

**III. PROJECT NARRATIVE**

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**COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 1**

Kansas City Girls Preparatory Academy (KCGPA) respectfully requests consideration under **Competitive Preference Priority 1** – Supporting High-Need Students by Increasing Access to High-Quality Educational Choice. KCGPA plans to serve a student population which as 50% classified as Limited English Proficient, and 15% eligible for Special Education Services. These rates are equal to or greater than the surrounding public school district.

**A. CONTRIBUTION IN ASSISTING EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS**

KCGPA is a new charter school. It will be the first single-gender, open-enrollment charter public school in Kansas City. It will enroll 100 fifth grade girls beginning in Fall 2019 and grow one grade per year to form a 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade middle school and a 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade high school. KCGPA addresses a community need for more opportunities for young women in neighborhoods that have been negatively impacted by de jure and de facto racial segregation.<sup>1</sup> Young women living in Kansas City’s segregated neighborhoods – and especially young women of color – do not have access to equitable educational opportunities.<sup>2</sup>

KCGPA will create a small-school atmosphere, where families, students, and staff will build the close and supportive relationships essential to developing young women who are self-directed, high-achieving, and committed to supporting one another. KCGPA will maintain a small-school atmosphere with a 20:1 teacher to student ratio to support this intentional culture. KCGPA will be an affiliate of the Young Women’s Leadership Network (YWLN), a network of all-girls schools founded to ensure college access for thousands of young women from low-income neighborhoods. In service of its core values of equity, community, and growth, KCGPA will build on YWLN’s model to create a space where young women develop their voice and

build the academic skills and knowledge to go wherever they want in life.

**KCGPA Prioritizes Enrollment of High-Need Students.** To ensure every student can achieve at high levels, KCGPA will partner with families and its community to build a strong network of support for every student. In particular, KCGPA seeks to serve students with special educational needs exceptionally well, including students with disabilities and students who speak a language other than English at home. KCGPA’s program will foster a strong community, confidence-building identity development, and a rigorous, college-bound academic culture.

KCGPA will recruit and serve students within the boundaries of Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS), a high-poverty district that serves students across Kansas City, Missouri. Using demographic data from the Illinois Facilities Fund (IFF),<sup>4</sup> KCGPA will serve the highest-need zip codes within KCPS as defined by the “service gap” between supply of and demand for adequately performing school seats. To achieve its mission of equitable outcomes for young women, KCGPA’s initial and long-term recruitment efforts will ensure that student demographics (e.g. family income, race) and learning needs (e.g. percentage of students with disabilities) reflect those of KCPS. KCGPA will have no tuition or fees, testing or entry requirements, or religious affiliation. KCGPA plans to serve a student population that is at least 95% eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch, 50% classified as Limited English Proficient, and 15% eligible for Special Education Services.

KCGPA will give enrollment preference to students residing in priority zip codes, students who are children of KCGPA employees, and siblings of students previously enrolled in the school provided those students satisfy the residency requirements. KCGPA will not have admission criteria and will accept and meet the needs of all students. KCGPA will take students on a first-come, first-served basis until its enrollment threshold is met. In the event there are

more applications than seats, the school will use a lottery process to give every applicant an equal chance of admission. In order to ensure the school continues to serve its target population over time and in accordance with R.S.Mo 160.410.2(1), KCGPA will provide a geographical enrollment preference to students living in zip codes where statutorily defined “high-risk” factors are prevalent, existing performing school options are limited, and that are within reasonable proximity of the school facility. Students will automatically be enrolled in the next grade level and will not have to reapply for admission. The lottery will not in any way be used to exclusively serve a particular subset of students, per section 4303(c)(3)(A) of the ESEA.

Finally, to maintain enrollment reflective of the broader KCPS district and to achieve its core mission of equity for underserved student populations, KCGPA will proactively recruit and serve diverse learners. KCGPA’s program is designed to develop foundational skills for both students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs) through a combination of intensive, focused literacy development, targeted small-group instruction, personalized learning, and push-in or pull-out support specific to the student’s needs.

**Inequitable Academic and College Readiness Outcomes.** Student achievement remains low for students across KCGPA’s priority zip codes, including both KCPS and area charter schools.<sup>5</sup> Only three schools within KCGPA’s priority zip codes had more than half of students proficient in both English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics in 2016-2017 as measured by the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). Across all primary schools in KCGPA’s priority zip codes in 2016-2017, students scored at an average of 37% at Basic or Proficient in ELA, 26% at Basic or Proficient in mathematics, and 19% at Basic or Proficient in science. In secondary schools, students averaged 36% at Basic or Proficient in ELA, 24% at Basic or Proficient in mathematics, and 18% at Basic or Proficient in science.

For students who take college-entrance exams, scores fall far below requirements for competitive admissions.<sup>6</sup> In terms of college readiness, secondary schools serving KCGPA's priority zip codes had a four-year graduation rate of 64%, average Composite ACT scores of 16 with 83% of graduates taking the ACT in 2016-2017. The average composite scores shows a significant gap in performance as compared to the minimum college-ready standard of a 21.<sup>7</sup>

**Inadequate Teacher and Instructional Leader Development.** One of the most important factors distinguishing high-performing schools is the quality, consistency, and depth of professional development (PD) available for instructional leader and teachers.<sup>8</sup> KCPGA's goal is to build deep capacity and institutional knowledge in its early years so as to ensure that all staff experience continued learning and growth in terms of both their Content Knowledge (CK) and their Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK).<sup>9</sup>

KCGPA recognizes there is a high probability young women living in KCGPA's priority zip codes will be one or more years behind their peers academically. KCGPA is designed to directly address a critical root cause of this consistent low performance: teachers and instructional leaders who are inadequately trained in evidence-based CK and PCK, including support strategies appropriate to high-need student populations.

KCGPA's pre-operational and start-up years will prioritize mastery-focused, Common Core State Standards (CCSS) -aligned PD to ensure educators it recruits, who will come largely from Kansas City area public schools, are prepared to drive transformative learning outcomes for students. The gaps in professional learning typical of teachers and instructional leaders across the Kansas City metro are outlined most clearly in TNTP's *The Mirage*, a study which found very little impact on measurable teacher improvement or year to year or growth in student achievement as a result of most school systems' PD efforts.<sup>10</sup> This grant request seeks funding to

address inequitable academic outcomes through PD for instructional leaders and teachers.

**Community-Grounded Design.** Based on its analysis of available demographic data, KCGPA anticipates serving a linguistically and culturally diverse community and student body. The school will build a strong school community that celebrates its differences, deepens understanding of a variety of cultural traditions, and unites students and families in a strong, mutually supportive network. KCGPA's founding team believes fundamentally this type of community depends on community and family input and feedback on the school's design and implementation. For that reason, KCGPA began holding focus groups, conducting empathy interviews with students and parents, and facilitating community forums over three years in advance of the school's launch. This input, in combination with research and partnership with the YWLN schools and other high-performing urban schools like Valor Collegiate Academies, has significantly influenced the design of the school's plans. A year and a half before launch, KCGPA has also begun a Community Design Collaborative that meets every 4-6 weeks in order to regularly engage community members in the design process. KCGPA has hired two consultants with strong community roots to lead outreach to faith leaders and community organizations. A mother who intends to send her daughter to KCGPA is volunteering as a lead designer of the input and engagement process.

To embed this work in the long-term life of the school, KCGPA will hire a full-time Family and Community Engagement Coordinator (FCEC) by Fall 2018. This role will be responsible for ensuring equity of access to conversations that inform the school design. Through strategic outreach, the FCEC will engage those who are the least likely to have access to school design conversations and meet them where they are, whether that's a church association,

neighborhood meeting, or their own living room. Those families with the least access to strong educational options are the families KCGPA is designed to serve.

