student support as referred by the school teacher/support staff.

LASS classes give a variety of assessments guiding teachers to work individually with students to develop skills and competencies. Assessments include Words their Way, Dibbles, Easy CBM, DAZE, MAZE, HELPS progress monitoring, and Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI). Our literacy specialist also works with students one-to-one based on outcomes of these assessments.

Enrichment was provided for the students who were performing above grade level in math and reading. There was a geometry class for those that excelled in math and had no other identified needs. There was a reading enrichment class for those that excelled in reading.

### ***Special Education: Inclusion***

The special education program is an inclusion model, with limited pull out support for the related services of Speech/Language, Developmental Adaptive Physical Education and Occupational Therapy. Two special education teachers co-teach language arts and math with the general education teachers. Another special education teacher was assigned to support all behavioral needs of the special education students. This staff member was assigned to work with the 1:1 special education students as well as provide support in the classroom as needed for socio-emotional needs of other students. Special education students receive the general education curriculum with modifications/accommodations as indicated in each student's IEP. Special education staff works with special education students in the classroom individually or in small groups along with general education students to provide support as indicated in the student's IEP.

All special education students are also supported with para professionals or with educational specialists in all classrooms, including elective classes. Educational Specialists (ES) are licensed teachers who are performing traditional para professional roles in the classroom. This is a new practice and was done to support full time teacher contracts in situations where teachers had open blocks in their schedule. Upon review of this practice, teacher learning of special education needs was enhanced as well as student learning.

In an attempt to support para professional development, all para professional staff was invited to all in-service learning. In addition, para support staff were also required to attend 2 technology trainings offered by TIES. This additional training provided for a more highly trained and inclusive educational staff.

### ***English Learner (EL)***

We did not have EL students so did not have an EL program. Students who may need EL services are screened in the LJA enrollment paperwork. Teachers also observe and make recommendations for support as needed. If there was an identified student need, the student would be screened using the traditional home/family interview and would be given the ACCESS assessment tool. Individual student support plans would then be developed to support learning English.

### ***Staffing to Match our Mission***

We intentionally aim to hire a diverse staff with race, class, and gender/gender identity backgrounds that are representative of our school demographics as well as the world around us.

Our staffing pattern reflects what is needed to accommodate the special education inclusion model- with push in special education teachers and additional para professional staff. We have 3 special education teachers: 1 language arts co-teacher, 1 math co-teacher and 1 behavioral support teacher. In addition, we have a school social worker to support special education students IEP needs around socio-emotional/behavioral needs. We have a total of 6 para professionals and 2 ES (teacher Educational Specialists) who work with all special education students based on IEP needs. Finally, we have both a dean and a cultural liaison staff to support socio/emotional/behavioral and family connectedness to school.

## ***School Calendar and Daily Schedule***

Our school calendar begins the second week of August and ends at the end of June. The number of instructional days is similar to other districts, but our schedule allows for extended breaks in between each quarter. Students and staff have come to appreciate how the calendar allows regular breaks to refresh our minds while shortening the time in the summer when much of our scholars' learning loss occurs.

Each student's schedule consists of the following classes: STEM, LASS (Language Arts and Social Studies), Math, Wellness (Health and Physical Education), Art, and Music. Seventy-Five minute learning blocks increase time for inquiry-based instruction and experiential lab work and increases opportunities for students to showcase and perform their learning.

In the 2015-2016 school year we modified our schedule to include a mid-day programming where all students receive math or reading intervention twice weekly for 40 minutes and choose a mid day enrichment class (club) to participate in twice weekly; Fridays time is designated to work on executive functioning. Mid day programming was implemented in line with our mission to provide equitable opportunities to all students. Our after school tutoring program and clubs was previously hindered by lack of student transportation, and is now accessible for all students. Additionally, optional enrichment experiences (Intersession) are offered during each quarter break (3 weeks each year).

### ***Attachment A: 2015-16 School Calendar***

## **INNOVATIVE PRACTICES & IMPLEMENTATION**

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### ***Team Teaching***

Language Arts and Social Studies (LASS) are taught in interdisciplinary 75 minute blocks with grades 5/6 together, and grades 7/8 together. Language Arts and Social Studies teachers write curriculum that integrates language arts and social studies content and standards to increase relevancy and exploring meaning across subjects. Co-teaching in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade enables teachers to meet frequently with students in individualized reading and writing conferences and plan for differentiated instruction. Curriculum has a two-year cycle, enabling students to engage with rigorous content in heterogeneous groups. An emphasis is placed on cooperative learning, listening and speaking skills and becoming critically literate.



### ***STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)***

Fifth and sixth grade students enroll in a science class that is infused with introductory engineering content to increase motivation and engagement. Math courses are 75 minutes and focused on making connections and solving problems. Every classroom is equipped with advanced technology - each having a Smart Board to aid instructional effectiveness.

STEM at Laura Jeffrey Academy prepares our students for rigorous choices in high school, and provides a foundation of competency and confidence to excel in college and in fields where women are traditionally underrepresented. Additionally, STEM classes focus on scientific literacy and student understanding of how to analyze and interpret information they receive about the world.



#### *Value-Added Principles*

- Becoming resilient problem solvers and innovative thinkers
- Exposure to technology to ask questions
- Competent use of technology to solve problems
- Nurture curiosity and wonderment

#### *The Practice of Science and Engineering*

- Scholars at Laura Jeffrey Academy are resilient in group work and are accountable to themselves and their group mates through collaborative problem solving.
- Science is a way of knowing about the natural world, and is done by individuals and groups, by characterizing empirical criteria, conversing in logical argument and providing skeptical review.
- Scientific inquiry requires identification of assumptions, use of critical and logical thinking, and consideration of alternative explanations.
- Scientific inquiry uses multiple interrelated processes to investigate questions and propose explanations about the natural world.
- Engineers create, develop and manufacture machines, structures, processes and systems that impact society and may make humans more productive.
- Engineering design is the process of devising products, processes and systems that address a need, capitalize on an opportunity, or solve a specific problem.

#### *Interactions Among Scientists, Engineers, Mathematicians, and Society*

- Men and women throughout the history of all cultures, including Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities, have been involved in engineering design and scientific inquiry.

- Tools and mathematics help scientists and engineers see more, measure more accurately, and do things that they could not otherwise accomplish.
- Designed systems (e.g. traffic flow) and natural systems (e.g. weather) exist in the world. These systems consist of components that act within the system and interact with other systems.
- Current and emerging technologies have enabled humans to develop and use models to understand and communicate how natural and designed systems work and interact.
- Science and engineering operate in the context of society and both influence and are influenced by this context.

### ***Girl-Focused***

Deconstruction of race, class, and gender in all classes provides students with rigorous topics for discussion and develops critical literacy. Focus on student voice and power throughout curriculum choices supports equity for all students while building 21<sup>st</sup> century skills of innovation and problem solving. The girl-focused curriculum assures students access to histories and viewpoints that are often left out or ignored in traditional curricula. We believe that our pedagogy, curriculum, and teaching practices are beneficial to any child, male or female. What girl-focused means at LJA is ensuring students (no matter who they are) are challenged to think critically, will learn a feminist perspective (which call for equality for all persons), will seek out injustice and work for a solution, and will hear stories and see examples of role models who are or have worked to dismantle gender stereotypes and glass ceilings. We will accept any student regardless of gender or gender expression. While doing this, we cannot deny the fact that we also want to reduce the gender gap in STEM-related fields. We work to increase students' competence and confidence in math and science. A focus on the whole child is expected from all staff and supported by a school social worker. Comprehensive sexuality education in grades 5 – 8 is designed to give students sufficient information to make healthy choices that impact their long term success.

“Asking Questions, Making Choices”, LJA’s motto, supports an environment where students are encouraged to research, think about, and ask questions to make informed and well thought out choices for their futures.

*“As look back over my years at LJA, I realized that I have something that other girls have not had the chance to receive. I know what it means to be a girl in the world. I know my place as a strong woman and I don't let anyone tell me different.*

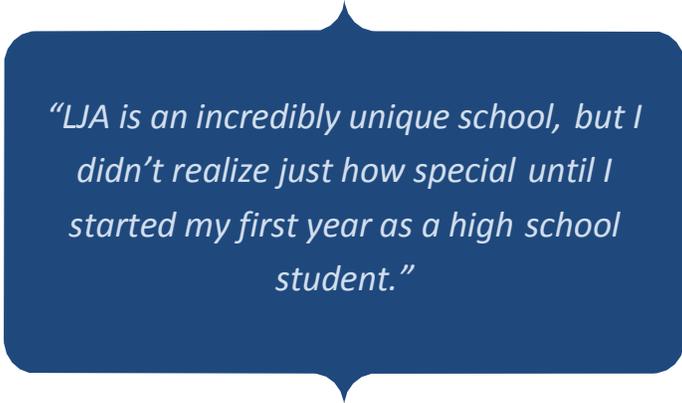
*I really wish I could tell every girl at my school about what it means to be a girl and how they can be engineers and doctors and scientists or anything else they set their heart to.... They haven't found their strong LJA scholar, and that makes me think about what I could do to help.”*

*Annalee M., LJA Grad*

## ***Critical Literacy***

One of the key pieces of our instructional framework is critical literacy. Through critical literacy, we live out our motto of *Asking Questions, Making Choices.*

Critical literacy is an approach that encourages the reader to actively analyze and deconstruct the texts they encounter in and out of the classroom. In this approach, literacy is about more than the ability to decode or “sound out” the words on the page, or the ability to summarize the main points of a story or article. Critically literate students see any text, whether it is a novel, picture book, textbook, song on the radio, or advertisement, as something that was created by a person or people with their own particular perspective in society, and are able to analyze those texts and reflect on their layers of meaning. Paulo Friere, the educator, philosopher, and author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, said that critical literacy was a vehicle for students and their teachers to learn to “read the world.”



