



## Profile and Plan Essentials

LEA Type		AUN
Charter School		102024758
Address 1		
7061 Lemington Avenue		
Address 2		
City	State	Zip Code
Pittsburgh	PA	15206
Chief School Administrator		Chief School Administrator Email
Brian Smith		brian.smith@catalystacademy.org
Single Point of Contact Name		
Brian Smith		
Single Point of Contact Email		
brian.smith@catalystacademy.org		
Single Point of Contact Phone Number		Single Point of Contact Extension
412-626-3863		
Principal Name		
Meryl Johnson		
Principal Email		
meryl.johnson@catalystacademy.org		
Principal Phone Number		Principal Extension
412-626-3862		
School Improvement Facilitator Name		School Improvement Facilitator Email

## Steering Committee

Name	Position/Role	Building/Group/Organization	Email
Brian Smith	Administrator	Catalyst Academy Charter School	brian.smith@catalystacademy.org
Meghan Lawrence	Administrator	Catalyst Academy Charter School	meghan.lawrence@catalystacademy.org
Rachel Amankulor	Board Member	Catalyst Academy Charter School	rachelamankulor@gmail.com
Michelle Bartha	Staff Member	Second Grade Teacher	michelle.bartha@catalystacademy.org
Myra Powell	Staff Member	Founding Community Advisor	myra.powell@catalystacademy.org
Parrish Davenport	Community Member	Unity Collaborative and Family & Friends Initiative	Parrish.davenport@ffipgh.org
Brittini Wright-Burley	Other	Wright Childcare Solutions	bwburley@wrightchildcare.com
Kenesha Travis	Parent	Parent Community Organization Member	kenesha.travis@gmail.com
Meryl Johnson	Administrator	Catalyst Academy Charter School	meryl.johnson@catalystacademy.org

## LEA Profile

Catalyst Academy Charter School is a college-preparatory K-8 public charter school in Pittsburgh, focused on serving families in the Hill District, Garfield, East Liberty, Larimer, Lincoln-Lemington, Homewood, and East Hills communities as well as families from across Pittsburgh and neighboring communities that are looking for a great school. Our mission is to create a world-class K-8 school where all children are prepared for college, career, and life. We believe in order for our students to be catalysts for their future, and the future for their families and communities, they need to be well prepared for college, career, and life. Our educational philosophy is that a child's education should seek mastery along three dimensions.

**College Readiness:** All scholars will be prepared to attend and graduate from a four-year college or university. Catalyst scholars will be prepared by achieving mastery of a broad, rigorous college-preparatory curriculum that both prepares and inspires.

**Career Readiness:** All scholars need to be equipped with the skills to thrive in the 21st century economy, including communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity.

**Life Readiness:** A great education cultivates confident, compassionate scholars ready to achieve their dreams.

To achieve our mission, and in alignment with our philosophy, the Catalyst Academy Charter School model has six key components:

1. High Expectations: We push ourselves and our scholars to always pursue excellence.
2. Academic Rigor: College prep, culturally affirming curriculum, longer school day and year.
3. Quality Teaching: Small group instruction, instructional coaches, up to two hours daily for planning and practice.

4. Strong Relationships: Smaller classes enhancing student and teacher relationships, frequent teacher-parent communication and home visits.
5. Innovation & Personalization: Catalyst Expeditions – Week-long project-based learning expeditions, scholar flextime for enrichment and tutoring, and personalized learning tools.
6. Holistic Development: Scholar goal circles, social-emotional learning curriculum, dedicated Catalyst Community Time.

Catalyst Academy is the first new K-8 charter school in Pittsburgh in 6 years and is located in the Lincoln-Lemington neighborhood, in the former Lemington School building.

We opened as a K-1 school in the fall of 2020, and serves grades kindergarten through 4th grade in 2023-24 and will grow a grade each year to eventually serve kindergarten through 8th grade. In 2024-25, we will serve approximately 320 students. As a public charter school, Catalyst Academy is a tuition-free, open-enrollment school for any student, including students with special needs and English-language learners, in the city of Pittsburgh and other area communities.

In 2020-2021, Catalyst was one of the only public schools in Pittsburgh to safely offer in-person learning 5-days / week with a distance learning option for families that needed it.

As of the 2024-2025 school year, Catalyst has a total enrollment of approximately 320 scholars across grades K-5. Approximately 90% of the student population qualifies for Free or Reduced Price Lunch. Over 90% of the scholars identify as African-American or multi-racial.

As the Catalyst team begins the process of planning, it is important for us to keep in mind that Catalyst is a growing school community.

Growing one grade level per year, Catalyst will constantly exist in a place of growth and innovation as we expand into a K-8 school community. The Catalyst Academy Charter School core values: Belong. Grow. Achieve. must remain at the center of our expansion and at the center of our planning process as we continue to grow.

As we continue to cosset our core values and their role in our decision-making process, the Catalyst team must also ensure that these values work in tandem with our school community. Charter schools are uniquely situated in that charters are positioned within the context of specific neighborhoods or areas but the scope of enrollment reaches beyond the boundaries of a particular neighborhood or area. Catalyst has the distinct privilege of creating a school community that draws on the cultures, experiences, and vigor of communities across the Pittsburgh area.

Our new school community has been brought together in the historic Lemington School building in Lincoln-Lemington. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Catalyst is breathing new life into the building through a phased renovation process. With the current building design, Catalyst will reach the full capacity of the Lemington School building once we reach 5th Grade (2024-2025 school year). Plans are underway to outline how we can support grades 6-8 while remaining on our current campus at 7061 Lemington Ave.