The community input KCGPA has gathered has already shaped the school design, including: mission and core values; a disciplinary policy that balances clear expectations and consequences with restorative justice, a highly structured, predictable, and safe environment for students that fosters their growth and responsibility for their behavior; leadership opportunities for students, including a robust student-faculty senate, student management of common areas, and student free times during the day to choose how they will work and collaborate; a focus on science, technology, engineering, and math; and arts programming. Going forward, KCGPA will continue to facilitate the Community Design Collaborative, which will eventually become a Family and Community Advisory Council. It will proactively engage families via media and in-person outreach activities, including regular surveys and focus groups of different sectors of the KCGPA community to gather feedback on how the school is upholding its mission and values.

**Research-Based Design.** In addition to extensive family and community engagement, KCGPA's founding team has adopted a research-based approach to design, which includes:

*Research on high-performing urban public schools.* A rich body of research highlights the attributes these schools use to ensure high levels of achievement for all students, including: (1) scaffolded practices to support ELLs<sup>11</sup> and students with disabilities;<sup>12</sup> (2) high expectations and high support structures<sup>13</sup> for staff culture; student-adult and student-student relationships; clear systems for student culture, engagement, and discipline; personalized instruction based on ongoing assessment and flexible time on task; and an extended school day and year.

*Direct observations of exemplar urban public middle and high schools.* The specific practices of high-performing schools in Kansas City and across the United States have guided the

development of KCGPA's model. Without question, all of these schools exemplify the principles noted above. What stands out most from in-person visits is the quality and intensity of staff development. Teachers experience coherent learning in CK and PCK through cycles of action, reflection, and collaborative learning. All development aligns to CCSS-aligned assessments and curricula. These practices in turn drive student-centered practices that maximize student engagement with CCSS-aligned skills and content. These schools have deeply influenced KCGPA's integrated approach to curriculum, assessment, and staff development, described in Section A.2: Curriculum and Instruction.

*Research on effective strategies for rigorous content and pedagogy.* KCGPA has leveraged this research in formulating its educational philosophy and designing the core elements of the school. KCGPA has also consulted with experts in the field of gender and race theory to customize programming that maximizes identity development for young women. KCGPA's instruction is grounded in seminal academic studies and texts. For example, the school's pedagogical approach is in line with the research underpinning the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). KCGPA's mathematics approach is also grounded in the research underpinning the MLS, including the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics' principles for mathematical teaching and learning. Similarly, Science, Technology, and Engineering content is grounded in research beneath the Next Generation Science Standards.

*Direct experience.* KCGPA's founding team has achieved significant results in areas critical to the success of a high-performing urban public charter school. The team's direct experience has informed its educational philosophy and gives it confidence in its merit.

**Affiliation with the Young Women's Leadership Network.** To ensure success, KCGPA will also leverage its affiliation with the Young Women's Leadership Network

(YWLN), a nonprofit that supports two life-changing programs: The Young Women's Leadership Schools and the College Bound Initiative. In 1996, Kansas City native Ann Tisch founded the U.S.'s first public all-girls school in thirty years, The Young Women's Leadership School of East Harlem. The success of the flagship school has inspired the opening of dozens of single-gender schools nationwide. KCGPA will benefit from affiliation with YWLN, including: (1) onsite support from network experts, including mentoring for school leadership; (2) PD and professional learning communities; (3) academic and advisory curricula; (4) support and guidance in the recruitment and hiring of leadership and staff.

Through its affiliation with YWLN, the School will build upon a proven model that results in high levels of student achievement, including a more than 95% high school graduation rate, a nearly 100% college acceptance rate with the majority accepted into four-year colleges, and a nearly \$20,000 average annual student financial aid package.

**Foundational and Extension Academic Standards.** Because of its college-ready mission, KCGPA will extend beyond Missouri Learning Standards (MLS), which are largely based in the CCSS. It will ultimately align to CCSS, and also leverage Advanced Placement (AP) and ACT College Readiness Standards. Because many students will not yet be proficient in the MLS and CCSS when they enter 5th grade, the MLS and CCSS will therefore occupy a prominent place in grades 5-8, though not to the exclusion of more rigorous standards in preparation for high school. Assessments in grades 9-12 will increasingly align to standards beyond the MLS and CCSS such as ACT College Readiness Standards and AP, with the MLS and CCSS providing the floor of expectations that all students must meet and exceed. Ongoing collaboration among vertical content teams and cross-disciplinary teacher teams will ensure that standards are aligned across grade levels and that students are prepared for college and career.

An 8th grade ELA class can serve to illustrate the impact of using foundational and extension standards. Interim assessments at 8th grade will still largely be aligned to MLS. AP rigor will be introduced through open-ended, AP-aligned tasks requiring students to do close reading and textual analysis with texts at Lexile and qualitative complexity levels above the expectations of the MLS.

**Research-Based Recruitment of High-Need Students.** KCGPA is motivated by the commitment to provide excellent schools that are rooted in the community it serves. KCGPA will invest in significant community outreach to develop partnerships designed to reach the families most in need of strong educational options, to inform the educational model based on the needs expressed by members of the community, and to provide additional services that will help prepare students for success in college and career.

KCGPA recognizes that there are many families that may not learn about KCGPA without proactive communication. KCGPA will actively publicize its program through a variety of media and means, beginning no later than August 2018. These efforts will be led by a Family and Community Engagement Coordinator (FCEC) who will be hired full-time in Fall 2018. The FCEC will have a significant budget allocation – roughly \$35,000 – to support advertising and outreach in the pre-opening year to ensure that KCGPA connects with families who will most benefit from its services and meets its enrollment targets.

KCGPA's research strategy is based on work from the Annenberg Institute on School Reform at Brown University, which recommends the following practices: (1) door knocking in surrounding neighborhoods; (2) reaching out to parents, students and community members through after-school and neighborhood programs; (3) reaching out to parent-teacher associations; (4) organizing neighborhood walks to meet families; (5) reaching out to young people through

community-based organizations; and, (6) reaching out to partner organizations and connectors.<sup>14</sup>

**KCGPA Will Proactively Retain Students and Address Inequities in Disciplinary Referrals.** KCGPA has devoted considerable attention to creating a program to which students and families can commit for eight years. Structures such as regular progress reports, consistent family communication by advisors, a Child Study Team referral process, social, emotional, and organizational support in advisories, a culturally relevant college prep school culture, and strong relationships with at least one adult are all intended to maximize the probability that a student and her family will remain with KCGPA through graduation.

KCGPA will also provide regularly scheduled, highly focused family engagement opportunities to make the school a friendly and useful place for students and families. KCGPA will also prioritize selection and support for teachers and leaders who are passionate about building true community with families. KCGPA believes strongly in engaging its school community and that what holds a community together is not compliance mere with rules but the maintenance of healthy relationships. For young women to truly find their voice, KCGPA will ground its cultural practices in the work of the highest-performing YWLN schools.

KCGPA's culture will focus on supporting every student to develop to her fullest potential by constantly asking: how can staff maximize young women's long-term development? To answer this question, staff will operate with the assumption that culture breaches and misbehaviors stem not from a lack of will, but from a lack of awareness, knowledge, or skill in effectively meeting one's needs, solving problems, or self-regulating a behavior.<sup>15</sup>

KCGPA will therefore take a teaching and learning oriented approach to student discipline that recognizes that punishment tends much more to suppress behavior than to change it in the long term. KCGPA administrators and teachers will not permit misbehaviors to derail

learning; nor will they permit a short-term, control-focused discipline model to obscure each young woman's potential to self-regulate her behavior with the right relationships and support. KCGPA will avoid discipline that excludes students from instruction whenever possible because students often miss the opportunity to explore new behaviors and may miss instruction.