*“LJA is an incredibly unique school, but I didn’t realize just how special until I started my first year as a high school student.”*

At LJA, you will see classrooms in which:

- teachers guide students in encounters with multiple viewpoints rather than presenting one voice as definitive or authoritative.
- students and teachers ask and discuss questions such as: Who created this text? What is this text about, and how do we know? Who is allowed to speak, and what are their perspectives on the world? Who benefits from the text? Who or what has been left out from this text?
- when textbooks are used in the classroom, they are not presented as the ultimate authority on a topic, but rather as another text to be analyzed and deconstructed with a critical lens. Texts are not considered to be universal or unbiased.
- students see themselves in the curriculum. In language arts, students see characters with which they can identify in the stories and books they read; in science and math, students explore how these disciplines relate to their experiences and communities, and in social studies, students learn about the “people’s history,” not just the history from the point of view of the powerful.

- teachers regularly consider questions together such as: How are members of the learning community participating in the cycle of making meaning? How does knowledge work in both democratic and undemocratic ways (to liberate or dominate)? To what extent does the study in question have value beyond the classroom and how will students take this learning and own it beyond the walls of LJA?
- the learning community is engaged in work that aims to learn about and act on social inequalities and injustice.

Critical literacy enriches our inquiry-based learning environment, in which challenging problems are posed and challenging questions are asked on a daily basis in every classroom. This kind of higher order thinking is interdisciplinary in nature, experiential, and the kind of highly rigorous work that helps students prepare for their future educations in high school and college. Critical literacy prepares students to become engaged, critical, and justice-oriented participants in our democratic society, and empowers the marginalized and oppressed by building critical consciousness, including the ability to name, act on, and transform injustice in our communities.

### ***J-Term***

Laura Jeffrey Academy is committed to making middle school the most valuable time of a child’s education, as it can be deeply transformative and set the stage for future success. J-term is a two and a half week period in January where classes are modified to enhance experience and inquiry in interdisciplinary STEAM (STEM + Arts) classes. Originally designed to address the post-winter-break restless energy of students, it has become an energizing and highly rigorous platform to deepen connections with the more traditional content and standards.

Experiential education particularly engages students in STEM fields, equipping them with the tools and knowledge to allow experimentation, collaboration, play, and creativity to thrive.



By exposing students to hands-on experiences with STEM, they can connect with and get excited about participating in their education.

### ***Collaborations and Non-Profit Partnerships***

A partnership with St. Catherine’s University started in 2010 helps LJA reduce the achievement gap in math and reading and encourages student interest in STEM activities. Twice a week, college tutors arrive after school to work directly with students identified as needing additional academic instruction.

Many of the college tutors are studying to be elementary education teachers. Tutors serve as positive role models and provide opportunity for LJA students to learn about higher education through the eyes of young adults currently working towards a college degree.

LJA also partnered with Girls Inc., Dakota County Technical College, Girls Scouts of MN & WI River Valleys, MN Alliance for Youth, Amity Institute, Technovation MN, AmeriCorps, Macalester College, Women's Environmental Institute, Great River Greening, and Carleton College. Volunteers from local colleges including Macalester College, St. Catherine, the University of Minnesota, Carleton College, North Central University and Hamline University enriched the lives of LJA students.

Augsburg College supports our Urban Debate League. Several groups of international leaders working in the area of women's rights, sponsored by the US State Department, tour LJA annually to learn about our innovative practices.

### ***Organizational Development***

Laura Jeffrey Academy's framework is based on extensive theory and research. Philosophical underpinnings of each theory align to create an approach to learning that accelerates student learning, promotes critical literacy and analysis of content, while focusing on closing the opportunity gap. This is a tall order and we have been engaged the past seven years testing our practices that work best for our demographics. Every day staff and teachers implement theory to practice engaging in action research and discussion to improve their practices and thus student outcomes.

We continue to build on innovations we have implemented and hone best practices that have helped us close achievement gaps and accelerate all learners at LJA.

### ***Extended Year Calendar***

LJA's extended year calendar is designed to prevent learning loss in the summer, offer mental breaks throughout the school year for both staff and students, and provide enrichment activities between quarters. Students begin the year in August and attend school through the end of June.

Girls Inc. *Eureka!* is a STEM (Science Technology, Engineering and Math) based approach to engaging and empowering 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade girls in a cohort model over five years so they see themselves as going to college and becoming vital members of the future workforce. The program includes STEM education, leadership and personal development, sports and swimming lessons.

Although our calendar extends into a time when many summer programs have already begun, we have the flexibility to accommodate educational camps that have been pre-approved by our Education Director. Additionally, we have developed partnerships with Breakthrough Twin Cities and YWCA Girls Inc. *Eureka!*, who have accepted several LJA students into their 5 year college readiness programs.

## ***Enrichment & Extra Curricular***

We offer a robust curriculum during intersessions, week-long enrichment classes held at the end of Quarter 1, 2, and 3, and additional opportunities during the summer. Programming focuses on a STEM, arts, literacy, or environmental study that includes the following:

### *Intersession:*

In the fall, University of MN English postbacs (20 teacher candidates) taught Literacy-based courses including “Healthy Selfies” where students explored the impact of body image and social media; “Be Your Own Hero”, where students explore fairy tales and wrote their own versions; and “Expressing yourself through songs and poems”, where students explored how to tell a story beyond that of a narrative.

Winter intersession was College & Careers. The week will be geared toward student goals and dreams for the future and learning about all the possibilities they have. Each morning was spent at LJA with presentations and activities from guest speakers, such as a spoken word artist from COMPAS and a representative from the University of Minnesota. Each afternoon students embarked on a field trip, including Como Zoo, St. Paul public libraries, various Twin Cities colleges/universities, and Fort Snelling State Park for a winter snowshoeing excursion.

During Spring intersession, students spent the first two days of the week at LJA getting an introduction to a theme of animals and nature, and then heading out to Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center for Wednesday-Friday of the week. This overnight trip is a great way for students to experience nature and try out activities such as climbing on a high ropes course and interacting with animals outside.

### *Extra Curricular:*

Technovation Challenge 2016 was a worldwide App building and entrepreneurial competition for middle school, high school, and college-aged students. For the third year, LJA students developed, designed, and pitched 7 different Apps to investors, in this worldwide competition.

Clubs included Spanish, Yearbook, QnA (Queers and Allies), Urban Debate, Preschool Buddies, Go Green, Harry Potter Murders, Mindful Coloring, Student Council, YWCA Girls Inc .

Two LJA basketball teams, two soccer teams, and two volleyball teams played in the St. Paul Parks and Rec league or the LIST (League of Independent School Teams) with lots of wins and losses. As a part of LIST we were able to host our very first home games in both basketball and volleyball, which was an experience many students enjoyed.

“Pay It Forward”, lead by Students Today, Leader Forever, included trips to Duluth and Wisconsin where students participated in service learning projects throughout the trip.

## *Challenges*

LJA's Instructional Framework is complex and expects all that is best practice and then some from all adults. Teachers use Understanding by Design to create rigorous, integrated and differentiated instructional units that scaffold assessment for learning methods and strategies from introduction to summative assessment. Shared inquiry lessons (Great Books methodology) anchor key understandings within the unit. Teachers are expected to know each student's zone of proximal development and to deliver instruction crafted to best fit each student's learning needs.

To provide culturally relevant curriculum is a value held by all, as is the commitment to environmental and social justice education. At LJA, teachers are asked to do a lot of important work around planning and reflection; we have a very important and cutting edge mission and vision. One of the major challenges is supporting teachers and staff in all the various ways we are asking them to be innovative. Finding appropriate and useful staff development, making time to plan curriculum, and reflection processing are some of the challenges we worked to address in 2015-16 by including common planning for teachers for 80 min three times per week. We have also implemented Peer Learning Communities (PLCs) for teachers weekly. We hope these changes address the challenges of creating sustainable systems that uphold the best practices of the framework and give teachers ample time to write curriculum and develop a sense of efficacy.

It will take several years to refine professional development so all staff understand and implement the framework with fidelity. For the 2016-2107 school year, we have included deliberate learning about theorists and ideas in which our framework is created. We hope this will increase staff awareness of how and why we do what we do and assist them in alignment to our vision.



### ***Highlights of the Strategic Plan***

School leaders, board members, and our authorizer came together to put together our four year strategic plan. Now in our final year of the current plan, we are reviewing our progress and will be convening in the coming months to revise our strategic plan and set goals for the next four years. During the last four years, we have made substantial growth and continue to keep our goals in mind as we review data and collaborate on a daily basis.

#### ***Mission-Specific Goals***

- LJA will forward the education provided to our students by establishing and retaining partnerships with families, community, non-profits, educators (emphasis on secondary education partnerships), corporations and foundations.
- LJA will strive to attract and retain highly qualified professional teachers and staff that reflect the student population and community at large that we serve.
- Facilities will support advancing technologies, creative education processes, and green initiatives designed to encourage innovative thinking, problem solving, and collaboration.
- LJA will demonstrate that the LJA framework is creating an environment and climate where students are progressing academically, socially, and emotionally; well prepared to enter H.S. upon 8th grade graduation.
- LJA will explore, evaluate and prioritize options for growth, expansion, and/or dissemination.

## **ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: GOALS & BENCHMARKS**

### ***Progress on ACNW Contractual Academic Goals & World's Best Workforce Alignment***

#### ***World's Best Workforce (WBWF) Goal Areas:***

- Ready for Kindergarten [R4K]: All students are ready for kindergarten.
- Reading Well by 3rd Grade [RG3]: All students in third grade achieve grade-level literacy.
- Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]: All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.
- Career and College Ready [CCR]: All students are career- and college-ready before graduating from high school.
- Graduate from High School [GRAD]: All students graduate from high school.