Maintaining, improving, and building the physical space is a necessary facet of our work, but not the only. Building relationships with community organizations and stakeholders remains vitally important to reaching our vision for families and scholars. A few of our community partners/organizations include: Wright Childcare Solutions, Cooks Culinary Management, Bible Center Church, Reading is Fundamental, Junior Achievement, Homewood Children's Village, and the Pittsburgh Ballet. Several of these community partners provide support for scholar enrichment during our Wednesday enrichment block.

Especially as a new school growing school, we have to be very frugal with our limited resources. The challenges of covering the various start-up (e.g., new furniture, technology, equipment) and fixed costs (e.g., building) of a school significantly impact our resource decisions.

## Mission and Vision

### Mission

The mission of Catalyst Academy Charter School is to provide a world-class education where all of our scholars are prepared for college, career, and life, in an education setting aligned to our core values: Belong. Grow. Achieve.

### Vision

The vision of Catalyst Academy Charter School is to provide underserved areas of Pittsburgh with an excellent public school option where all students have the opportunity to define and achieve their dreams.

## Educational Values

### Students

**Belong** It is the job of Catalyst scholars to support our shared core value, **Belong**, by learning, applying, and demonstrating the key takeaways of Social-Emotional Learning initiatives taught during Catalyst Community Time and Whole-School Community Time. **Grow** Scholars receive actionable feedback from teachers, peers, and school leaders daily. In order to grow as an organization, each and every unit of the organization must hold to the belief that they can reach levels of success with the right supports and access to feedback. **Achieve** Scholars will display mastery and show what they know when assessed on grade-level standards throughout the school year via local assessments and state assessments starting in grade 3. One of our primary objectives as a school is to ensure all scholars have what they need in order to achieve their dreams through college, career, and in life.

### Staff

**Belong** Staff members are entrusted with our communities most precious gift; their children. Faculty and staff must do the work to guarantee that scholars and families feel connected to their new school community. Building safe, accountable, and fun learning environments where scholars know themselves and their peers deeply, aids in the creation of a classroom community that exemplifies our core value of **belong**. Additionally, making space for parents and families to play their necessary role in the education of their child is a non-negotiable. **Grow** Staff members will model what it means to have a growth mindset through the coaching and feedback they receive from Instructional Coaches and members of the School Leadership Team. It is the job of faculty and staff to push themselves and others within the organization to continually seek ways to improve in order to get the absolute best outcomes for scholars and families. **Achieve** Faculty and staff achievement is directly tied to their own growth and the growth and achievement of their scholars. Our primary focus is to guarantee that scholars have all of the skills and tools necessary to achieve their dreams; therefore, our achievement is inextricably linked to the growth and achievement of scholars. When scholars grow and achieve at grade-level, we are exemplifying our core value of **achieve**.

### Administration

**Belong** The Catalyst Academy Charter School Administrative team (Leadership Team) works explicitly to create a culture in which all stakeholders feel comfortable bringing their full self to our school community. We believe and act on the belief of meeting people where they are, but not leaving them there. It is critical that we create a culture where teammates and stakeholders care personally and challenge directly, exuding radical candor. **Grow** As stated above, we meet people where they are, but do not leave them there. This statement typifies growth and a growth mindset. The Leadership Team works to create systems of accountability and feedback for all stakeholder groups in order to support their overall growth and development. For scholars, this happens through the support and feedback given by teachers. For



faculty and staff, accountability and feedback are built directly into our coaching and development model. Our Leadership Team receives additional coaching and development through outside partners and takes the feedback provided from stakeholders through surveys and formal staff conversations at the middle and prior to the end of the school year. For parents and families, we take their feedback through community surveys and take action based on the results while also building their capacity to act and advocate for their needs. Achieve The Leadership Team supports the achievement of our school community by upholding our other two core values: Belong. Achieve. while also: 1.) Remaining data-driven in our approach to teaching and learning 2.) Setting a clear vision for success 3.) Guaranteeing scholars access to rigorous, grade-level materials and curriculum 4.) Providing faculty and staff with the materials, resources, and outlets they need in order to be successful.

## Parents

Belong Parents have done the work of entrusting the Catalyst team with who they cherish most, their child. Parents support the core value of Belong in service to our mission by engaging in monthly parent events, opening lines of communication with faculty and staff, and building relationships and connections with other scholars, parents, and families. Additionally, scholars cannot/will not feel a true sense of belonging if they are not here in school. Parent support with timely attendance each day directly supports Catalyst in making sure our core value of Belong is evident. Grow As stated previously, we all act as models for scholars in what it means to exhibit a growth mindset and what it means to seek to continually improve. Parents support our core value of Grow by seeking growth opportunities for themselves within the school community and by providing feedback directly to Catalyst via our Parent and Community Advisor or through parent surveys. Achieve Parents and families support the achievement of their scholar and Catalyst as a whole by demonstrating an understanding of the school expectations for scholar success and supporting our execution of providing scholars with grade-level curriculum and materials. At home, parents support scholars in the acquisition of early literacy skills by reviewing sight word lists, reading 20 minutes per night, and supporting with take-home work if necessary.

## Community

Belong The community exemplifies our core value of Belong in service to our mission by creating space for Catalyst to exist in a safe and nurturing environment. The community also creates space for parents, families, and scholars from across the Pittsburgh area to come together and form a shared community within their context. Additionally, the community pushes Catalyst to be a resource and support for the community as a whole. Grow The community allows for Catalyst to continue to support our mission and vision in the context of our given space and home while also supporting our overall growth by providing access to community resources or initiatives that will support the learning of scholars and families. Achieve When the Catalyst community wins, we all win. Collective success will only come from a

shared sense of achievement for both the school and the community as a whole. With support in both the areas of Belong and Grow, the success shown through achievement is an inevitability.