**Transportation to Ensure Equitable Access.** To fulfil its mission of equitable access for all students to an excellent education, KCGPA will provide transportation to all students in its priority zip codes. KCGPA will provide transportation for students whose IEP requires accommodations and students who are homeless. KCGPA will align its level of service to KCPS.

**Compliance with Federal and State Statute, Including Title IX.** As a single-gender school, KCGPA's Board has carefully reviewed applicable federal and state nondiscrimination law, including the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The Missouri General Assembly amended the State's laws governing charter school admissions in 2012 to allow single-sex charter schools, provided enrollment in the school is voluntary. Missouri charter schools are free and open to all students who are residents of the school district in which the charter school is located and students who are eligible to attend schools in that district under a voluntary desegregation program (R.S. MO §160.410). KCGPA will be free of any tuition or fees and open to female students who are eligible to attend Kansas City Public Schools.

## **B. PROJECT DESIGN**

**Project Goals.** KCGPA will use grant funds to support three key goals. First, KCGPA will adopt research-based, CCSS-aligned curricula to ensure the foundations of a guaranteed and viable curriculum are in place for all students. Second, KCGPA will use those curricula to drive CCSS-aligned Content Knowledge (CK) and Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) for all

staff. Finally, staff will use their curriculum and developmental experiences to dramatically increase high-need students’ achievement in terms of growth and proficiency. These goals will be driven, each in turn, by an intensive curriculum research process, an ongoing and integrated process of curriculum internalization and refinement to develop staff’s CK and PCK. Students will experience an inclusive, highly supportive, and CCSS-aligned learning progression to support rapid academic improvement.

Because KCGPA’s program is focused on mastery, please note that these goals include the expectation that teachers will reteach content that has not been previously mastered based on student performance on CCSS-aligned assessments. For example, if entering 5<sup>th</sup> grades students have not yet mastered 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level place value standards (e.g. CCSS.Math.Content.3.Number and Operations in Base Ten.A: Use place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic), KCGPA staff will use their CCSS-aligned curricular tools and training to reteach this critical content and connect it to 5<sup>th</sup> grade level standards.

**Logic Model**

<b>Goal 1: Adopt research-based, CCSS-aligned curricula.</b>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
1.1: Select CCSS-aligned curricula and assessments for all content areas	1.1: Research curricula	1.1: By November 16, 2018, a curriculum evaluation document will provide clear recommendations for curriculum procurement in all content areas.
	1.2: Procure curricula	1.2: By January 1, 2019, all curricula will be available to all staff.
<b>Goal 2: Develop teacher and instructional leader CK and PCK while simultaneously improving curricula by integrating PD with CCSS-aligned curricula.</b>		

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
2.1 Staff internalize CK and PCK	2.1: Pre-assessment of CK and PCK	2.1: 100% of new hires complete and reflect on the Knowledge and Practice Survey and an AP (or similar) assessment for their content area
	2.3: External PD and Internal Cycles of Professional Learning	2.3.1: 100% of instructional leaders and teachers demonstrate at least 80% proficiency on Post-Assessments. 2.3.2: 100% of classes have a CCSS-aligned curriculum as measured by Student Achievement Partners' Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool.
	2.4: Post-assessment of CK and PCK	2.3: 100% of staff complete and reflect on a Knowledge and Practice Survey and an AP (or similar) assessment for their content area.
<b>Goal 3: Increase high-need students' achievement on CCSS-aligned assessments.</b>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
3.1: Students grow on norm-referenced assessments.	3.1 and 3.2: CCSS-aligned, Inclusive instructional model	3.1: Students enrolled at KCGPA by September 1 of each academic year will achieve an average of at least 1.25 years of annual academic growth as measured by multiple administrations of a nationally norm-referenced assessment (e.g. NWEA MAP).
3.2: Students demonstrate		3.2.1: At least 75% percent of students enrolled at KCGPA for three consecutive years will achieve

proficiency on CCSS-aligned assessments.		Proficient or Advanced status in all assessed subjects on the Missouri Assessment Program.
		3.2.2: At least 75% of students enrolled at KCGPA for three consecutive years will demonstrate mastery as measured by multiple administrations of nationally criterion-referenced assessments.
3.3: Students classified as Limited English Proficient increase English language proficiency.	3.3 and 3.4: Co-teaching, small-group instruction, tutoring, and personalized learning	3.3: At least 75% of students classified as Limited English Proficient will be reclassified as Former Limited English Proficient by the end of their third year at KCGPA, with the exception of Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education or Level 1 students, who will be reclassified by the end of their fifth year at KCGPA.
3.4: Students with disabilities achieve IEP goals.		3.4: At least 90% of students with IEPs will achieve 90% of annual IEP goals.

**Goal 1: Research-Based, CCSS-Aligned Curricula.** KCGPA believes fundamentally in the power of a growth mindset and an excitement in the constant journey to learn and grow. This belief is grounded in the research of Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck, who has shown that a strong growth mindset can be more predictive of success in life outcomes than a high IQ.<sup>16</sup> She defines a fixed mindset as a belief that “basic qualities, like... intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits.” People with this mindset “spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent

instead of developing them.” This contrasts with a growth mindset, wherein “people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work... [which] creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.”

To strengthen this growth mindset, KCGPA will provide a highly rigorous and highly supportive program grounded in a standards-based grading system. Carol Ann Tomlinson and Jay McTighe define this as grading that focuses on “measuring students’ proficiency on well-defined course objectives”<sup>17</sup> rather than traditional letter grades that can obscure the actual learning students are attaining. KCGPA’s standards-based grading system will include:<sup>18</sup> (1) Alignment to clear learning goals and criterion or proficiency-based performance standards; (2) Goals and criteria that are available ahead of time; (3) Pre-selected assessments (tests, quizzes, projects, etc.) used for grading purposes; (4) Emphasis on the most recent evidence of learning when grading; and (5) Separation of achievement from effort/behavior.

KCGPA’s standards-based grading system will help families, teachers, and young women focus on learning as the ultimate measure of success. It will reinforce the core value of growth through expectations of constant revision and improvement until mastery is achieved. KCGPA will monitor key data points like attendance, homework, and non-academic measures of success. These will be included in weekly progress reports and celebrated across the school to ensure all stakeholders understand the critical role that these inputs play in students’ learning and growth.

To provide a guaranteed and viable program that is inclusive and supportive of high-need students, KCGPA will adopt research-based, CCSS-aligned curricula. KCGPA recognizes that the choice and implementation of curricula is fundamental to teacher and student success. Chingos and Whitehurst state that “the choice of instructional materials has large effects on student learning—effects that rival in size those that are associated with differences in teacher

effectiveness.”<sup>19</sup> This section overviews instructional models, pedagogical approaches, and curriculum choices, then discusses the role those elements play in staff development.

KCGPA’s curriculum will be designed to meet the educational needs of young women with unlimited potential who will likely come to KCGPA one or more years behind grade level. Students will encompass a broad spectrum of needs for academic development, ranging from students who struggle with and dislike school, to students who have immigrated as refugees with little or no formal schooling, to students who are above grade level and hungry for more challenge. To ensure that students will graduate on a successful path to college, KCGPA divides its approach to curriculum into two phases:

- In grades 5-8, curricula will emphasize the mastery of core academic standards with a strong focus in literacy, numeracy, and Social and Emotional Learning. Curricula will simultaneously build foundations while also preparing students for the intellectual demands of a college preparatory high school program.
- In grades 9-12, curricula will become increasingly specialized and content-driven in preparation for success in Advanced Placement classes and advanced learning opportunities such as internships or early college classes.