<b>Indicator 1: Mission Related Outcomes</b>
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*Goal:* In each MCA tested area students at LJA will reduce the achievement gap by increasing the percent of students of color who are proficient on each test each year.

*WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Achievement Gap Closure [AGC]: All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.*

*Key Measures & Results for this Goal: The results for LJA on this indicator are mixed. While Black students' MCA proficiency increased in math from 24.3% in 2015 to 27% in 2016, the same group of students remained at the same proficiency in reading MCA. However, students who receive free and reduced lunch made gains in both math and reading MCA proficiency. In math proficiency, students increased from 16.3% proficient in 2015 to 22% proficient in 2016. In reading, students increased from 32.7% in 2015 to 42.4% in 2016. There is some success in narrowing the achievement gap among students at LJA, but not sufficient as students of color and students who are on free and reduced lunch are not performing at the same level as peers overall.*

### **Indicator 2: English Language Learners**

*Goal: N/A – in FY 2016 LJA had no English Language Learners*

### **Indicator 3: Reading Growth**

*Goal: 2016 - 65% of all students who are enrolled in LJA for both the fall and spring NWEA testing cycles in grades 5-8 will meet growth goals as set in NWEA.*

*WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Graduate from High School [GRAD]: All students graduate from high school.*

*Key Measures & Results for this Goal: Students at LJA exceeded this goal in 2016 with 68.8% of students meeting or exceeding NWEA growth targets, or maintaining performance in the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher. We believe that implementation of a mid-day literacy intervention for students has helped increase student growth.*

### **Indicator 4: Math Growth**

*Goal: 2016 - 65% of all students who are enrolled in LJA for both the fall and spring NWEA testing cycles in grades 5-8 will meet growth goals as set in NWEA.*

*WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Career and College Ready [CCR]: All students are career- and college-ready before graduating from high school.*

*Key Measures & Results for this Goal: Students at LJA came shy of this goal with only 57.1% meeting NWEA growth targets. We implemented mid-day intervention for students in math during the 2016 school year, however, we have not been able to have consistency in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math teachers for the past three years. This inconsistent implementation of the curriculum and interventions has likely impacted student performance.*

### **Indicator 5: Reading Proficiency**

*Goal:* 2016 - 60% of all students who are enrolled at LJA in grades 5-8 as of October 1st will meet proficiency on the spring MCA test

*WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:* Career and College Ready [CCR]: All students are career- and college-ready before graduating from high school.

*Key Measures & Results for this Goal:* Students at LJA scored 55.8% proficiency on the 2016 MCA test in reading. One of the explanations for the discrepancy between NWEA growth and MCA proficiency is the fact that many of our students come to LJA below grade level in reading. Our interventions are helping students make gains, but unfortunately, many of them are still not performing at grade level.

### **Indicator 6: Math Proficiency**

*Goal:* 2016 - 55% of all students who are enrolled at LJA in grades 5-8 as of October 1st will meet proficiency on the spring MCA test.

*WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:* Career and College Ready [CCR]: All students are career- and college-ready before graduating from high school.

*Key Measures & Results for this Goal:* Students at LJA missed this goal with a proficiency of 44.2%. Similar to reading, a much greater percent of students made projected growth on NWEA. While our students are making growth in math, many are still not proficient at grade level standards. We continue to implement mid-day intervention and tutoring for students who are not performing at grade level. Additionally, our former 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math teacher has rejoined the LJA team after being gone for three years. This will add consistency and high expectations for all students.

### **Indicator 7: Science Proficiency (and Growth)**

*Goal:* The percentage of continuously enrolled (from Oct. 1 each year) LJA eighth grade students who have been at LJA for 3 or 4 years that will reach proficiency on the MCA Science Test will be higher than the statewide percentage of eighth grade students that reach proficiency.

*WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal:* Career and College Ready [CCR]: All students are career- and college-ready before graduating from high school.

*Key Measures & Results for this Goal:* The state proficiency for 8<sup>th</sup> grade science was 48.7% in 2016. Students who have been at LJA for 3 or 4 years had a proficiency of 57.1% which exceeds the state average by several points. Students who have been part of the education program at LJA since 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade benefit from the full program we offer at both the 5/6 grade levels and the 7/8 grade levels.

**Indicator 8: Proficiency or Growth in Other Curricular Areas or Educational Programs**

Goal: N/A

**Indicator 9: Post Secondary Readiness**

Goal: N/A

**Indicator 10: Attendance**

Goal: LJA will increase each year until 93% or will maintain an attendance rate of 93% or higher.

WBWF Goal Areas Addressed by this Goal: Career and College Ready [CCR]: All students are career- and college-ready before graduating from high school.

Key Measures & Results for this Goal: The attendance rate at LJA for 2015-2016 was 92%. There is an attendance committee at LJA for the 2016 school year. This group will reach out to families earlier than in the past to ensure student attendance at school. We will also follow the Ramsey County truancy guidelines more closely.

**Indicator A: Federal and State Accountability**

Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR) is 30.68%

Proficiency	2.36 points
Weighted percentage of subgroups reaching targets	9.5%
Growth	10.98 points
Average Growth Z-Score	-0.1476
Achievement Gap Reduction	9.66 points
Achievement Gap Reduction Score	0.2836
Graduation	NA
Weighted percentage of subgroups reaching targets	NA
TOTAL POINTS	23.01 points
Possible points	75 points

Focus Rating (FR) is 19.33%

Achievement Gap Reduction	9.66 points
Achievement Gap Reduction Score	0.2836
Focused Proficiency	0.0 points

Weighted percentage of subgroups reaching targets	0.0%
TOTAL POINTS	9.66 points
Possible points	50 points

*Additional Academic Data*

In 2015-2016 school year, LJA received an ADSIS grant to implement interventions. Interventions included mid-day tutoring for math and reading, behavioral interventions, and individual reading interventions. Students who participated in Math interventions during the year met growth targets at a higher rate than those students who did not receive math interventions – 58.7% of students receiving math interventions met or exceeded NWEA growth targets. Students who participated in literacy interventions saw 60% of students make more than a year’s growth on DIBBLES in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Students at LJA participated in the Technovation Challenge during the 2015-2016 school year. LJA increased our participation in the app-building challenge from 3 teams to 7 teams going to competition. This was due in part to adding coding to our regular math curriculum and affording math class time to the competition. Students found the experience challenging and rewarding, so much so that we will have several teams returning this year to refine and enhance their skills.

Because of the robust and comprehensive sexuality education program offered at LJA, students and staff were invited to participate in the Adolescent Health Conference in summer 2016. Students presented to conference attendees about the program offered at LJA, the confidence they have found in their own bodies, and gave advice on how to engage youth in conversations about sexual health.

As part of the teacher growth and effectiveness evaluation, each teacher participated in individual student achievement goals. Teachers looked at data in each instructional area and designed interventions to increase student learning. Based on these plans and progress, students made higher gains in curriculum-based areas than in previous years. Teachers will continue to revise and refine measures and student target groups to ensure higher performance for all student success.



## **EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION**

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Staff at LJA constantly evaluate student progress towards academic standards through PLCs that teachers participate in weekly. In PLCs teachers evaluate the four guiding questions to ensure rigorous curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The four questions are:

1. What is it we expect our students to learn?
2. How will we know when they have learned it?
3. How will we respond when some students do not learn?
4. How will we respond when some students already know it?

Through these guiding questions, and collaborative work teachers work to ensure students are learning and progressing.

Additionally, students who are not meeting expectations are referred to SST (Student Support Team) for further investigation and intervention. The SST at LJA meets every-other week to explore student concerns and evaluate interventions. In the 2016-2017 school year, teachers meet weekly in grade-level teams to evaluate student success and progress.

In the 2015-2016 school year, a teacher-leader team was formed to increase support for teachers, increase effective instruction and assessment, and increase rigor in curriculum design. The team consisted of the Education Director, the UbD coach, and the assessment coach. The team participates in teacher observations and walk-throughs. The team gathers data, reviews plans, and works with teachers to meet growth targets. LJA participates in the state model for teacher evaluation and growth. All teachers at LJA receive two formal evaluations and several walk-throughs each school year. Teachers create growth goals and plans for student success through the observation process.

### ***Assessments***

NWEA MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) tests are administered three times a year in science, math, and reading. Results are shared with the students; students monitor and record their performance and set goals for the next cycle; and, results and goals are shared with parents. MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments) are taken once per year. Mid-day interventions and tutoring courses are created to align with the data, and instructional units designed by staff incorporate the needs identified by data. In addition, classroom formative and summative assessments document student learning. Grading is standards based. Grading software, JumpRope, provides teachers with more powerful, complete and visually appealing grade reporting capabilities. This software also enables parents to access grades online and teachers comment on student dispositional skill development as well as academic performance.

### ***Performance in Math:***

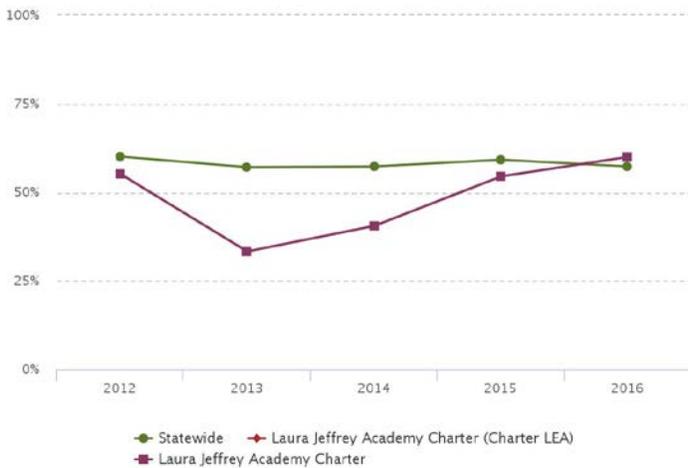
Students at LJA take the NWEA test in math three times a year which measures a student's growth over the course of a year. Additionally students take the MCA once a year as indicated by the State of Minnesota. While our overall scores dipped a bit in 2016, the data highlighted below shows areas of growth.