Other (Optional)

Omit selected.

## Future Ready PA Index

Select the grade levels served by your school. Select all that apply.

True K	True 1	True 2	True 3	True 4	True 5	False 6
False 7	False 8	False 9	False 10	False 11	False 12	

## Review of the School(s) Level Performance

### Strengths

Indicator	Comments/Notable Observations
The current Future Ready PA Index lists the 22 - 23 indicators, for which we only have one academic indicator as this was the first year we took the PSSAs.	The current PA Ready Index lists the 22 - 23 indicators, for which we only have one academic indicator as this was the first year we took the PSSAs.
Although not yet published on the Future Ready PA Index, both Math and ELA PSSA scores improved from the 2022 - 2023 to 2023 - 2024 school years.	Catalyst Academy viewed early reporting scores and noted this increase.
The 2022 - 2023 Regular Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism rates will be posted to this year's Future Ready Index. However, it is notable that Catalyst Academy decreased Chronic Absenteeism by 20% between the 22 - 23 and 23 - 24 school year.	This will not be published this year, but has been tracked the school and will be posted on the Future Ready PA Index next year.

### Challenges

Indicator	Comments/Notable Observations
Percent of Students with Regular Attendance	When the 22 - 23 data is posted on the Future Ready PA Index, it will reflect a high rate of chronic absenteeism. Although progress has been made in the 23 - 24 school year, there is still progress to be made.
Improvement in percent proficient/advanced on PSSAs in ELA and Math.	Although not posted on the Future Ready PA Index, the 22 - 23 3rd grade cohort (4th grade students in 23 - 24) showed minimal improvements in math proficiency from 3rd grade to 4th grade, but an overall schoolwide improvement.

## Review of Grade Level(s) and Individual Student Group(s)

### Strengths

Indicator We only have one indicator populated in the index because we are a new school and have only started taking PSSAs in 2023. ESSA Student Subgroups African-American/Black	Comments/Notable Observations We only have one indicator populated in the index because we are a new school and have only started taking PSSAs in 2023.
Indicator ESSA Student Subgroups	Comments/Notable Observations
Indicator ESSA Student Subgroups	Comments/Notable Observations
Indicator ESSA Student Subgroups	Comments/Notable Observations

### Challenges

Indicator Percent of Students with Regular Attendance ESSA Student Subgroups African-American/Black	Comments/Notable Observations We have very high rate of chronic absenteeism that we are working to address.
Indicator ESSA Student Subgroups	Comments/Notable Observations
Indicator ESSA Student Subgroups	Comments/Notable Observations
Indicator ESSA Student Subgroups	Comments/Notable Observations

### Summary

#### Strengths

Review the strengths listed above and copy and paste 2-5 strengths which have had the most impact in improving your most pressing challenges.

We only have one indicator populated in the index because we are a new school and have only started taking PSSAs in 2023.
Although not yet published on the Future Ready PA Index, both Math and ELA PSSA scores improved from the 2022 - 2023 to 2023 - 2024

school years.

The 2022 - 2023 Regular Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism rates will be posted to this year's Future Ready Index. However, it is notable that Catalyst Academy decreased Chronic Absenteeism by 20% between the 22 - 23 and 23 - 24 school year.

### Challenges

Review the challenges listed above and copy and paste 2-5 challenges if improved would have the most impact in achieving your Future Ready PA index targets.

Percent of Students with Regular Attendance - We only have one indicator in the PA Ready Index

Percent proficient/advanced on PSSA Math and ELA exams

## Local Assessment

### English Language Arts

Data	Comments/Notable Observations
MAP Assessment: ELA 65% of scholars fall between the 1st and - 40th percentile for achievement.	While there is significant work to do, this indicator is an improvement from last year (73% of scholars fell between the 1st - 40th percentile for achievement).
STEP Literacy Assessment: 77.9% of scholars schoolwide are performing below grade level expectations	While there is significant work to do, this indicator is an improvement from last year, where 89% of scholars were performing below grade level expectations. We also saw a significant improvement in scholar growth.

### English Language Arts Summary

#### Strengths

We view our phonics, guided curriculum and reading comprehension curricula as robust tools to build both foundations reading skills as well as background knowledge. During the 2023 - 2024 school year, all scholars received at least 60 minutes (most received 90 minutes) of phonics and guided reading a day. Scholars qualifying for Tier II or Tier III services received additional instruction from our growth interventionists and/or literacy tutors from an external partner.
Our instructional leadership team provides above-average levels of coaching, development, and support for classroom teachers. Teachers receive daily coaching and feedback and weekly professional development. Our Leadership Team has also invested additional time and resources into professional development from our literacy curriculum consultants at Lifelong Readers. These consultants meet regular with our Deans of Instruction and our educators to analyze data and adjust instructional practices.
Notable growth was made on both local assessments for ELA/Literacy, MAP and STEP.

#### Challenges

Attendance has been a challenge to seeing consistent academic progress. When students are not regularly attending it is difficult to catch them up to their grade level peers and maintain the pace required to meet grade-level standards.
We serve a high-needs student population which brings extra challenges related to classroom management, social-emotional development, and disparities in background knowledge that can be additional hurdles to providing great instruction.
2nd grade switched to the 2 - 5 MAP/NWEA assessment, compared to the K - 2 exam in previous years
While there has been growth in local assessment scores in math and ELA, the majority of scholars are not proficient/advanced on the PSSA math and ELA exams.