The limited time KCGPA will have to prepare students to succeed in college and beyond requires a strong curriculum design process in the school’s pre-opening year. The founding team will use this time to research and gather materials from the nation’s highest performing schools and focus intensely on iterating them to best suit the needs of the young women KCGPA seeks to serve. KCGPA will approach curriculum design through the lens of backwards design, aiming to ensure fully articulated sequences of learning exist for 5<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade prior to launch.

As KCGPA grows, all grade levels, including high school, will have curriculum planned

well in advance of their launch. This is an important reason for the early hire of key instructional leaders. KCGPA will prepare for the added complexity of high school curricular planning by continuing to engage all staff in significant development that supports effective planning, such as AP Institutes or participation in training with the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

KCGPA will provide teachers with full curricular resources, including a scope and sequence for each subject in each grade, detailed syllabi for each course listing the skills and concepts to be mastered, and a database of unit and daily lesson plans that account for days for re-teaching standards on which students are struggling, thus allowing the scope and sequence to be adjusted by each teacher to meet students' needs. KCGPA will provide teachers with Destination Assessments, proven source materials, catalogues of effective strategies, and ample time throughout the year for curriculum adaptation and refinement. Providing the founding staff with this high level of support will allow them to focus on addressing students' needs from the very first day of school.

On an annual basis, KCGPA's staff will review student achievement data, including MAP scores, to determine how to improve the curriculum. The team will compare results to goals to determine whether curricula are effectively supporting fulfillment of the school's mission. Analysis will look at data trends across the entire school, as well as by specific subgroups of the student population. Teachers will use this analysis to make curricular adjustments through collaboration with one another and instructional leaders that emphasizes research and refinement rather than creation.

Beyond this annual, formal revision process, curriculum development will occur through weekly cycles of curriculum internalization and adaptation that will both drive staff development and address student needs. These processes are discussed in the following section.

**Goal 2: Integrated Curriculum and Staff Development.** As Robert Marzano argues, for KCGPA’s curricula to truly be “guaranteed and viable,” KCGPA must plan proactively to close the gaps that so often emerge between what is intended, what is implemented by teachers, and what is actually attained by students.<sup>20</sup> A critical goal of curriculum development will therefore be to build teachers and leaders’ capacity to systematically plan and adjust instruction in order to close the gap between intended and attained levels of learning. KCGPA leaders and teachers will continually assess this gap via the Cycles of Professional Learning detailed below. In so doing, KCGPA’s curricula will build teacher and leader capacity by: (1) Developing staff’s CK and PCK through internalization of curricula; (2) Ensuring staff can see and leverage vertical alignment and interdisciplinary connections; and (3) Maximizing staff time focused on intellectual preparation and anticipating student needs rather than developing curricula.

KCGPA’s curricula will not function alone in building staff capacity in these ways. The curricula will work together with standards and assessments that define learning outcomes and student work that reveals levels of attainment. Staff must routinely connect these resources to assess effectiveness and adjust. KCGPA will therefore ground nearly all development in standards, assessments, curriculum, and student work. Staff will use these resources to develop deep and nuanced connections between academic skills and knowledge and the priority needs of the young women they serve. This approach is inspired by the framework below from Educational Resource Strategies (ERS), a nonprofit that is a national leader in addressing the challenges described in *The Mirage*, a study which found very little impact on student achievement as a result of most school systems’ PD efforts.<sup>21</sup>

<b>Framework for Curriculum-Driven Professional Learning</b>	
<b>Component</b>	<b>Description</b>

Rigorous, Comprehensive Curricula and Assessments	Ensure all schools have access to rigorous and coherent curricula, assessments, and instructional resources aligned to College- and Career-Ready Standards. (1) Broad and deep instructional resources; (2) Carefully vetted; (3) Designed for teacher adaptation; (4) Continuously improved
Content- Focused, Expert-Led Collaboration	Organize teachers into teams, led by content experts, that have the time, support, and culture of trust and learning to collaborate on instruction. (1) Shared-content teams; (2) Sufficient time; (3) Leadership by content experts; (4) Agendas, protocols, tools, and data; (5) Culture of trust and agency
Frequent, Growth- Oriented Feedback	Provide regular feedback from content experts that is focused on helping teachers improve instructional practice. (1) Personalized attention from coaches; (2) Sufficient time for observation and feedback; (3) Support for content experts

KCGPA seeks to address the first component of this framework through the selection and ongoing development of CCSS-aligned curricula. KCGPA will use PD processes to address the second and third components, closing the gap between the intended and attained curricula.

*Internalization of the CCSS before instruction.* KCGPA will provide teachers with development and time for collaboration to unpack the CCSS and identify intended learning outcomes. During the launch year, teachers will begin this work as early as January 2019 (as consultants) and no later than May 2019. A deep understanding of the arc of learning and connections across years will be critical for effective planning and differentiation. For example, in 5th grade math, teachers will examine standards across grades through the lens of rigor (conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application) via close study of MLS. Teachers will leverage resources like the CCSS Mathematical Progressions<sup>21</sup> and Student

Achievement Partners' *Coherence Map*<sup>22</sup> to envision clear progressions of knowledge and skill as they: (1) Read the language of the standard and connecting standards in prior and upcoming grade levels; (2) Annotate and consider precisely what the standard asks students to know and do; and (3) Identify the key knowledge and academic skills needed to demonstrate mastery.

*Internalization of assessments and adaptation of curricula before instruction.* Once teachers have used standards to see a coherent vision of learning progressions, they must have time to analyze actual assessments to build more nuanced expectations for student mastery at the appropriate level of rigor.<sup>23</sup> Teachers will build on their work of internalizing standards by engaging in the following activities: (1) Complete Destination Assessments, including those for one's own grade and other key benchmarks in other grades to ensure vertical alignment; (2) Create and/or analyze exemplars of student responses to Destination Assessment items; (3) Identify connections between the language of the standard and assessment items; (4) Map required knowledge, skills, and thinking processes into concrete learning objectives; (5) Compare the standards and assessments with existing curricular resources; and (6) Adapt curricular resources to fully align with MLS expectations and anticipated student needs

*Internalization and adaptation of curricula during instruction via Cycles of Professional Learning (CPLs).* As instruction occurs, teachers will engage in ongoing cycles of curriculum and lesson study in vertical content teams. In the first few years, when these teams will still be smaller, leaders and consultants will represent the perspective of upper-grade teachers and curriculum and assessment resources. This structure is grounded in the work of researchers like Liping Ma<sup>24</sup> and Helen Timperley<sup>25</sup> and represents the heart of ongoing teacher content learning. Content teams will include teachers responsible for students with disabilities and ELLs. Teachers will examine their curriculum concurrently with analysis of student assessments to determine

gaps in student skills and knowledge. Teacher teams will pair this analysis with reflection on their own practices and intensive study of relevant knowledge and pedagogical skill-building resources. This process will ensure teachers bridge the gap between grade level expectations and current student performance by: (1) Deepening content and pedagogical knowledge via study of curriculum and best practices; (2) Identifying student needs via analysis of student work; and (3) Modifying curricula via collaborative planning that addresses student needs. CPLs will be driven by curriculum, assessment, and student work and occur in the structures below:

- *Interim assessments (IAs)*. IAs will occur every six to eight weeks to provide clear benchmarks for measuring progress. Grade level and subject matter data will be analyzed by instructional leaders, teachers, and expert consultants from The Achievement Network. Teachers will compare their students' performance to goals and to other high-performing urban schools in order to identify areas where reteach lessons and other interventions are necessary to ensure student mastery. For more information, please see Section A.3: Assessing Student Performance.
- *Weekly content team meetings*. Content teams will engage in curriculum internalization protocols, analysis of student work, and shared learning to improve their own practice. For example, a team of ELA teachers might engage in internalization protocols that involve reading standards and curricular materials, completing and reflecting on key tasks, and debriefing together the choices made by curriculum writers. After looking at student work, they may see that students are struggling to write using the Tier 2 vocabulary they taught. To enhance their knowledge and skills before developing a reteach plan, the team of teachers may study best practices for academic vocabulary instruction in a text like Doug Lemov's *Reading Reconsidered*, engage in shared planning activities, and practice

instructional delivery techniques together.