As seen in the chart to the right highlighting the fact that overall in Math, Black student performance at LJA, is at its highest level in 5 years, nearing the overall state average.



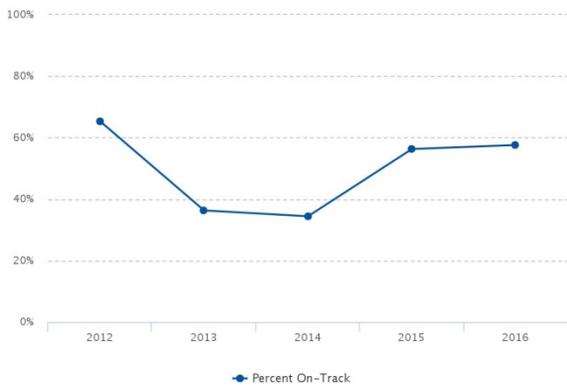
MCA Overall Math Black Student Proficiency  
LJA vs. State

Sixth grade performance in math has also been on the rise, in fact in 2016 sixth graders at LJA outperformed the state average and also scored better than in the past 5 years.

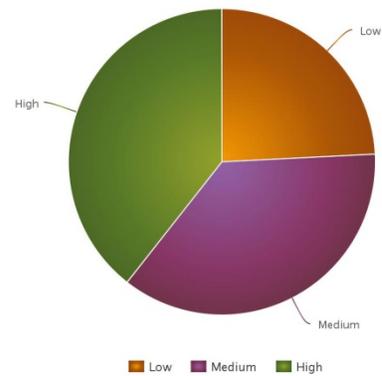


MCA 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Student Proficiency  
LJA vs. State

Not only performance, but also “on track” for success and growth are strong indicators for 6<sup>th</sup> graders in Math. Showing the highest percent of 6<sup>th</sup> graders “on track” for success since 2012. The pie chart shows that 75.8% of students made either “high” or “medium” growth.



MCA 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math “on track”



MCA 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Student Growth



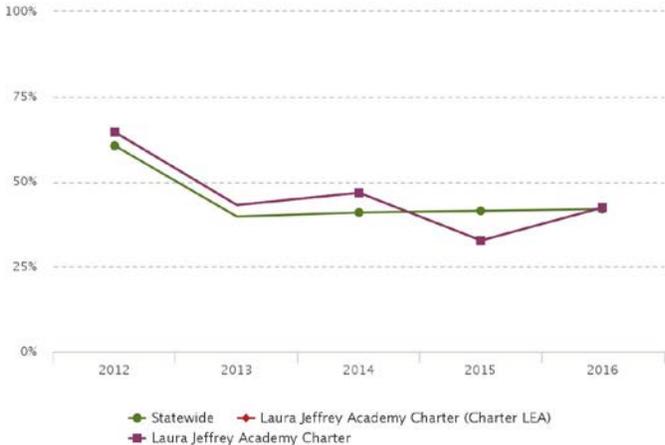
Seventh grade students' MCA math scores are also on the rise and at the highest point in 5 years as of 2016.

MCA 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Student Proficiency  
LJA vs. State

Students who participated in math intervention also met NWEA growth targets at a higher rate than their peers, with 58.7% of students in math intervention meeting or exceeding growth targets, compared to 56.9% meeting growth target of students not in math intervention.

*Performance in Reading:*

As in math, students take the NWEA three times per year in reading and the MCAs in the spring in reading. The following is some of the data from Reading.



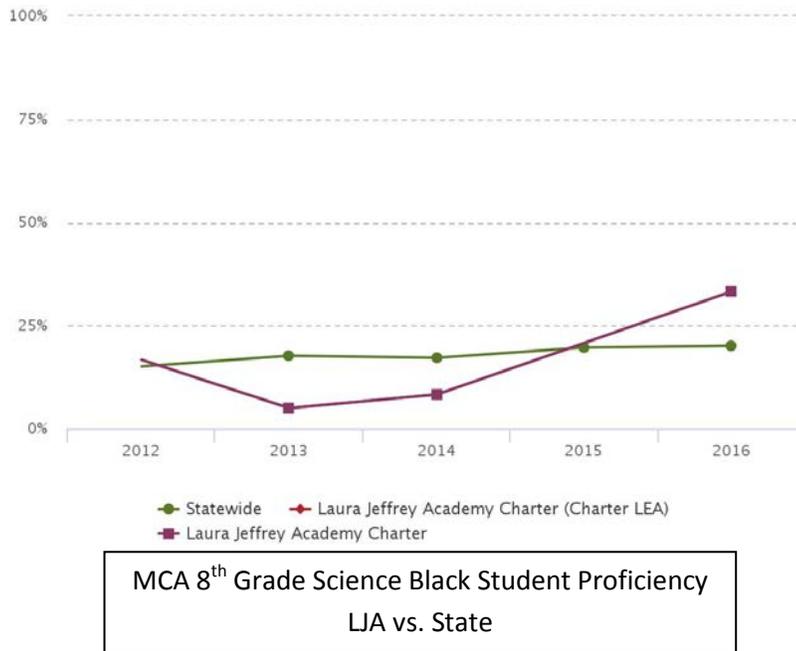
As seen in the graph on the left, students on free and/or reduced price lunches at LJA have come back up in 2016 and are once again out-performing the state average for the same demographic.

MCA Reading Proficiency  
LJA vs. State – Students on free/reduced meals

Laura Jeffrey Academy met our growth goal for NWEA for 2016, for the second year in a row in reading. Data shows that students are meeting growth targets at increasing numbers each year. While many students join LJA below grade level, growth over the course of the year is an important indicator that can tell if a student is making gains, even when they are not meeting grade level proficiency.

*Performance in Science:*

The FY2016 saw some success in science scores at LJA. Crucial to our mission is that students who have been in our Girl-Focused, STEM-focused program for 3-4 years will outperform students across the state on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade science test. At LJA in 2016 57.1% of students who have been at LJA for 3 or 4 years met proficiency on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade science test, compared to 48.7 % for a state average. Additionally, Black students at LJA far outperformed the state average for black students, with scores on the rise at LJA for the second consecutive year.



Overall, our proficiency on MCA tests are down slightly, however there are bright spots in the data which we will use to help identify practices or instruction that lead to student growth and proficiency.

*Educational Effectiveness: Assessment & Evaluation*

At Laura Jeffrey Academy, we believe that students learn best when given opportunities to ask questions, explore diverse viewpoints, and work together to create knowledge. To this end, teachers work collaboratively to create rigorous curriculum units each quarter guided by UbD(Understanding by Design) framework of backwards planning in order to meet Minnesota state standards in each of the respective content areas. Curriculum plans and instructional units are reviewed in a variety of ways to ensure inquiry methods and robust questioning for student learning. Each quarter curriculum units are peer reviewed, and reviewed by the curriculum teacher leader as well as the Education Director. Below are some of the highlights of the curriculum and process at LJA:

UbD (Understanding by Design) Units with learning targets: Units are based on MN State Standard that include the Common Core standards and explicitly articulate the processes, skills, concepts, and knowledge

that students must understand for proficiency. The Education Director review Units each quarter, and Unit reviews are displayed outside classrooms and can be found on classroom pages for quick reference.

- Learning Targets: outline skills and dispositions that help develop career and college ready students and all learning targets are based on MN State Standards. Students work towards mastery of learning targets rather than an overall class grade. This allows students, teachers, and families to gauge learning based on specific skills and/or concepts.
- Student Ownership: students know their yearlong and quarter learning targets and are graded based on their mastery of each learning target. Embedded in Units are formative and summative assessments.
- One-to-one conferences with teachers: Team-taught LASS (Language Arts & Social Studies) class allows teacher to schedule reader and writer workshops that include one-to-one conferences with the teacher. Student/Teacher conferences are intensive discussions where students receive feedback from the teacher and ask questions about their work.
- Peer conferences: Teachers use information from one-to-one conferences to pair students for learning from each other during peer conferences.
- Relevant and Rigorous Classroom Time: in LJA's inquiry-based learning environments, scholars solve complex problems that have no obvious answer by making inferences, supporting arguments with evidence, conducting research and interpreting results, and analyzing conflicting explanations. Papers must be well reasoned, well organized, and well documented from credible sources. Teachers encourage discussion and dialogue and critical thinking as defined by the MN State Standards.
- Critical Literacy: Learning to critique texts and deconstruct raced, classed, and gendered cultural expectations leads to increased competence and thus confidence in learning. Students identify multiple viewpoints when confronted with issues and identify different perspectives and the factors that impact those perspectives.
- Showcase Learning: Students have a variety of different opportunities to prepare and perform during class time, practicing and developing their editing, speaking, listening and collaborative competencies. Students showcase learning at the end of the quarter three times per year. Community members, families, and students share in the progress and learning through an assembly of performances and a gallery walk through classrooms.

Students are assessed in a variety of ways beginning the first week of school. In order to get a clear picture of each student's performance level, students take the NWEA –MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) test in Math, Reading, and Science three times a year to monitor progress with the first round of testing in the first weeks of school. Data from each of the NWEA tests is used to help identify students for tutoring and intervention as well as for acceleration. Students who are performing below grade level in reading undergo additional assessments to determine what intervention will suit them best. Teachers monitor progress weekly for each student in all classes and reach out to parents to create learning plans when students are falling behind in meeting learning targets.