## Mathematics

Data	Comments/Notable Observations
MAP Assessment: Math -63% of scholars fall between the 1st - 40th percentile for achievement, 17% in the 41st - 60th, and 20% in the 61st - 99th.	This is a slight increase in achievement, compared to last year where 65% of scholars fell between the 1st - 40th percentile
Scholars were in the 52nd percentile for growth on the MAP/NWEA Math Assessment	This is a sizable improvement from last year, where scholars were in the 32nd percentile for growth

## Mathematics Summary

### Strengths

Our math curriculum, Eureka Math, provides a strong foundation in both mathematical thinking and numeric fluency.
Our instructional leadership team provides above-average levels of coaching, development, and support for classroom teachers.
Scholars exhibited improvements in both achievement and growth on the NWEA/MAP assessment.
As a school, we consistently implemented IXL for additional math practice

### Challenges

Attendance has been a challenge to seeing consistent academic progress. When students are not regularly attending it is difficult to catch them up to their grade level peers and maintain the pace required to meet grade-level standards.
We serve a high-needs student population which brings extra challenges related to classroom management, social-emotional development, and disparities in background knowledge that can be additional hurdles to providing great instruction.
While there has been growth in local assessment scores in math and ELA, the majority of scholars are not proficient/advanced on the PSSA math and ELA exams.

## Science, Technology, and Engineering Education

Data	Comments/Notable Observations
We have not taken any local standardized assessments in Science/STEM thus far because we are only starting 4th grade in the 2023-24 school year.	We have established a baseline proficiency of 26% on the 4th grade PSSA assessment, although this is not a local assessment

## Science, Technology, and Engineering Education Summary

### Strengths

We have created a schedule that allows for STEM learning 4-5 days per week.
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Our instructional leadership team provides above-average levels of coaching, development, and support for classroom teachers.

### Challenges

Attendance has been a challenge to seeing consistent academic progress. When students are not regularly attending it is difficult to catch them up to their grade level peers and maintain the pace required to meet grade-level standards.

We serve a high-needs student population which brings extra challenges related to classroom management, social-emotional development, and disparities in background knowledge that can be additional hurdles to providing great instruction.

Inconsistent staffing of our STEM role has led to some instructional inconsistencies over time.



## Related Academics

### Career Readiness

Data	Comments/Notable Observations
As a new school which opened during the pandemic, we have not yet been able to focus on career readiness to the degree we would like. Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, this will be prioritized to a greater extent.	
During the 2023 - 2024 school year, we utilized an online platform called Smart Futures to both teach scholars about career readiness and to collect aligned artifacts.	

### Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs

True Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs Omit

### Arts and Humanities

True Arts and Humanities Omit

### Environment and Ecology

True Environment and Ecology Omit

### Family and Consumer Sciences

True Family and Consumer Sciences Omit

### Health, Safety, and Physical Education

True Health, Safety, and Physical Education Omit

### Social Studies (Civics and Government, Economics, Geography, History)

True Social Studies (Civics and Government, Economics, Geography, History) Omit

### Articulation Agreements

True We do not have any articulation agreements because we do not have high school students, or ALL current agreements have been uploaded to other FRCPP plans.

## Summary

### Strengths

Review the comments and notable observations listed previously and record 2-5 strengths which have had the most impact in improving your most pressing challenges.

We have strong, research-based, curricular tools in ELA.
We have strong curricular tools in Math.
We provide above-average supports for teacher coaching and professional development.
We have STEM/Science classes 4-5 days/week for our students.

### Challenges

Review the comments and notable observations listed previously and record 2-5 Challenges which if improved would have the most impact in achieving your Mission and Vision.

It is critically important to reduce our rate of chronic absenteeism.
Our students are socio economically disadvantaged and the pandemic has exacerbated those challenges. Many of our students enter our school academically behind. A significant number of our students have dealt with childhood trauma during their young lives that also impacts their learning.

## Equity Considerations

### English Learners

True This student group is not a focus in this plan.

### Students with Disabilities

True This student group is not a focus in this plan.

### Students Considered Economically Disadvantaged

False This student group is not a focus in this plan.

Data	Comments/Notable Observations
Because over 90% of our students are economically disadvantaged, our whole school data reflects the economically disadvantaged sub group. So, for ELA ~>80% of economically disadvantaged students are below proficiency according to the MAP assessment.	
Because over 90% of our students are economically disadvantaged, our whole school data reflects the economically disadvantaged sub group. So, for Math ~>75% of economically disadvantaged students are below proficiency according to the MAP assessment.	

### Student Groups by Race/Ethnicity

False This student group is not a focus in this plan.

Student Groups	Comments/Notable Observations
Black	Because over 90% of our students identify as African-American or multi-racial, our whole school data reflects the African-American sub group. So, for ELA ~>80% of economically disadvantaged students are below proficiency according to the MAP assessment. For Math ~>75% of economically disadvantaged students are below proficiency according to the MAP assessment.

## Summary

### Strengths

Review the comments and notable observations listed previously and record the 2-5 strengths which have had the most impact in improving your most pressing challenges.

We have strong research-based ELA curricular tools.
We have strong math curricular tools.
We provide above-average supports for teacher coaching and professional development.

### Challenges

Review the comments and notable observations listed previously and record the 2-5 Challenges which if improved would have the most impact in achieving your Mission and Vision.

We serve a high-needs student population which brings extra challenges related to classroom management, social-emotional development, and disparities in background knowledge that can be additional hurdles to providing great instruction. Our teachers need high support levels to improve their skill set at address these hurdles.
It is critically important that we reduce the rate of chronic absenteeism.
While there has been growth in local assessment scores in math and ELA, the majority of scholars are not proficient/advanced on the PSSA math and ELA exams.