- *Weekly instructional rounds.* Following up on learning goals identified in content team meetings, instructional leaders and teachers will engage in instructional rounds together. This will support ongoing calibration of expectations, teacher capacity development, and planning and coaching focused on the highest-leverage areas for student growth.
- *Weekly, data-based cycles of observation and feedback for individual teachers.* KCGPA will use Relay Graduate School of Education's systems for teacher observation and feedback. These are inspired in part by approaches articulated in Diane Sweeney's *Student-Centered Coaching* and Paul Bambrick-Santoyo's *Leverage Leadership*. Teacher observation and feedback will be centered in evidence of student and teacher practice. For example, exit ticket data will be analyzed during coaching sessions (as appropriate) and potentially be used to discuss next steps and re-teaching. Coaches and teachers will use this evidence to articulate individual teacher goals to most rapidly advance student learning. They will co-plan and practice together to ensure mastery of those goals. Coaches will also support teachers with co-planning and feedback on curriculum, unit, and lesson plans.
- *Co-planning and coaching using daily formative assessments for individual teachers.* KCGPA will collect data daily so teachers can immediately respond to any skill set not mastered. At the end of each class, students will complete an exit ticket assessing class objectives. Teachers will be trained in data driven instruction and effective comprehension monitoring to immediately adjust instruction to ensure students fully grasp the material.

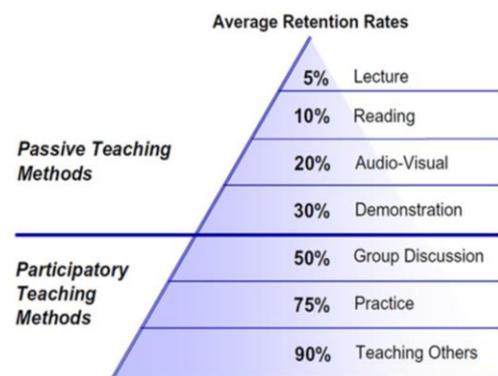
These structures will provide the foundation for teachers and leaders to address their own and their students' learning needs while simultaneously improving curricula. KCGPA believes that external experts can significantly improve staff's bar of expectations, knowledge, and skills

as they engage in this work. KCGPA will engage a network of external experts to support staff development, including active collaboration with YWLN and other high-performing urban schools, Achievement Network, consultants with content-specific expertise (e.g. a math curriculum consultant), The Fellowship for Race and Equity in Education, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Relay Graduate School of Education, Student Achievement Partners, Teach like a Champion’s Train the Trainer programming, UnboundEd’s Standards Institutes, and UChicago STEP Literacy Programming.

**Goal 3: Increase achievement on CCSS-aligned assessments.** KCGPA’s overall instructional philosophy will be consistent across all classrooms. KCGPA believes all students can learn at high levels, and it is therefore critical that staff collaborate to internalize and apply research-based practices that benefit all students, especially students with disabilities and ELLs.

KCGPA will support consistency and vertical alignment by grounding all instruction in common curricula and a data-driven, “assessment for learning” approach. To ensure clear intended learning outcomes, KCGPA will use benchmark “Destination Assessments.” These assessments will focus teachers and students on essential knowledge and skills while providing data for instructional improvement. They will fall into two categories: external assessments (e.g. NWEA MAP) and internal assessments (e.g. ACT-aligned interims or an essay). Section A.3: Assessing Student Performance provides additional detail.

To prepare students for the rigor of these Destination Assessments, KCGPA will engage students in a continuum of participatory teaching methods, outlined in the graphic at right.<sup>26</sup> To support these participatory methods, KCGPA will use instructional models to ensure



all students develop a thorough grounding in content and skills with the goal of application and synthesis via discussion, practice, and collaborative learning. Teachers will choose from the following instructional models based on need, standards, and the Destination Assessment rigor.

- *Whole Group Direct Instruction.* Students will learn foundational skills and knowledge in heterogeneous groups, guided by the facilitation of a teacher and/or co-teachers.
- *Small Group Direct Instruction.* Students will learn in homogenous groups to address skills or knowledge that are particular to the needs of that group. This structure will be especially important for the rapid development of literacy and numeracy foundations as well as for targeted support of students with disabilities and ELLs.<sup>27</sup>
- *Personalized Learning.* Students will drive their own learning through goal-setting and independent practice.<sup>28</sup> This structure will: (1) Maximize students' autonomy and ownership of learning, which is especially helpful for students with special needs to develop their wayfinding and executive functions; (2) Maximize students' ability to monitor their own progress; (3) Create flexible opportunities for students to get lots of "at bats" with knowledge and skills they have not yet mastered and (4) Leverage teachers for higher order conceptual and shared learning rather than relatively mundane tasks like generating and tracking student progress on a math problem set.
- *Collaborative Learning.* Students will collaborate with others to drive their collective learning, build habits of discussion, and practice for application-level assessments and expeditions.
- *Tutoring.* KCGPA will develop partnerships with nonprofits, businesses, and/or universities to offer a high volume of individual tutoring services to students.

**Mastery-Focused Pedagogy.** KCGPA will develop teachers in universal pedagogical

principles that ensure high engagement, support, and rigor whether in whole group or personalized instructional models. The following strategies are prioritized to ensure that students with disabilities, students with limited English language proficiency, and students “at-risk” of academic failure meet the high standards that are set at KCGPA.

*Help Students Until They Master It.* Students learn at varying rates. KCGPA believes in Growth and the potential of all students to meet high standards. KCGPA will therefore be prepared to support students regardless of the pace at or style in which they learn until they reach mastery, via: (1) Clear, engaging, high-quality lessons fostered by a low student to teacher ratio; (2) Station rotations through small group, collaborative, and personalized learning models; (3) Pull-out and push-in support from Learning Support Specialists for students with disabilities and ELLs; (4) Extended block schedule that allow for sustained practice before shifting to a new cognitive task; (5) Increased learning time relative to traditional schools; (6) Additional services such as counseling, speech, and occupational and physical therapy; and (7) Tutoring.

*Caring Relationships.* Feeling known, cared for, and respected is a prerequisite to the sense of personal value and well-being necessary for learning. To maintain a “small feel” and develop an intentional community, KCGPA will operate as distinct middle and high school academies, each employing a strong daily advisory structure to foster a feeling of belonging in a tight-knit community. Staff will have ample time and support for building relationships with students. Together, students and staff will meet challenges and come to see that with shared, hard work they can surpass any obstacle.

*Help students envision a bright, inspiring future.* Research indicates that children who have a clear and positive image of their futures are better able to overcome the hurdles that being born into low-income communities can place before them.<sup>29</sup> KCGPA will continuously engage

students in college and career learning opportunities to ensure they internalize an equitable vision of their own future and the growth mindset to connect their work at KCGPA to the development of knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in these institutions. This message will be reinforced through: (1) Frequent learning about and reference to inspiring leaders, universities, and career paths; (2) Connections with speakers, mentors, and tutors from universities and area businesses; (3) Field trips to museums, local and national parks, and universities; and (4) Expeditions, internships, and study abroad programs.