## **STUDENT & PARENT SATISFACTION**

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### ***Student Engagement and Supports***

- Home visits to every family at the beginning of the year build relationships between the family and Peer Community Network (PCN) teacher, determine student interests and goals, and develop a family/school relationship.
- Quarterly showcase: The student showcase happens 3 times a year at Laura Jeffrey Academy. Showcase is a time for students to share learning and quarter assessments with peers, families and community members. Our Quarter Showcases happen at the end of Quarters 1 and 3 and after J-Term. Students showcase performances include an assembly for student performances such as musical ensembles, spoken word, technology presentations, and plays. The Showcase also includes a gallery walk through classrooms where individual students display and share learning.
- Schoolwide Social Contract: Each year students work together to create their own social contracts. They write them on cranes and hang them in the hallways to remind themselves of the agreements they made. The 2015-16 contract:

*Take responsibility for your actions and be safe*

*Be open and positive to new people and ideas*

*Treat others with kindness and respect*

*Walk on the right in the hallways*



### ***Family & Caregiver Involvement: creating a community and climate of learning***

We did a parent survey in the Fall of 2015. We used this survey to find out the interests, needs, and concerns of our families.

- 86% of parents felt LJA staff were responsive to their concerns about their child.
- 73% of respondents felt their students had adjusted well, made new friends, and feel safe and respected at school.
- When asked if their students take on academic challenges, 57% responded yes and 35% responded somewhat. Only 3% responded that they want further help with that goal.



- 78% of respondents say the uniform policy works well for them, and 22% were neutral.
- 27 % of respondents specifically commented on their students' improved confidence, independence, and/or self-awareness.
- Other celebrations included: variety of activities, success of individual accommodations, supportive staff, excellent academic progress, curriculum connections to daily life, thinking critically, social justice framework
- Many of the challenges noted were around adjusting to middle school or to the next grade, as well as busing. 30% of respondents also listed no challenges for either the parent or the student at LJA.

### ***Special Education***

Each year the special education director holds a SEAC meeting, in which all special education parents are invited to learn more about the special education program (general program information, data around special education academic success and future directions/program goals) as well as providing an arena for face to face feedback about special education student needs. This school year, parents expressed interest in continuing the inclusion model and asked for better communication from the student's general education staff around homework completion and general daily performance. Parents also asked for more specific information from case managers around types of intervention that were put into place at school for student goal areas as well as more information on what parents can do to support learning at home. In general, parents expressed satisfaction with the inclusion model and level of staff support (student to staff ratio).

### ***Feedback and Learning***

In the spring we held 2 parent feedback sessions to find out what people love about LJA, what we can improve upon, and what their dreams are for LJA. The events were well attended and informed many of our decisions moving into the new school year.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

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The mission of *Laura Jeffrey Academy's* authorizer, the Audubon Center of the North Woods, is to instill a connection and commitment to the environment in people of all communities through experiential learning. ACNW defines environmental education as the implementation of values and strategies that foster learning and create environmentally literate citizens who engage in creating healthy outcomes for individuals, communities, and the Earth. The overarching goal of environmental education is an environmentally literate citizenry. The test of environmental literacy is the capacity of an individual to work individually and collectively toward sustaining a healthy natural environment. This requires sufficient awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to create a healthy planet where all people live in balance with the Earth.

Laura Jeffrey Academy believes that environmental education is a key component in supporting our scholars to be well rounded individuals. Through explorations in our natural world, scholars are meeting and superseding school-wide goals. Scholars are exploring the needs of their community, gathering information from others, and creating change based on what they find. Environmental education through the exploration of our natural world is used as a vehicle to address a variety of issues. These issues range from daily choices on energy use, to evaluating our choices which increases our scholar's outcomes, both academically and socially. Laura Jeffrey Academy strives to give scholars a plethora of opportunities to embody the work they learn about by extending it outside of our school walls. Through experiences scholars are able to see the change they desire for their world. Through the use of their voice and personal experiences, scholars gain the confidences and sense of power to create for their environment and future world.

To this end, scholars at LJA embark in environmental learning both in and out of the classroom throughout the year. In the classroom setting, STEM classes (which each scholar has for 75 min every day) explore green and sustainable architecture in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade as part of the two-year curriculum cycle. Students learn about an area of the world, explored natural and sustainable resources available in that area, and created dream homes based on their research. Students included design elements and materials that met the 13 principles of sustainable design while creating homes. They learned to evaluate materials not only based on budget, but also effect on the environment and durability.

Students in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade explored ecosystems as part of the STEM curriculum, culminating in creating nesting boxes for the American Kestrel based on what they learned about predator-prey relations and ideal environments for the particular bird to thrive. The boxes were donated to members of the LJA community for use in the area.





Environmental learning does not stop in the classroom.

Our science teacher has created a relationship with Great River Greening and has taken two field trips this last year with students to learn about sustainability and to help plant in our area. Students work side by side with community volunteers to clean buckthorn, plant, and learn about protecting and preserving Minnesota's beautiful riverways.

We also take at least one intersession trip each year to an environmental learning center where students learn about the natural habitat of Minnesota, the animals and wildlife present in different biomes, and how to maintain clean and healthy waterways in our state. In FY2016, 80 students in grades 5-8 visited Eagles Bluff Environmental Center to learn about pond life, pioneer life, archery, high ropes, raptors and snakes. Visiting the environmental center, scholars explored a wide variety of sciences with young professionals who are passionate about engaging youth through experiences. Scholars have demonstrated an understanding of how technology and personal choice impact the environment, both for the positive and negative.

The school provides EE learning opportunities to a larger, school-related community at least twice per year. Students and faculty model sustainable practices, share knowledge of environmental education, and experience environmentally focused activities with the larger school community or neighborhood. The school provides opportunities for students to pass forward to their families the ideas and skills they've learned.

*Chili Cook-Off* - LJA provided an evening community event for 150 parents and guardians related to hosting a zero-waste event. For families who want to donate a chili for the cook-off, scholars provide mini-lessons on ensuring a zero-waste dish. Promotion of composting, and reducing waste from our kitchens is available for families looking to make behavior changes within their own homes.

*Sustainability and Vertical Gardening* – STEM classes explored where food comes from, designed garden spaces, and planted vertical gardens in our courtyard. Students and parents volunteered to tend the garden over the summer weeks and are continuing their learning into the next year. The food produced has been used in a variety of ways within the LJA community, students are most engaged in gathering ripe produce!

*Sustainability and environmental protection* have been the focus of club offerings at LJA over the year as well. Students from Macalester partnered with LJA to lead a club called Go Green. Students explored issues of endangered species across the globe, waste and the problems associated with growing landfills, and action items in our immediate community.

We believe that it is also important to teach students how to enjoy the outdoors in all types of weather. As part of our J-Term classes, students can choose an “Outdoor Winter Survival” course. Students in this class explore how to make quinzhees for shelter in the snow, start fires, cook food, and snowshoe. The whole school also participates in a tubing field trip. This began as an effort to get students to be willing to be outside in the cold Minnesota winter.



Challenges in implementing our environmental education program include monetary resources – although we have been lucky to find partnerships such as Great River Greening which have been zero cost experiences for students. One area we would like to grow is in regard to the reduction of food waste, however, we have not been as successful as we could be in part because the state guidelines require students to take certain foods even if they don’t want it resulting in food waste and because of our time and resource constraints.



## **GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT**

### ***Board of Directors***

The Laura Jeffrey Academy (LJA) Board and staff are well-versed in board governance. Cindy Reuther, LJA's Founder and former Executive Director (until 6/30/15), and ex officio Board member, has served on multiple nonprofit boards and has provided consulting services on governance and leadership issues to numerous organizations. Jill Gaulding, former co-chair, has served on multiple nonprofit boards and heads her own nonprofit organization, Gender Justice. She has been a member of the LJA Board for 6 years, providing legal expertise and perspective from a parent of an LJA alumna. Jo Park, an LJA leadership team member, has board experience with Hamline University and the Emma Norton Residence for Women. All LJA Board members have received training on board governance via MDE standards. Our Board continues to expand their passion for LJA's work by attending events, meeting parents and teachers, and becoming more involved in school activities.

### ***2015-16 Board Roster***

Member Name	Board Position	Affiliation	Date Elected	Date Seated	Term End Date	Phone Number	Email Address
Jennifer Schiller	Ex Officio	School Leader	N/A	July 2015	N/A	651-414-6000	<a href="mailto:jennifers@laurajeffreyacademy.org">jennifers@laurajeffreyacademy.org</a>
Cindy Reuther	Co-Chair	Community Member	June 2015	July 2015	June 2018	651-402-9803	<a href="mailto:reutherck@gmail.com">reutherck@gmail.com</a>
Jill Gaulding	Member	Community Member	June 2014	July 2014	June 2016	651-699-1744	<a href="mailto:jill.gaulding@gmail.com">jill.gaulding@gmail.com</a>
Devavani Chatterjea	Co-Chair	Parent	June 2015	July 2015	June 2018	651-696-6621	<a href="mailto:chatterjead@macalester.edu">chatterjead@macalester.edu</a>
Jason Fritts	Member	Community Member	April 2016	June 2016	June 2019	612-253-6692	<a href="mailto:jfritts@eidebailly.com">jfritts@eidebailly.com</a>
Jacob Bonde	Member	Teacher	June 2013	July 2013	June 2016	651-414-6000	<a href="mailto:jacobb@laurajeffreyacademy.org">jacobb@laurajeffreyacademy.org</a>
Laurie Hamre	Member	Community Member	Aug 2015	Aug 2015	Aug 2018	651-343-1402	<a href="mailto:lauriebhamre@comcast.net">lauriebhamre@comcast.net</a>
Beth Murphy	Member	Community Member	June 2014	July 2014	June 2016	612-270-0194	<a href="mailto:bethmurphy@me.com">bethmurphy@me.com</a>
Annie Hotop	Member	Community Member	June 2015	July 2015	June 2018	651-308-9043	<a href="mailto:amhotop@gmail.com">amhotop@gmail.com</a>
Sharon Gifford	Member	Community Member	June 2015	July 2015	June 2018	612-867-5458	<a href="mailto:Sharon.gifford@gmail.com">Sharon.gifford@gmail.com</a>
Maggie Struck	Member	Community Member	June 2015	July 2015	June 2018	651-792-6683	<a href="mailto:Stru0234@umn.edu">Stru0234@umn.edu</a>
Danielle Jones-Glaser	Member	Community Member	March 2016	June 2016	June 2019	773-230-1534	<a href="mailto:Danielle_jones2002@yahoo.com">Danielle_jones2002@yahoo.com</a>

Together, the Board and school leaders have tremendous leadership capacity, stemming from their demonstrated commitment to Laura Jeffrey Academy's mission and vision and from their experience in board governance, fiscal management, education, curriculum and instruction, and school and nonprofit management.