## Supplemental LEA Plans

Programs and Plans	Comments/Notable Observations
Special Education Plan	N/A
Title 1 Program	This is the SWP for Title 1
Student Services	N/A
K-12 Guidance Plan (339 Plan)	N/A
Technology Plan	N/A
English Language Development Programs	N/A

### Strengths

Review the comments and notable observations listed and record those which have had the most impact in improving your most pressing challenges.

### Challenges

Review the comments and notable observations listed previously and record the 2-5 challenges which if improved would have the most impact in achieving your Mission and Vision.

## Conditions for Leadership, Teaching, and Learning

### Focus on Continuous improvement of Instruction

Align curricular materials and lesson plans to the PA Standards	Operational
Use systematic, collaborative planning processes to ensure instruction is coordinated, aligned, and evidence-based	Exemplary
Use a variety of assessments (including diagnostic, formative, and summative) to monitor student learning and adjust programs and instructional practices	Operational
Identify and address individual student learning needs	Operational
Provide frequent, timely, and systematic feedback and support on instructional practices	Operational

### Empower Leadership

Foster a culture of high expectations for success for all students, educators, families, and community members	Operational
Collectively shape the vision for continuous improvement of teaching and learning	Operational
Build leadership capacity and empower staff in the development and successful implementation of initiatives that better serve students, staff, and the school	Operational
Organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources aligned with the school improvement plan and needs of the school community	Operational
Continuously monitor implementation of the school improvement plan and adjust as needed	Operational

### Provide Student-Centered Support Systems

Promote and sustain a positive school environment where all members feel welcomed, supported, and safe in school: socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically	Operational
Implement an evidence-based system of schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports	Operational
Implement a multi-tiered system of supports for academics and behavior	Operational
Implement evidence-based strategies to engage families to support learning	Emerging
Partner with local businesses, community organizations, and other agencies to meet the needs of the school	Operational

### Foster Quality Professional Learning

Identify professional learning needs through analysis of a variety of data	Exemplary
Use multiple professional learning designs to support the learning needs of staff	Operational
Monitor and evaluate the impact of professional learning on staff practices and student learning	Operational

## Summary

### Strengths

Which Essential Practices are currently Operational or Exemplary and could be leveraged in your efforts to improve upon your most pressing challenges?

Use multiple professional learning designs to support the learning needs of staff
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Provide frequent, timely, and systematic feedback and support on instructional practices
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### Challenges

Thinking about all the most pressing challenges identified in the previous sections, which of the Essential Practices that are currently Not Yet Evident or Emerging, if improved, would greatly impact your progress in achieving your mission, vision and Future Ready PA Index interim targets in State Assessment Measures, On-Track Measures, or College and Career Measures?

Implement evidence-based strategies to engage families to support learning
--

Partner with local businesses, community organizations, and other agencies to meet the needs of the school
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While there has been growth in local assessment scores in math and ELA, the majority of scholars are not proficient/advanced on the PSSA math and ELA exams.
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## Summary of Strengths and Challenges from the Needs Assessment

### Strengths

Examine the Summary of Strengths. Identify the strengths that are most positively contributing to achievement of your mission and vision. Check the box to the right of these identified strength(s).

Strength	Check for Consideration in Plan
We only have one indicator populated in the index because we are a new school and have only started taking PSSAs in 2023.	False
Although not yet published on the Future Ready PA Index, both Math and ELA PSSA scores improved from the 2022 - 2023 to 2023 - 2024 school years.	False
We view our phonics, guided curriculum and reading comprehension curricula as robust tools to build both foundations reading skills as well as background knowledge. During the 2023 - 2024 school year, all scholars received at least 60 minutes (most received 90 minutes) of phonics and guided reading a day. Scholars qualifying for Tier II or Tier III services received additional instruction from our growth interventionists and/or literacy tutors from an external partner.	False
Our instructional leadership team provides above-average levels of coaching, development, and support for classroom teachers. Teachers receive daily coaching and feedback and weekly professional development. Our Leadership Team has also invested additional time and resources into professional development from our literacy curriculum consultants at Lifelong Readers. These consultants meet regular with our Deans of Instruction and our educators to analyze data and adjust instructional practices.	True
The 2022 - 2023 Regular Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism rates will be posted to this year's Future Ready Index. However, it is notable that Catalyst Academy decreased Chronic Absenteeism by 20% between the 22 - 23 and 23 - 24 school year.	False
Our math curriculum, Eureka Math, provides a strong foundation in both mathematical thinking and numeric fluency.	False
We have created a schedule that allows for STEM learning 4-5 days per week.	False
We have strong, research-based, curricular tools in ELA.	True
We have strong curricular tools in Math.	True
We provide above-average supports for teacher coaching and professional development.	True
Our instructional leadership team provides above-average levels of coaching, development, and support for classroom teachers.	False
Our instructional leadership team provides above-average levels of coaching, development, and support for	False

classroom teachers.	
Notable growth was made on both local assessments for ELA/Literacy, MAP and STEP.	False
Scholars exhibited improvements in both achievement and growth on the NWEA/MAP assessment.	False
As a school, we consistently implemented IXL for additional math practice	False
We have STEM/Science classes 4-5 days/week for our students.	False
We have strong research-based ELA curricular tools.	False
We have strong math curricular tools.	False
We provide above-average supports for teacher coaching and professional development.	False
Use multiple professional learning designs to support the learning needs of staff	False
Provide frequent, timely, and systematic feedback and support on instructional practices	False

### Challenges

Examine the Summary of Challenges. Identify the challenges which are most pressing at this time for your Charter/Cyber Charter School and if improved would have the most pronounced impact in achieving your mission and vision. Check the box to the right of these identified challenge(s).