*Foundational Texts to Ensure Equitable Pedagogical Practices.* All KCGPA's teachers will be developed using Zaretta Hammond's *Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain* and Aida Walqui and Leo van Lier's *Scaffolding the Academic Success of Adolescent English Language Learners*, both during summer PD and throughout the year. These texts provide a strong grounding in principles of teaching and learning that drive equitable communities and outcomes. Teachers will also leverage tools described in the *Teach Like a Champion* taxonomy to support high levels of cognitive engagement.

*Provide Structure and Order.* KCGPA believes that all students have a right to a safe and orderly school. Creating an environment in which teachers can focus on students' priority needs and students can focus on learning and mutual support is essential to our mission. We will therefore hold students to high, clear expectations for academics and behavior. Please see Section A.8: Culture and Climate for more detail.

**Serving Students with Special Needs.** KCGPA believes that young women with special learning needs have incredible strengths to offer to the school community and to be leveraged in their own growth. KCGPA rejects the deficit-based beliefs that are often attached to a variety of student classifications. KCGPA's founding team has seen firsthand the incredible levels of

commitment, growth, and leadership of which all students are capable. The school will provide exemplary service to all students with special learning needs, will ensure a free appropriate public education in accordance with part B of IDEA, and fully expects to see unparalleled growth and contributions to the school community from them.

KCGPA believes – and research repeatedly demonstrates<sup>30</sup> – that every classroom should be an environment which is inclusive of the educational needs of all children. KCGPA has structured its foundational approaches to curriculum, instruction, and assessment accordingly. Further, KCGPA believes that a continuum of services must be available through the school so that all students can participate fully in all programming.

Inclusion at KCGPA will be based on a co-teaching model. Within the inclusive classroom, core content teachers, Learning Support Specialists (LSS) for ESL and Special Education (SPED), and Paras/Aides will collaborate to deliver instruction together. Co-teaching will be designed to maximize the talents of all educators and to present co-teachers as having equal knowledge and authority. Co-teachers will have clearly defined roles that clarify how often they meet to collaborate, when materials will be created or modified, to what extent they co-plan, and how to best divide instruction within a lesson. Generally, the core content teacher will be responsible for delivering CCSS-aligned content and collaborating with the LSSs and Paras/Aides to design accommodations and modifications. The LSSs will be responsible for making changes to the lesson plan and classroom materials to scaffold instruction for ELLs and implement IEPs for students with disabilities. All teachers will be trained in effective co-teaching strategies and provided with ongoing support to maximize the impact of co-teaching.

Inclusive learning honors the diversity of young women's cultural, intellectual, physical, and social and emotional backgrounds, and provides educational supports and opportunities that

remove barriers to learning and enables full participation in the school program. Each student feels that she is a valued member of the school community and is provided the resources to realize her full potential. Inclusive Learning practices include:

*Sheltered Content Instruction (SCI)*. To accommodate the linguistic and cultural diversity of its student population, KCGPA will use an inclusive educational model that integrates SCI into all phases of student learning experiences. Research shows that SCI leads to increased student performance among ELLs.<sup>31</sup> Sheltered content instruction will include

- *Design and Plan*. Content and language objectives are accessible and supplementary materials are available to support student learning.
- *Build background knowledge*. Academic concepts are explicitly linked to students' backgrounds and previous learning, and key vocabulary is emphasized using multi-modal approaches such as visual and auditory cues.
- *Build comprehension*. Teacher uses language structures and body language/gestures to ensure comprehension and uses concept-building strategies.
- *Interactions*. Students can discuss concepts with peers and wait-time is consistently built into classroom routines.
- *Practice and Application*: Students have opportunities to consistently apply concepts and language using reading, writing, and listening strategies.
- *Lesson delivery*: Learning is appropriately paced, active, and student-centered.
- *Review and Assessment*: Teachers consistently use a variety of ways to assess student comprehension and mastery of learning.

*Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum*. Every teacher will see themselves as a reading and writing teacher, and will engage in deep, ongoing PD to ensure that they have the

knowledge and skills to be effective. Students need to read and write in a variety of contexts inclusive of discipline-specific language. Teachers will provide frequent practice for students to use a common set of reading and writing strategies along with discipline-specific supports.

*Collaboration focused on student work and student needs.* Department and grade level teams and whole-staff PD will include consistent use of protocols to analyze student work. Teachers will engage with the actual work of their students to identify precise areas of need and to share and learn from each other's expertise in differentiating instruction to address varying student needs.

*Block scheduling.* Extended classes allow teachers to develop deep understanding of individual student's strengths and needs.<sup>32</sup> This approach, combined with an average of 85 minutes of collaborative planning time each day, provides time for teachers to get to know their students and design lessons that explore the full conceptual depth of any topic they are teaching.

Ultimately, KCGPA believes that the greatest responsibility for successfully educating students with disabilities and with language needs lies within the core classroom. Through PD and collaborative support, teachers will receive extensive development on effective intervention strategies targeted towards students' greatest needs. These school-wide structures are the first step in meeting the needs of students performing below or above grade level. Additional supports are introduced for students who are performing more than one level below or above her actual grade level, are not meeting standards in one or more core subjects, or have persistent challenges with academic or behavioral expectations.

**Serving Students with Disabilities.** *Relevant legal frameworks.* KCGPA will adhere to national and state policies regarding special education identification and accommodations: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B, Americans with Disabilities Act Title

II, Rehabilitation Act Section 504, and applicable Missouri statutes, primarily sections 162.670 to 162.710. In compliance with Federal law, KCGPA will annually submit to DESE a local compliance plan that indicates how a free and appropriate public education will be provided to children with disabilities. The School will comply with the local compliance plan, the state plan, and state and federal laws and federal regulations. KCGPA will serve all students regardless of ability and will comply with all state and federal statutes, including Title II of the ADA, the IDEA, and Section 504. KCGPA will educate students with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and with their nondisabled peers, to the extent appropriate and allowed by each student's IEP. The school will not discriminate in admission or enrollment against students having or suspected of having disabilities.

All students with special service needs will be identified in accordance with Child Find requirements (34 CFR §300.125). KCGPA will conduct a full and individual initial evaluation, in accordance with 34 CFR §300.305 and 34 CFR §300.306, before the initial provision of special education and related services to a student. If a determination is made that a child has a disability requiring special education and related services, an Individualized Education Program or IEP will be developed for the child in accordance with 34 CFR §300.320. The IEP will be in effect at the beginning of the school year and will be reviewed and revised periodically, and at a minimum annually. The IEP Team for each child with a disability shall include all individuals specified in 34 CFR §300.321. In addition, KCGPA will provide transportation for students requiring special education services in compliance with 34 CFR §300.323.

*Special education processes and procedures.* To ensure that all students' needs are well met, KCGPA will hire teaching staff who have the appropriate special education licensure. KCGPA will hire a Director of Student Support (DSS) with experience leading effective special

education programs to work closely with leaders, teachers, and students to provide accommodations and modifications as needed. The DSS will also oversee the inclusion program by supporting teams of co-teachers, observing co-teaching, and giving feedback on accommodations that are made to classroom materials. The DSS will also maintain records and ensure that all staff meets the needs of all students with disabilities.

*Identifying students with disabilities, IEP development and implementation.* Upon enrollment, families will complete questionnaires to identify if their child has received special education services or has been diagnosed as having a disability. Once students are enrolled in the school, the DSS will communicate with families whose students are already receiving special education services. The staff will implement existing IEPs and provide an appropriate education in the LRE. If a student with an IEP is not making effective progress, the special educator will convene appropriate stakeholders and, if appropriate and only with parent consent, the team will make changes to the IEP.