**Board Training and Development**

<b>Laura Jeffrey Academy Initial Board Training- FY16</b>			
<b>Board Member Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Training Title</b>	<b>Presenter or Trainer</b>
Cindy Reuther	Oct 2015	Board Training	St Thomas
Devavani Chatterjea	Dec 2015	Board Training	St Thomas
Laurie Hamre	Dec 2015	Board Training	St Thomas
Annie Hotop	Aug 2015	Board Training	St Thomas
Maggie Struck	April 2016	Board Training	St Thomas
Sharon Gifford	Aug 2015	Board Training	St Thomas
Jason Fritts	Dec 2016	Board Training	St Thomas
Anna Robinson	Dec 2016	Board Training	St Thomas
Danielle Jones-Glaser	Aug 2016	Board Training	St Thomas
Maggie Struck	April 2016	Board Training	St Thomas
Sharon Gifford	Aug 2015	Board Training	St Thomas

<b>Laura Jeffrey Academy Ongoing Board Training- FY16</b>			
<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Training #1: Board Retreat-Orientation to board policies, strategic plan</b>	<b>Training #2: EpiCenter Training Mike Schultz, November 2015</b>	<b>Training #3: Understanding Standardized Test Data and NWEA and MCA Trends Allison Stapley, February, 2016</b>
Cindy Reuther	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jill Gaulding	Yes	No	No
Devavani Chatterjea	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jason Fritts	N/A	N/A	N/A
Jacob Bonde	No	Yes	No
Laurie Hamre	Yes	Yes	No
Beth Murphy	Yes	Yes	No
Annie Hotop	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sharon Gifford	Yes	No	Yes
Maggie Struck	Yes	No	Yes
Danielle Jones	N/A	N/A	N/A

## ***Management***

The leadership team consists of Jennifer Schiller, Executive Director; Allison Stapley, Education Director; and Jo Park, Special Programs Director. This team works together with a collaborative process for making major decisions while creating a climate of respect, effective communication and individual responsibility and accountability. This team approach is part of LJA's framework and also fosters an environment of collaboration, trust and generosity of spirit in the school. The management team is in charge of defining and implementing with staff LJA's strategic plan. Future decisions include growth options, facilities and on-going practices to close opportunity and achievement gaps.

### ***List of Administrators/Qualifications***

#### **Jennifer Schiller, Executive Director**

Jennifer had over 15 years of communications, operations and management experience in the technology arena coming into LJA. Entering her fourth year, she succeeded the founder, Cindy Reuther, as the new Executive Director. She began her career at LJA in the Director of Operations role where she was responsible for the behind the scenes workings of LJA in the areas of finance, hr, technology, transportation, food service, and facilities. Additionally, communication with the community, partner organizations, vendors, and the state were key responsibilities in support of LJA's mission. Working closely with Cindy allowed her to deeply understand LJA's mission and is poised to carry it forward. Jennifer continues to develop and expand partnerships and programs to enhance learning of all students, manage finances and compliance, and acts as the board liaison.

#### **Allison Stapley, Education Director**

Allison has been with Laura Jeffrey Academy since before our doors opened. She spent her first several years here as a math teacher and then transitioned into her role as our Education Director, a role which she has been in for four years. She has 15+ years in education. All of her experience has been in schools of choice, including seven years at engineering magnet schools and one year at in International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Education, with a minor in physics from Gustavus Adolphus College, and a Masters of Education in Administration from Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, TX. Allison has worked as a science teacher, campus science specialist, engineering teacher, and math teacher. She has also provided professional development for teachers in the area of engineering and curriculum development. Allison has assisted schools in writing winning award and grant proposals, including both state and national magnet awards.

#### **Jo Park, Special Programs Director**

Jo has over 30 year of experience in the social work and education fields. She is now in her third year at LJA as Special Programs Director and as a part of the leadership team. She is a licensed Clinical Social Worker, K-12 Principal licensure and Special Education Director. In her day to day responsibilities, she supervises the special education program, including compliance and programming. As a part of this responsibility, she supervises the following staff: special education teachers, special education para professionals, school social worker, promise fellow and cultural

liaison. She also supervises the system of intervention for behavior, reading and math, along with the education director and facilitates the student support team meetings and data collection for the interventions. She is responsible for the overall behavior management support for students, including discipline.

## **Professional Development Plans and Implementation**

### ***Professional Development Plan for Jennifer Schiller, Executive Director***

#### *Major Responsibilities:*

- Budget and Financial Strategies
- Supervise Leadership Team
- Vision/Mission
- Board Liaison
- Partnerships and Grants

#### *Goals:*

- Lead implementation of board committee directions
- Work with the board development committee to develop LJA's donor base and bring in \$75,000 in grants and fundraisers.
- Attend Director and Leadership workshops
- Restorative Practices training
- Ensure alignment to LJA's framework
- Lead with equity in mind for staff and family culture, and a system with open communication.

#### *Professional Development received:*

- Leadership
  - ACNW Leadership Retreat
- Community Building:
  - Community Development : Building Respectful Community Through Understanding our Racial and Cultural Complexity – by Irreducible Grace Foundation, August 2015
  - Restorative Circle training – Nancy Riestenberg, MDE, August 2015
  - Community Building – Allison Stapley and Jo Park, August 2015
  - Race Equity series training – by Alicia Sojourner, YWCA, 3 part series – Spring 2016
- Administrative
  - Omnicircular Training, MDE

### **Professional Development Plan for Education Director**

The Education Director holds an Elementary Education teaching license, but does not hold a MN Principal's license. She had a PK-12 Principal license in Texas, which has since expired.

### *Major Responsibilities:*

- Supervision and support of teaching staff
- Supervision of curriculum development
- Assessment supervision and implementation
- Family communications
- Student academic support and progress

### *Goals:*

- Enhance educational leadership abilities through cohort support and structured guidance.
- Continue to refine PLCs for teachers that focus on best practices.

### *Professional Development received:*

Allison participated in the Minnesota Principals Academy during the 2015-2016 school year and will continue through the 2016-17 year. The program is in conjunction with NISL (National Institute for School Leadership) Executive Development Program. The program focuses on creating scholarly leaders for schools in Minnesota. The program combines best practices in teaching and learning, subject-area content knowledge, and leadership knowledge and practices, including:

- Leadership knowledge and skills: Strategic thinking; strong school culture and team building; data-driven organization; importance of systems; turnaround leadership competencies.
- Best practices in teaching and learning: Coaching and teacher supervision; use of standards-based classrooms; formative assessment; instructional teams; compelling school vision; differentiated instruction; and professional learning communities.
- Subject-area knowledge: Creating excellent school-wide programs in English language arts, mathematics and science; identifying and coaching towards strong instruction in the content areas.
- Best practices for delivery of adult curriculum: 360° assessments; cohort-based; job-embedded learning; simulations; case studies; group discussion; and extended period of study.

## **STAFFING**

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LJA's plan for staffing is to be a #1 employer in Minnesota that includes a competitive salary and benefits package, and a collaborative and engaging workplace. Our goal is to maintain highly qualified, passionate leaders who are aligned with our mission and contribute to the growth of all students.

We have diversity in our staff and have provided on-going professional development in academic, discipline, and social/emotional arenas. Additionally, our professional development is supplemented by all-staff and smaller group meetings to delve more deeply into each topic, allowing the voices of our community and staff to deepen our understandings of multiple perspectives.

Our inclusive model of Special Education allows co-teaching in all types of classrooms. This model fits with our overall mission and vision for ensuring that all students have access to a rich and rigorous curriculum. You will find multiple adults in classrooms, understanding the needs of each individual student and supporting both academically and behaviorally.

At the beginning of the year, staff development occurs with all staff. During the summer staff development session, all staff participate in training on topics designed as a result of the LJA leadership and special education teams collaborating around immediate needs and mission-related goals. As an on-going result of this collaborative process, weekly or monthly professional development occurs as an integrated team.

### **2015-16 Licensed Teaching Staff**

<i>Name</i>	<i>File #</i>	<i>License /Assignment</i>	<i>2016-17 Status*</i>
<i>Jennifer Arzayus</i>	<i>449152</i>	<i>Visual and Digital Media Arts</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Emily Barnes</i>	<i>420766</i>	<i>Literacy Specialist</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Kelly Barnholdt</i>	<i>432140</i>	<i>Physical Education and Health</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Jacob Bonde</i>	<i>447966</i>	<i>Language Arts</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Asha Erler</i>	<i>415712</i>	<i>Social Studies</i>	<i>NR</i>
<i>Elizabeth Forshee</i>	<i>440010</i>	<i>Science</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Jill Greenwood</i>	<i>355789</i>	<i>Special Education</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Dana Huseth</i>	<i>451115</i>	<i>Language Arts</i>	<i>NR</i>
<i>Jinjer Markley</i>	<i>469380</i>	<i>Science</i>	<i>NR</i>
<i>Michael Merritt</i>	<i>348979</i>	<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>NR</i>
<i>Megan Naps</i>	<i>481189</i>	<i>Special Education</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Anna Robinson</i>	<i>403851</i>	<i>Social Studies</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Karissa Stotts</i>	<i>474838</i>	<i>Language Arts</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Tyler Stromquist-LeVoir</i>	<i>485689</i>	<i>General Music</i>	<i>NR</i>
<i>Bethany Uchytel</i>	<i>470887</i>	<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Alicia Veltri</i>	<i>996757</i>	<i>Special Education</i>	<i>NR</i>

\* R = Return, NR = Not Return, C = Changed Roles

### **2015-16 Teacher Professional Development Activities**

All teachers have been trained in Developmental Designs, which supports socio-emotional development of the scholars. Teachers that are new, receive the training prior to the start of the school year. Special education teachers/staff received training in due process and other requirements as LJA was under a self monitor compliance year with MDE. Our school social worker received training in how to support the socio emotional regulation needs of our students. Finally, all language arts teachers were training in specific reading interventions such as HELPS and REWARDS.