Strength	Check for Consideration in Plan
Percent of Students with Regular Attendance - We only have one indicator in the PA Ready Index	False
Percent proficient/advanced on PSSA Math and ELA exams	False
Attendance has been a challenge to seeing consistent academic progress. When students are not regularly attending it is difficult to catch them up to their grade level peers and maintain the pace required to meet grade-level standards.	True
We serve a high-needs student population which brings extra challenges related to classroom management, social-emotional development, and disparities in background knowledge that can be additional hurdles to providing great instruction.	False
2nd grade switched to the 2 - 5 MAP/NWEA assessment, compared to the K - 2 exam in previous years	False
Attendance has been a challenge to seeing consistent academic progress. When students are not regularly attending it is difficult to catch them up to their grade level peers and maintain the pace required to meet grade-level standards.	False
Attendance has been a challenge to seeing consistent academic progress. When students are not regularly attending it is difficult to catch them up to their grade level peers and maintain the pace required to meet grade-level standards.	False
It is critically important to reduce our rate of chronic absenteeism.	False

We serve a high-needs student population which brings extra challenges related to classroom management, social-emotional development, and disparities in background knowledge that can be additional hurdles to providing great instruction. Our teachers need high support levels to improve their skill set at address these hurdles.	False
We serve a high-needs student population which brings extra challenges related to classroom management, social-emotional development, and disparities in background knowledge that can be additional hurdles to providing great instruction.	False
We serve a high-needs student population which brings extra challenges related to classroom management, social-emotional development, and disparities in background knowledge that can be additional hurdles to providing great instruction.	False
While there has been growth in local assessment scores in math and ELA, the majority of scholars are not proficient/advanced on the PSSA math and ELA exams.	False
While there has been growth in local assessment scores in math and ELA, the majority of scholars are not proficient/advanced on the PSSA math and ELA exams.	False
Inconsistent staffing of our STEM role has led to some instructional inconsistencies over time.	False
Our students are socio economically disadvantaged and the pandemic has exacerbated those challenges. Many of our students enter our school academically behind. A significant number of our students have dealt with childhood trauma during their young lives that also impacts their learning.	False
It is critically important that we reduce the rate of chronic absenteeism.	False
Implement evidence-based strategies to engage families to support learning	False
Partner with local businesses, community organizations, and other agencies to meet the needs of the school	False
While there has been growth in local assessment scores in math and ELA, the majority of scholars are not proficient/advanced on the PSSA math and ELA exams.	False
While there has been growth in local assessment scores in math and ELA, the majority of scholars are not proficient/advanced on the PSSA math and ELA exams.	True

### Most Notable Observations/Patterns

In the space provided, record any of the comments and notable observations made as your team worked through the needs assessment that stand out as important to the challenge(s) you checked for consideration in your comprehensive plan.



## Analyzing (Strengths and Challenges)

### Analyzing Challenges

Analyzing Challenges	Discussion Points	Check for Priority
Attendance has been a challenge to seeing consistent academic progress. When students are not regularly attending it is difficult to catch them up to their grade level peers and maintain the pace required to meet grade-level standards.	There are several root causes of attendance - transportation challenges, parent work schedules, prior attendance disruptions during the pandemic creating weak attendance patterns.	True
While there has been growth in local assessment scores in math and ELA, the majority of scholars are not proficient/advanced on the PSSA math and ELA exams.	Catalyst scholars, as predominantly low-income students of color who have experienced varied levels of trauma, were disproportionality impacted by the global pandemic. Academics and learning suffered, and we are hoping to engage in a long-range plan that steadily and thoughtfully improves scholar learning and achievement.	True

### Analyzing Strengths

Analyzing Strengths	Discussion Points
We have strong, research-based, curricular tools in ELA.	
We have strong curricular tools in Math.	
We provide above-average supports for teacher coaching and professional development.	Our instructional leadership team plays a critical role in supporting the coaching and development of our teachers to be able to address our students' needs. Teachers receive daily real-time coaching, twice-weekly collaborative planning meetings, one two hour professional development session a week, and a weekly 30 minute coaching meeting with the Dean of Instruction.
Our instructional leadership team provides above-average levels of coaching, development, and support for classroom teachers. Teachers receive daily coaching and feedback and weekly professional development. Our Leadership Team has also invested additional time and resources into professional development from our literacy curriculum consultants at Lifelong Readers. These	Our instructional leadership team plays a critical role in supporting the coaching and development of our teachers to be able to address our students' needs.

consultants meet regular with our Deans of Instruction and our educators to analyze data and adjust instructional practices.	
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**Priority Challenges**

Analyzing Priority Challenges	Priority Statements
	We need to restructure and intensify our attendance protocols to both incentivize better attendance and more strictly adhere to attendance procedures related to chronic absenteeism and truancy.
	We need to continue to allocate time and resources to improving conditions for learning so that we are accelerating learning and increasing the number of scholars who are proficient/advanced on the PSSA, and thereby more highschool, college, and career ready.

## Goal Setting

Priority: We need to restructure and intensify our attendance protocols to both incentivize better attendance and more strictly adhere to attendance procedures related to chronic absenteeism and truancy.