KCGPA will use a Child Study Team (CST), a small team of licensed special and general education teachers, to respond to the specific learning needs of all students in the general education classroom, provide continuous support, and, when appropriate, evaluate students for special education services. The CST is engaged after initial academic or behavioral concerns for a student are raised by a teacher or parent/guardian. If a teacher raises the concern, s/he completes a CST referral form and the student's parent/guardians are informed. The CST meets to evaluate the student's classroom performance and prescribes an intervention to address the obstacle(s) to academic success. Through this process, the CST creates a comprehensive plan that includes strategies and structures for staff to employ. Over the next 3-10 weeks, members of the CST periodically observe the implementation of the plan and reconvene to evaluate its

effectiveness. The plan generally will provide for increasingly scaffolded interventions, beginning in the general classroom setting, then small-group settings, and finally in one-to-one settings. The CST uses observation and assessment data to decide which strategies and interventions to continue, modify, and discontinue. If the adjusted plan is effective, the CST continues its ongoing monitoring, evaluation and adjustments. If the plan is not effective, the CST will consider referring the student to an outside resource for more specialized evaluation.

When an evaluation indicates evidence of a disability and that special education services are appropriate, an IEP team consisting of the parents, DSS, a regular education teacher, and the student (if age and developmentally appropriate) will develop an IEP for the student and special education services will be provided. All IEPs will be evaluated annually and revised as needed by the IEP team. All students receiving special education services will be reevaluated at least once every three years.

*Instructional Models.* KCGPA will serve students with disabilities within an inclusive co-teaching model to the greatest extent appropriate. KCGPA believes students with disabilities benefit from additional adult support, and there are significant benefits of two teachers collaborating to plan and deliver high quality instruction. Some of these structures include a clear deadline by which the general education teacher provides the special education teacher with materials that need to be modified for each student with an IEP and a built-in time for co-teachers to meet with the DSS to discuss achievement data of students with disabilities. Each teacher will be responsible for implementing the IEPs of all students in their classes and seeking support in implementation when necessary. Staff PD will support this approach.

KCGPA anticipates serving a significant range of student needs, including multi-handicap, autistic and mildly cognitively-impaired students. In cases where these students' IEPs

dictate the need for a low teacher-to-student ratio or alternative curriculum, it may be necessary to place them in substantially separate classroom settings. KCGPA will directly operate all facets of its special education program and will be responsible for evaluating and hiring staff to meet the needs of all students. KCGPA will rely on three primary instructional models:

- *Full inclusion.* A student attends general education classes all day and receives accommodated and/or modified instruction and instructional materials by a special education certified teacher or Para/Aide in accordance with the IEP.
- *Substantial inclusion.* A student attends mostly general education classes but also receives accommodated and/or modified small group and individual instruction in a separate setting by a special education certified teacher or Para/Aide in accordance with the IEP.
- *Substantially-separate.* A student receives modified instruction in a small group or individual setting apart from the general education population by a special education certified teacher or Special Education Aide in accordance with the IEP.

Instructional methods will be developed and revised for students through ongoing teacher communication, are dependent on each student's specific disability, and can be used in each of the full inclusion, substantial inclusion, or substantially-separate classrooms. Methods include, but are not limited to, the methods outlined in Appendix A.6.1: Instructional Methods for Specific Disabilities. KCGPA is committed to meeting all goals identified in IEPs.

*Evaluation of special education program.* KCGPA will formally evaluate its special education programming every spring. During this time, KCGPA's school leader and DSS will review student performance in the school's special education program, including individual student progress towards yearly IEP goals, including progress reports, report cards, monitor

reports from special education teachers, and statewide assessments. The results of this analysis will inform programmatic revisions, including PD, to better ensure that students are making progress towards IEP and academic goals.

*Special education staffing.* The following table overviews the staffing profile that KCGPA is assuming. The number of staff and percentage of time spent by grade level will depend upon enrolled students' needs. KCGPA currently anticipates needing at least one full-time Learning Support Specialist and one full-time Special Education Para/Aide per grade level.

- *Director of Student Support (DSS).* Monitors and assesses all students with disabilities and ELL support programs, manages all special education staff and the CST, develops all staff via PD. Requires Master's Degree, ESL certification, and 5 years students with disabilities and ESL teaching experience.
- *Learning Support Specialist (SPED) - Inclusion.* Designs and implements curricular accommodations and modifications required by IEPs, manages IEP review and evaluation process for students. Requires SPED certification.
- *Learning Support Specialist (SPED) - Substantially-Separate.* Designs and implements specialized curricular accommodations and modifications required by IEPs, manages IEP review and evaluation process for students. Requires SPED certification with focus on specific disability.
- *Special Education Para/Aide.* Assists special education teachers to ensure IEP compliance. Requires relevant child-care experience and references.

Specific positions and the proportion of each position's time that will be dedicated to SPED instruction may vary from original projections based on the needs that will be served. In cases where an IEP requires specialized services not offered by KCGPA's special education

staff, such as speech, physical and occupational therapy, the school will contract with external providers. KCGPA's founding team stands ready to make budgetary adjustments depending on the actual need for such services.

**Serving Students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).** *Relevant legal frameworks.*

KCGPA anticipates that roughly half of students will need support in developing English language proficiency. KCGPA will adhere to national and state policies regarding LEP identification and education: The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, Title III, Secs. 3111–3141; 20 U.S.C. 6821–6871, and applicable Missouri statutes under Chapter 160. KCGPA will refer internally to English Language Learners (ELLs) as “Emerging Bilingual” to emphasize an asset-based perception of bilingualism and a commitment to strengthening the languages that students bring with them.

*Identifying ELLs.* Students with English language learning needs will be identified through a Home Language Questionnaire, included in multiple languages during the enrollment process. If the student's home language is not English, KCGPA staff will conduct an interview with the student and parent, with interpreters provided to ensure clear communication. If the student speaks a language other than English, or little to no English, the DSS or designee will administer the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (WAPT). The DSS and a team of staff members will then use those results, teacher input, conversations with parents, and prior academic performance to determine whether the child qualifies as an ELL. If a child is designated as ELL, the DSS and the teacher team will devise an instructional plan for providing ESL support by a licensed ESL teacher and SCI in all classes.

During this identification process, KCGPA seeks to afford every opportunity to help students understand the school's policies and become active members of the school community.

Translators will be employed to support these efforts. KCGPA recognizes that parents have a right to decline ELL services for their child and will follow all appropriate regulations when this scenario occurs.

*Serving ELLs.* KCGPA will use a research-based SCI model to support ELLs. KCGPA will serve ELLs differently depending on their needs and their level of English proficiency as outlined below. Services will be provided by licensed ESL teachers. Students more proficient in English will receive predominantly mainstreamed instruction with additional SCI support to meet the specific child's needs. For additional information, please see Appendix A.6.2: Instructional Methods for Specific English Language Learning Categories.

*Progress monitoring of ELLs.* On an annual basis, ELLs will be assessed and, as appropriate, reclassified to a new ESL level or determined to be proficient in English. Each ELL will be re-assessed in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English by trained personnel. During this process, the following data will be considered: NWEA MAP testing results; a student's performance in classes, ESL Progress Reports, school-based assessments, teacher observations, and statewide testing results. KCGPA will schedule meetings with parents to discuss findings and recommendations.

KCGPA will strive to support language proficiency growth such that all ELLs can be reclassified within three years at the school. Staff will consider reclassifying ELLs when they have earned an overall composite score on ACCESS of at least a 5 and are able to demonstrate the ability to perform all class work in English. When a student appears to be proficient in English, the school will follow the process of reclassifying a student from an ELL to a Former LEP status. KCGPA will monitor the progress of its students for two years after they have been reclassified from ELL status to Former LEP status, or until graduation from KCGPA, whichever

is earlier.