All staff received the following training as a part of our professional development days: vision impairment/mobility training, behavioral intervention training, UbD's, Development Designs refreshers, shared inquiry, sensory needs of students in relationship to the physical spaces of classrooms, staff/teacher growth professional goals, equity training, LJA frameworks/principles, and restorative measures.

### **2015-2016 Licensed Non-Teaching Staff**

<b>Name</b>	<b>File #</b>	<b>License /Assignment</b>	<b>2016-17 Status*</b>
<i>JoEllen Park</i>	<i>363344</i>	<i>Director of Special Education, Principal's license, Social Worker/Director of Special Programs</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Anne McGraw</i>	<i>481219</i>	<i>Social Worker</i>	<i>NR</i>
<i>Allison Stapley</i>	<i>380654</i>	<i>Elementary Ed/Education Director</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Beth Tenquist</i>	<i>426464</i>	<i>Elementary Ed/Dean</i>	<i>NR</i>
<i>Michael Wilson</i>	<i>341907</i>	<i>School Social Worker</i>	<i>R</i>

\* R = Return, NR = Not Return, C = Changed Roles

### **2015-16 Non-Licensed Staff**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>2014-15 Status*</b>
<i>Dawn Andrada</i>	<i>Office Manager</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Brenda Berckenhoff</i>	<i>Special Education Educational Assistant</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Hilda Caples</i>	<i>Special Education Educational Assistant</i>	<i>NR</i>
<i>Patricia Ferrell</i>	<i>Special Education Educational Assistant</i>	<i>R</i>

<i>Tiffini Flynn Forslund</i>	<i>Cultural Liaison</i>	<i>NR</i>
<i>Marie Gottschalk</i>	<i>Technology Specialist</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Julie Nowariak</i>	<i>Special Education Educational Assistant</i>	<i>NR</i>
<i>Cassandra Quam</i>	<i>Administrative Assistant</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Manuel Rivera</i>	<i>Food Service</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Jennifer Schiller</i>	<i>Executive Director</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Satara Strong</i>	<i>Special Education Educational Assistant</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>Renate Willer</i>	<i>Special Education Educational Assistant</i>	<i>NR</i>

\* R = Return, NR = Not Return

### **Teacher Retention:**

We have a large cohort of experienced teachers who are dedicated to the LJA mission. As we continue to refine our program, we look closely at what works well and where we could enhance our learning program. We have a growth mindset at LJA and with that we continue to strive to hire and maintain stellar teachers for our system. 2015-16 was a year where we saw some shifts in staffing due to assessment of our structural needs, evaluation of performance, and personal and career growth decisions. Though many of our teachers become incredible leaders in their field and are extremely passionate about our scholars and teaching at LJA, some teachers do not find their groove while at LJA.

<i>Percentage of Licensed Teachers from 2015-16 not returning in 2016-17 (non-returning teachers/total teachers from 2014-2015 x 100)</i>	<i>37%</i>
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### **2016-2017 Licensed Teaching Staff**

<b><i>Name</i></b>	<b><i>Year of employment</i></b>	<b><i>File #</i></b>	<b><i>License /Assignment</i></b>	<b><i>Comments</i></b>
<i>Jennifer Arzayus</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>449152</i>	<i>Visual and Digital Media Arts</i>	
<i>Arden Ashley-Wurtmann</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>447130</i>	<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>Returned after leave of absence</i>
<i>Emily Barnes</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>420766</i>	<i>Literacy Specialist</i>	<i>Previously on LASS team</i>
<i>Kelly Barnholdt</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>432140</i>	<i>Physical Education and Health</i>	

<i>Christian Belden</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>495041</i>	<i>Elementary Ed/Mathematics</i>	
<i>Jacob Bonde</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>447966</i>	<i>Peer Coach</i>	<i>Previously on LASS team</i>
<i>Gaye Fisher</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>492364</i>	<i>Music/Performance</i>	
<i>Elizabeth Forshee</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>440010</i>	<i>Science</i>	<i>STEM 7/8</i>
<i>Jill Greenwood</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>355789</i>	<i>Special Education</i>	<i>Inclusion Co-Teacher</i>
<i>Annie Lien</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>462995</i>	<i>Elementary Ed/LASS</i>	
<i>Morgan McLaughlin</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>489767</i>	<i>Science</i>	<i>Student taught in STEM7/8 last year</i>
<i>Megan Naps</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>481189</i>	<i>Special Education</i>	<i>Inclusion Co-Teacher</i>
<i>Anna Robinson</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>403851</i>	<i>Social Studies</i>	<i>Team teacher LASS 7/8</i>
<i>Karissa Stotts</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>474838</i>	<i>Language Arts</i>	<i>Team teacher LASS 7/8</i>

**2016-2017 Licensed Non-Teaching Staff**

<b><i>Name</i></b>	<b><i>File #</i></b>	<b><i>License /Assignment</i></b>
<i>JoEllen Park</i>	<i>363344</i>	<i>Director of Special Education, Principal's license, Social Worker/ Director of Special Programs</i>
<i>Allison Stapley</i>	<i>380654</i>	<i>Elementary Ed/Education Director</i>
<i>Michael Wilson</i>	<i>341907</i>	<i>School Social Worker</i>

**2016-17 Non-Licensed Staff**

<b><i>Name</i></b>	<b><i>Assignment</i></b>
<i>Dawn Andrada</i>	<i>Office Manager</i>
<i>Brenda Berckenhoff</i>	<i>Special Education Educational Assistant</i>
<i>Patricia Ferrell</i>	<i>Special Education Educational Assistant</i>

<i>Marie Gottschalk</i>	<i>Technology Specialist</i>
<i>Cassandra Quam</i>	<i>Administrative Assistant</i>
<i>Manuel Rivera</i>	<i>Food Service</i>
<i>Jennifer Schiller</i>	<i>Executive Director</i>
<i>Satara Strong</i>	<i>Special Education Educational Assistant</i>

**Special Education:**

We have the following related service providers:

- Reno Mothes-DAPE, who is contracted from Designs for Learning
- Christine Spray-OT, contracted with On the Move Therapy Services
- Zehara Ansari, School Psychologist, private practice
- Sara Avery-Babel-Speech/Language, who is contract through Word Play
- Kelli Boeve, school nurse, who is contract through Soliant

The providers set their own schedule around the designated IEP needs. They have a space in the building to do their service and students rotate in to them.

**OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

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LJA continues to comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations and provisions of the Audubon Center of the Northwoods charter contract, including, but not limited to the following:

***Transportation***

LJA provides school busing to students within the St. Paul boundaries and to a community stop in Minneapolis. Additionally, public transportation passes are provided to those who express a financial need for assistance.

***Health and Safety***

LJA tracks and monitors health histories, concerns and incidents. A contracted school nurse is responsible for reporting health records of each student. Incident record histories are created and filed with each occurrence within our student data system. Safety drill procedures are practiced throughout the year in regard to fire, bus, lockdowns, and severe weather. Students that need to take medicine during the school day are asked to provide a doctor’s note and have the medicine in the original pharmacy container. Medicine is stored in a locked cabinet in the school office and administered as directed by office staff. Each time a medicine is administered the name of the medication, the time, and the dose given is logged by the administering staff member. A vision and hearing screening are done for all students once per year in the fall of the school year. Some

students require daily/weekly support for medical plans and these are carried out by the health assistants in the office and supervised by the contracted school nurse.

### ***Food Service***

Staff are trained on food safety and follow guidelines as set forth by the City of St. Paul Food Inspector and MDE. Breakfast and lunch are provided and available to all students.

### ***Hiring Practices***

All teachers must have a current license in the State of Minnesota within the subject matter they are hired to teach. The process of hiring begins by publically posting the job description in multiple places including, but not limited to, EdPost, St. Catherine's Katie Click, Indeed, and MACS. Once a sufficient number of applicants have submitted required resume, references and cover letter, the Education Director and Special Programs Director create a team to interview the applicants.

Teachers are required to also create and present mock lesson plans. A similar process is followed with non-teacher staff in regard to gaining applicants. These applicants interview with a team relevant to the respective position. Background checks are done on all new staff, board members, and volunteers who work with students.

### ***DUE PROCESS -student discipline data***

*Expulsion: 0*

*Out of School Suspension: 13*

During the 2015-16 school year, there were 13 total OSS instances: 8 one-day OSS incidents, 4 two-day OSS incidents, 1 three-day incidents and 0 five-day incidents. This accounted for a total of 12 students receiving OSS during the year.

The overall out of school instances went down from 40 OSS incidents and 21 students receiving OSS in the 2014-2015 school year. We began implementation of restorative practices with more fidelity and decreased student's number of out of school suspension days if that student would participate in restorative measures and repair the harm done. This was very successful and all students who were suspended agreed to participate in restorative measures. We also began to implement some socio-emotional interventions and this may have contributed to the decrease in OSS both in days and also in the number of students.