Outcome Category			
Regular Attendance			
Measurable Goal Statement (Smart Goal)			
Reduced chronic absenteeism from approximately 42% in 2023-24 to 20%, by the 2026 - 2027 school year			
Measurable Goal Nickname (35 Character Max)			
Reduce Chronic Absenteeism			
Target Year 1	Target Year 2	Target Year 3	
Reduced chronic absenteeism from approximately 42% in 23-24 to 35%, in the 2024-25 school year.	Reduced chronic absenteeism from approximately 35% in 24-25 to 25%, in the 2025-26 school year.	Reduced chronic absenteeism from approximately 42% in 2023-24 to 20%, by the 2026 - 2027 school year	
Target 1st Quarter	Target 2nd Quarter	Target 3rd Quarter	Target 4th Quarter
Chronic absenteeism is 45% or less by October 25, 2024 (the end of the first quarter).	Chronic absenteeism is 40% or less by January 17, 2025 (the end of the second quarter).	Chronic Absenteeism is 40% or less by March 28, 2025 (the end of the 3rd quarter)	Reduced chronic absenteeism from from 42% to 35% by the end of the school year (June 13, 2025).

Priority: We need to continue to allocate time and resources to improving conditions for learning so that we are accelerating learning and increasing the number of scholars who are proficient/advanced on the PSSA, and thereby more highschool, college, and career ready.

Outcome Category			
English Language Arts			
Measurable Goal Statement (Smart Goal)			
At least 40% of Catalyst Academy Scholars in grades 3 - 7 will be proficient or advanced on the PSSA ELA exam by the end of the 2026 - 2027 school year.			
Measurable Goal Nickname (35 Character Max)			
ELA PSSA Goal			
Target Year 1	Target Year 2	Target Year 3	
Catalyst Academy Scholars in	Catalyst Academy Scholars in	At least 40% of Catalyst Academy	

grades 3 - 5 will achieve, on average, at least 30% proficient or advanced on the PSSA ELA exam	grades 3 - 6 will achieve, on average, at least 35% proficient or advanced on the PSSA ELA exam	Scholars in grades 3 - 7 will be proficient or advanced on the PSSA ELA exam by the end of the 2026 - 2027 school year.	
Target 1st Quarter	Target 2nd Quarter	Target 3rd Quarter	Target 4th Quarter
Catalyst Academy Scholars will score in the 21st - 30th percentile for Achievement on the benchmark NWEA ELA exam in September.	Catalyst Academy Scholars will score in the 25th - 35th percentile for Achievement on the benchmark NWEA ELA exam in January	Catalyst Academy Scholars will score in the 30th - 35th percentile for Achievement on the benchmark NWEA ELA exam in May	Catalyst Academy Scholars in grades 3 - 5 will achieve, on average, at least 30% proficient or advanced on the PSSA ELA exam

Outcome Category			
Mathematics			
Measurable Goal Statement (Smart Goal)			
Catalyst Academy Scholars in grades 3 - 7 will achieve, on average, at least 35% proficient/advanced on the PSSA Math Exam by the 2026 - 2027 school year.			
Measurable Goal Nickname (35 Character Max)			
PSSA Math Goal			
Target Year 1	Target Year 2	Target Year 3	
Catalyst Academy Scholars in grades 3 - 5 will achieve, on average, at least 25% proficient/advanced on the PSSA Math Exam in 2024 - 2025	Catalyst Academy Scholars in grades 3 - 6 will achieve, on average, at least 30% proficient/advanced on the PSSA Math Exam in 2025 - 2026	Catalyst Academy Scholars in grades 3 - 7 will achieve, on average, at least 35% proficient/advanced on the PSSA Math Exam by the 2026 - 2027 school year.	
Target 1st Quarter	Target 2nd Quarter	Target 3rd Quarter	Target 4th Quarter
Catalyst Academy Scholars will score in the 21st - 30th percentile for Achievement on the benchmark NWEA Math exam in September.	Catalyst Academy Scholars will score in the 21st - 30th percentile for Achievement on the benchmark NWEA Math exam in January	Catalyst Academy Scholars will score in the 25th - 30th percentile for Achievement on the benchmark NWEA Math exam in May	Catalyst Academy Scholars in grades 3 - 5 will achieve, on average, at least 25% proficient/advanced on the PSSA Math Exam in 2024 - 2025





## Action Plan

### Measurable Goals

Reduce Chronic Absenteeism	ELA PSSA Goal
PSSA Math Goal	

Action Plan For: Counseling, school climate interventions (e.g., positive behavior interventions and supports) to improve students' social-emotional skills

Measurable Goals:

Action Step		Anticipated Start/Completion Date	
Identify students in need of PBIS and/or counseling support. Develop and implement plans that are coordinated with teachers and administrators		2024-08-19	2025-06-13
Lead Person/Position	Material/Resources/Supports Needed	PD Step?	Com Step?
Director of Scholars	Counselor and other members of the leadership and school culture teams.	Yes	No

Anticipated Output	Monitoring/Evaluation (People, Frequency, and Method)
Behavior support plans for students requiring additional supports	School culture team, in coordination with leadership, instructional, and special education teams where appropriate, meets weekly to review referrals for support, and data on students currently supported to ensure interventions are meeting the needs of individual students.

Action Plan For: Attendance team (attendance specialist, parent engagement specialist, counselor, principal, etc) efforts to address chronic absenteeism through parent engagement, data collection, truancy referrals, rewards for great attendance, attendance letters, etc.