*In School Suspension: 16*

During the 2015-16 school year, there were 21 instances of ISS with 16 different students receiving ISS. This is down from 48 instances of ISS with 22 different students during the 2014-15 school year.

We have continued to train all new staff in developmental designs for our overall framework to teach and support student socio/emotional/behavioral skill development. There is ongoing staff support to have fidelity to this framework throughout the school year.

The school materially complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations and provisions of the charter contract relating to:

- relevant compliance and reporting requirements to the authorizer, state education agency, and/or federal authorities, including but not limited to:
  - \* State reporting and applications, including but not limited to: MARSS, STARS, UFARS, EDRS, Q Comp, DIRS, lease aid;
  - \* TRA/PERA;
  - \* School website is compliant with statutory and authorizer expectations;
  - \* Insurance coverage;
- the school facilities, grounds and transportation, including but not limited to:
  - \* Fire inspections and related records;
  - \* Viable certificate of occupancy or other required building use authorization;
  - \* Physical space provides a safe, positive learning environment for students;
  - \* Appropriate and safe student transportation practices;
  - \* health and safety, including but not limited to:
    - Nursing services and dispensing of pharmaceuticals;
    - Food service;
    - Emergency management plan;
- admission and enrollment rights of students, including but not limited to policies and practices related to admissions, lottery, waiting lists, fair and open recruitment;
- due process and privacy rights of students, including but not limited to:
  - \* Due process protections, privacy, civil rights and students liberties requirements, including First Amendment protections and the Establishment Clause restrictions prohibiting public schools from engaging in religious instruction;
  - \* Conduct of discipline pursuant to the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act;
  - \* Maintain the security of and provide access to students records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and other applicable authorities;
  - \* Transfer of student records;
- employment including transparent hiring, evaluation and dismissal policies and practices;
- required background checks for all school employees

## FINANCES

Questions regarding school finances for 2015-16 and/or an organizational budget for 2016-17 contact Jennifer Schiller, 651-414-6000, [jennifers@laurajeffreyacademy.org](mailto:jennifers@laurajeffreyacademy.org)

Financials were provided by Dieci School Finance.  
 Contact: Robert Procaccini, President and Financial  
 Manager Phone: 651-251-6983  
 Email: [robert@diecisf.com](mailto:robert@diecisf.com)

Information presented below is derived from preliminary audit figures. The full financial audit will be completed and presented to Minnesota Department of Education and Audubon Center of the North Woods no later than December 31, 2016.

<p><b><i>For the seventh year in a row, LJA received MDE's finance award</i></b></p>	
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<i>FY16 Projected Finances</i>	<i>Fund 1</i>	<i>Fund 2</i>	<i>Fund 4</i>
<i>Total Revenues</i>	\$ 2,354,626	\$ 53,795	\$ 19,600
<i>Total Expenditures</i>	2,423,683	55,246	19,600
<i>Total Board Assigned Expenditures</i>	0		
<i>Net Income</i>	(69,058)	(1,451)	(0)
<i>Total Fund Balance</i>	201,350	0	1,227

### Overview

In FY16, administration and the Board decided to use additional expenditures to improve the academic program for the school. These expenditures included spending to provide at risk students with

interventions to help prevent additional students from requiring special education services. With the use of these funds and low enrollment, FY16 was a challenging year financially for the school. Despite these challenges, they helped prepare for FY17 and the school has made significant improvements to their academic program.

## **Revenues**

The school's main sources of income are from state aids relating to ADM, special education funding, federal grants, as well as local grants and donations from the community.

## **Expenses**

The main expenditures the school incurs are related to staffing/benefits, facility rental, and expenses to serve their special education population. The school is a STEM school and tries to spend as much money on related expenditures as the budget allows.

## **Net Income and Fund Balance**

In FY16, the school is projected to have a negative net income as a result of lower enrollment and additional expenses due to the ADSIS program that was implemented. The school's estimated FY16 fund balance is \$202,577 which is estimated to be 8.1%. Currently the school is projecting to maintain this fund balance in FY17.

## **World's Best Workforce Annual Budget**

The school continues to improve their STEM program by adding technology and improved curriculum to ensure student's performance is increasing. The school's budget continues to include expenditures for interventions with students to help improve their overall learning experience and increase their academic achievements.

## **Future Plans**

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### *Intervention Support*

The state funded ADSIS grant was applied for and obtained by the school for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years. Because of this grant, dedicated staff time/resources supporting reading, math and behavioral support will occur during the school day. Mid day classes will continue to occur for math and reading interventions. In addition, socio-emotional/behavioral intervention support will be added to the mid day class structure. During the mid day on Tuesday/Thursday, all students will engage in enrichment activities such as coding, team/leader development, reading buddies to younger students in the Montessori next door, Girls in Action, etc. Finally, on Friday during the mid day, all students will be supported in executive functioning education/practice of skills. This grant allows us the opportunity to provide all students with either intervention support and/or accelerations.

### *Behavioral Support*

All staff will continue to be trained in Developmental Designs and support will be given to staff during professional development days throughout the school year. A behavior intervention person, hired with ADSIS dollars, will work part time as we continue this work into the 2016-17 school year. Restorative practice interventions will continue and be enhanced to address lower level behavioral issues.

### *Technology*

We were awarded grants from Honda Foundation and Richard M. Schultze Family Foundation in FY16 and again for FY17, and have also received a new grant from Boston Scientific for FY17. With this funding we will focus our budgets on three main areas: technical staffing and staff training, network infrastructure upgrades, and technology hardware.

Our technology specialist who aids in our math classes to teach coding to all students and helps mentor students in the App building competition, Technovation Challenge!, will return in FY17; the upgrade of our firewalls, network infrastructure, internet bandwidth and communications will be completed prior to fall of FY17; a new technology and IT training room will be built; and new computers, tablets, and technology supplies will be purchased to support all students.

### *Teacher and Staff Development*

Expansion and enrichment of the Teacher-Leadership team for the 2016-2017 school year will increase support for teacher growth and development in the upcoming school year. The Teacher leadership team includes the Education Director and three veteran teachers from various subject areas and expertise. This team works to create and provide professional development for staff. Additionally, giving informal “teacher leaders” opportunities to develop professional learning for peers.

In an effort to be more collaborative across content areas as well as with general education and special education, LJA has reformatted team meetings to include support staff and EAs. This provides a collaborative environment where problem solving around student academics and curriculum means all of the invested professionals working together.

Additionally, we received a grant from Donaldson Foundation in both FY16 and FY17, providing funding to support our J-term model which is designed to engage students in STEAM (STEAM integrates the art with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) learning, inquiry, and experience. This grant in part funds training our teachers on experiential curriculum building which will be used to enhance all classroom teaching throughout the year. We have found students have increased attendance, decreased behaviors that require interventions, and allow students to explore and understand concepts to supplement the learning within our regular schedule.

### *Master Schedule*

In the 2016-2017 school year music and art classes are taught in separation. Last year they were co-taught in the hopes of an integrated fine arts curriculum. The plan did not work as expected, and Art and Music

classes are separated. Students have Art every other day for a semester and Music every other day for the other semester.

### *Focus on Framework*

A focus in the 2016-2017 school year is for staff to have a deep understanding of the theorists and theories from which the framework of LJA is derived. It is important for staff to understand why we do what we do, and why it is such important work. Digging into the work that has come before helps us find a common language and vision and helps us work for that.

### *Parent Engagement Network*

Our community diversity is a challenge that is both welcome and part of our mission. To better understand families' perspectives and needs and engage in meaningful conversations, we formed a Parent Engagement Network (PEN) to provide a regular space to address issues and inform on progress. We would like everyone to engage in the way that works best for them and have opened up dialogues to be a community with equity in mind.



*The LJA 8<sup>th</sup> grade class!*

# Laura Jeffrey Academy | 2015-2016 Calendar

1-31 NO SCHOOL

JULY 2015						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

JANUARY 2016						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

1 NO SCHOOL  
 4 Back to School!  
 18 NO SCHOOL (Holiday)  
 22 Last Day of Quarter 2/  
 Early Release at 1:00 PM  
 25-29 Intersession (Optional  
 Programming)

1-11 NO SCHOOL

12 First Day of School /  
 First Day of Quarter 1

AUGUST 2015						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

FEBRUARY 2016						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29					

1-5 NO SCHOOL  
 8 First Day of Quarter 3  
 15 NO SCHOOL (Holiday)

4 NO SCHOOL (Prof. Dev.)  
 7 NO SCHOOL (Holiday)

SEPTEMBER 2015						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

MARCH 2016						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

3-4 NO SCHOOL/Conferences  
 25 NO SCHOOL (Prof. Dev.)

8 Last Day of Quarter 1  
 9 NO SCHOOL (Prof. Dev.)  
 12-16 Intersession (Optional  
 Programming)  
 19-23 NO SCHOOL  
 26 First Day of Quarter 2

OCTOBER 2015						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

APRIL 2016						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

14 Last Day of Quarter 3  
 15 NO SCHOOL (Prof. Dev.)  
 18-22 Intersession (Optional  
 Programming)  
 25-29 NO SCHOOL

23-24 NO SCHOOL/  
 Conferences  
 25 NO SCHOOL (Prof. Dev.)  
 26-27 NO SCHOOL (Holiday)

NOVEMBER 2015						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

MAY 2016						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

2 First Day of Quarter 4  
 27 NO SCHOOL (Prof. Dev.)  
 30 NO SCHOOL (Holiday)

21-31 NO SCHOOL

DECEMBER 2015						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

JUNE 2016						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

29 Last Day of School/  
 Last Day of Quarter 4

Q1=40 days  
 Q2=49 days  
 Q3=45 days  
 Q4=41 days  
 Total School Days=175