Measurable Goals:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced chronic absenteeism from approximately 42% in 2023-24 to 20%, by the 2026 - 2027 school year</li> </ul>

Action Step		Anticipated Start/Completion Date	
Implement more aggressive parent communications, positive incentives related to attendance.		2024-08-19	2025-06-13
Lead Person/Position	Material/Resources/Supports Needed	PD Step?	Com Step?
Principal	Support from cross-functional team that includes school operations, school culture, and leadership teams.	No	Yes

Anticipated Output	Monitoring/Evaluation (People, Frequency, and Method)
Earlier interventions for students with challenging attendance including parent communication and truancy elimination meetings	Attendance team will meet weekly to review data, address concerns, and create a process of continuous improvement

**Action Plan For: Instructional Coaching**

Measurable Goals:

Action Step		Anticipated Start/Completion Date	
Provide rapid instructional skill development to teachers through a variety of instructional coaching approaches (e.g., observation and feedback, modeling, co-teaching, lesson planning, etc)		2024-08-19	2025-06-13
Lead Person/Position	Material/Resources/Supports Needed	PD Step?	Com Step?
Principal	Instructional coaches (Deans of Instruction)	Yes	No

Anticipated Output	Monitoring/Evaluation (People, Frequency, and Method)
Weekly data points collected on individual teachers aligned with teaching rubrics as well as coaching plans to address individual teacher development needs.	Weekly coaching meetings between coaches and individual teachers as well as weekly meetings of the instructional leadership team (coaches plus principal)

## Action Plan For: Comprehensive MTSS

Measurable Goals:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced chronic absenteeism from approximately 42% in 2023-24 to 20%, by the 2026 - 2027 school year</li> <li>• Catalyst Academy Scholars in grades 3 - 7 will achieve, on average, at least 35% proficient/advanced on the PSSA Math Exam by the 2026 - 2027 school year.</li> <li>• At least 40% of Catalyst Academy Scholars in grades 3 - 7 will be proficient or advanced on the PSSA ELA exam by the end of the 2026 - 2027 school year.</li> </ul>

Action Step		Anticipated Start/Completion Date	
Create tiered academic interventions for scholars needing more intensive academic supports		2024-08-19	2025-06-13
Lead Person/Position	Material/Resources/Supports Needed	PD Step?	Com Step?
Meryl Johnson, Principal	MTSS Referral, Growth Interventionist Schedule, Math and Literacy Intervention programs	No	Yes

Anticipated Output	Monitoring/Evaluation (People, Frequency, and Method)
Scholars receiving Tier MTSS supports show growth on academic measures such as MAP/NWEA and PSSAs.	Monthly MTSS meeting with MTSS committee (Principal, Director of Scholars, Director of Inclusive learning)., Ongoing progress checks using progress monitoring tools and benchmark assessments.

## Expenditure Tables

### School Improvement Set Aside Grant

True School does not receive School Improvement Set Aside Grant.

### Schoolwide Title 1 Funding Allocation

False School does not receive Schoolwide Title 1 funding.

eGrant Budget Category (Schoolwide Funding)	Action Plan(s)	Expenditure Description	Amount
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Instructional Coaching</li></ul>	Dean of Instruction (Instructional coaching)	43085
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Instructional Coaching</li></ul>	Dean of Instruction (Instructional coaching)	47364
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Instructional Coaching</li></ul>	Dean of Instruction (Instructional coaching)	45809
Total Expenditures			136258

## Professional Development

### Professional Development Action Steps

Evidence-based Strategy	Action Steps
Counseling, school climate interventions (e.g., positive behavior interventions and supports) to improve students' social-emotional skills	Identify students in need of PBIS and/or counseling support. Develop and implement plans that are coordinated with teachers and administrators
Instructional Coaching	Provide rapid instructional skill development to teachers through a variety of instructional coaching approaches (e.g., observation and feedback, modeling, co-teaching, lesson planning, etc)

### Instructional Coaching

Action Step		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide rapid instructional skill development to teachers through a variety of instructional coaching approaches (e.g., observation and feedback, modeling, co-teaching, lesson planning, etc)</li> </ul>		
Audience		
Teachers		
Topics to be Included		
Lesson planning, pedagogical skill development, curricular content delivery, classroom management, analyzing student work, data analysis, positive classroom culture		
Evidence of Learning		
Instructional coaches will observe classroom teachers regularly and collect data aligned to the Catalyst core teaching rubric to assess both the teacher's skill as well as evidence of the impact of various coaching supports provided.		
Lead Person/Position	Anticipated Start	Anticipated Completion
Principal and Deans of Instruction	2024-08-01	2025-06-13

### Learning Format

Type of Activities	Frequency
Coaching (peer-to-peer; school leader-to-teacher; other coaching models)	Every teacher receives development at least once a week
Observation and Practice Framework Met in this Plan	
This Step Meets the Requirements of State Required Trainings	



## Communications Activities

Educate parents on the importance of strong attendance					
Action Step	Audience	Topics to be Included	Type of Communication	Anticipated Timeline Start Date	Anticipated Timeline Completion Date
	Parents/Guardians	Importance of strong attendance for student academic outcomes, state attendance requirements	Principal	08/19/2024	06/13/2025
Communications					
Type of Communication			Frequency		
Presentation			3-5 times per year, e.g. Curriculum Night, Back to School event, parent-teacher conferences		



Educate Parents on MTSS Process					
Action Step	Audience	Topics to be Included	Type of Communication	Anticipated Timeline Start Date	Anticipated Timeline Completion Date
	Guardians and families	What is MTSS? How does my scholar get referred to MTSS? What interventions are available?	Principal	08/19/2024	06/13/2025
Communications					
Type of Communication			Frequency		
Other			Initial presentation, but ongoing communication via letter as students get referred/entered into MTSS		

## Approvals & Signatures

Uploaded Files

Chief School Administrator	Date
Building Principal Signature	Date
School Improvement Facilitator Signature	Date