*ELL staffing.* In addition to hiring a proportionate number of ESL-certified teachers to serve our students effectively, KCGPA will ensure that its ELLs are instructed by teachers who are qualified to shelter instruction and who receive ongoing development in ELL strategies and supports. KCGPA's goal is to have all content teachers and other appropriate staff complete ESL training and certifications as appropriate for their role and the proportion of ESL students that KCGPA serves. KCGPA anticipates at least one LSS for ESL per grade level, who would report to the DSS. KCGPA will revise its staffing model as needed based on ELL student enrollment.

*Evaluation of ELL program.* KCGPA will formally evaluate the effectiveness of its ELL program every spring. During this time, KCGPA's school leader and instructional leaders will review student performance including ELL progress reports, report cards, monitor reports of Former LEP students, LSS qualitative assessments, and statewide assessments. The results of this analysis will inform programmatic revisions, including PD, to better ensure that students are making progress to learn English and academic subject content successfully.

### **C. PROJECT PERSONNEL**

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Drive Employment Practices.** KCGPA believes that equitable outcomes for students can be achieved through the development of an intentionally diverse community and inclusive culture. The culture of this community will be driven not only by a shared desire for equitable outcomes, but by an abiding belief in the value of equity itself – that we must address the inequities of historical de jure segregation and contemporary de facto segregation and work together to address them.

KCGPA's inclusive approach to learning honors the diversity of young women's cultural, intellectual, physical, and social and emotional backgrounds, and provides educational supports

and opportunities that remove barriers to learning and enables full participation in the school program. A diverse and inclusive staff is critical to achieving this goal.

In its pre-opening year, KCGPA's Community Design Collaborative, Board, CEO, School Leader, Director of Finance and Operations, and Family and Community Engagement Coordinator will work together to develop an explicit commitment and strategy to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion school-wide. This strategy will include a focus on students; families, staff, board members, and external partners. The strategy will address: (1) inclusion of community members, families, and students in the design and leadership of the school; (2) recruitment of board members and staff with an explicit focus on racial and gender diversity; design of learning experiences for staff and students that focus on cultural competence, and intersectional identities; and (3) school-based systems for ensuring equitable advancement, pay, and recognition for all hires, and creating a workplace culture that is welcoming to all. This work will be supported by participation in a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion cohort sponsored by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and led by Promise54, a nonprofit specializing in this area of practice.

Because of the important focus on curriculum development and staff recruitment during its pre-opening year, KCGPA will prioritize these areas of practice for implementation of its DEI strategy. KCGPA has already established rigorous internal goals to ensure that 75% of applicants are educators of color and/or women to provide positive role models for an otherwise disenfranchised population. To achieve this recruitment goal, KCGPA has established strong external outreach to networks of educators who reflect the diversity of its students. As a result of this work, KCGPA received 74 applications for its Founding School Leader role, of whom 64% were educators of color and 82% were women.

**Founding Team Members Have the Capacity to Achieve the Mission.** KCGPA's

founding team brings insights from having managed, governed, and led for results in some of the highest performing urban public schools in the U.S., along with a diverse array of relevant leadership experiences. Members of the Board have direct experience with public school finance, nonprofit and education law, and governance, as well as a distinguished record of service in the Kansas City community. The team has demonstrated long-term commitment to the mission of equity and student success. And, not insignificantly, KCGPA has the commitment of philanthropic organizations that will ensure that the school has the financial resources necessary to succeed.

*Christine Kemper, Board Chair.* Following a fifteen-year career in communications, politics, and philanthropy, Christine founded a marketing and research consultancy that has advised local, national and global brands since 2002. She is deeply committed to service for students from low-income backgrounds and brings a wealth of governance and nonprofit leadership experience to KCGPA. She has served in leadership roles for dozens of regional nonprofit organizations, including serving on the board of DeLaSalle Charter High School, an alternative school for students at-risk of not graduating. Currently, as President of the Board of Directors of University Academy Charter School, Christine has overseen the school's development during a period in which it has earned an Annual Performance Report of 100% in two consecutive years, been the highest performing charter public school in Missouri, and was recognized as a National Blue-Ribbon School, which recognizes five years of sustained excellence from 2013-2017.

*Julia Tomasic, Treasurer.* Julia is a twenty-eight year veteran of the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department. She has dedicated her career to improving the safety, success, and

quality of life for urban core residents. She believes wholeheartedly that the most important thing she can do to contribute to this mission is to support the opening and development of the school that provides more opportunities for young women. She has served in a wide range of functions, including Patrol, Vice/Narcotics, Tactical Response Team, Community Support Division/Victims Assistance Unit, and many others. She knows from personal experience as a police officer that too few students are receiving the supports they need and has long-standing ties to the community that KCGPA will serve.

*Mayor Sylvester “Sly” James, Jr, Board Member.* Mayor James and his family have called Kansas City home for more than 60 years. He is a graduate of Rockhurst University, a former Marine, and an attorney. Mayor James entered politics in 2011 and is serving his second term as Mayor of Kansas City, Missouri. Six years later, KC is enjoying a renaissance. The city boasts the nation’s largest SMART City technology deployment with predictive analytics that help maximize city services. The most successful streetcar service in the U.S. has tallied more than three million rides since 2016. Most importantly, he places a tremendous focus on ensuring excellent education for every student. Recipient of the All-American City Award, his reading proficiency initiative, Turn the Page KC, has helped increase city-wide 3rd grade reading levels by more than 20%. His background informs his leadership style - discipline and service with a focus on results. He has served on the Advisory Board for the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and as President of both the National Conference of Democratic Mayors and African-American Mayors Association.

*Tom Krebs, Chief Executive Officer.* Tom was a founding member of Leading Educators, a national nonprofit that develops instructional leaders and teachers in content-specific best practices aligned to CCSS. As a founding Executive Director for Leading Educators’ first

national expansion region, Tom led his team and participants to impact 8,000 students from low-income backgrounds, with 42% of students achieving 1.5+ years of growth or 80%+ standards mastery. Later, as Vice President of Program, Tom built and led a team responsible for developing and implementing systems and direct training for rigorous CCSS-aligned ELA and math instruction across DC Public Schools (DCPS). This partnership led to DCPS achieving in 2016-2017 the highest student achievement growth of any large urban school system, with 8.5 and 6.5 ELA and math score increases on PARCC assessments, respectively.<sup>32-34</sup> Tom also led the team responsible for implementation of an Investing in Innovation award in partnership with Chicago Public Schools. Prior to Leading Educators, Tom served as a founding academic dean at a charter high school in Newark, New Jersey, where he led colleagues and students to achieve ACT score growth of 30 national percentile points, 98% proficiency on state exams, the highest Language Arts graduation exam scores in the state, and a 96% college acceptance rate.

*Tara Haskins, Founding School Leader.* Following her graduation from Hampton University, a historically black college, Tara joined the New Teacher Project (TNTP) and taught middle school English and Language Arts in Shreveport, Louisiana. It was here that she developed a middle school all-girls mentoring program that focused on mindfulness, college preparation, and community service. Tara then joined KIPP Voyage Academy for Girls in Houston, where she taught U.S. History and served as a History and later an English content lead, responsible for supporting and developing teachers in both disciplines. She also led school-wide culture systems as Dean of Restorative Justice and Culture. Her implementation of school-wide restorative practices at led to out of school suspensions decreasing by half in a single year. Ms. Haskins has also most recently served as Assistant Principal where she led a broad array of academic and cultural functions. For example, her leadership of the implementation of a CCSS-

aligned English Language Arts curriculum led to students and staff achieving 2020 academic goals two years ahead of schedule.

**D. MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The focus of KCGPA’s grant request is to support the systematic building of staff capacity in alignment with CCSS and other college and career ready standards and assessments, such as AP. In the early years of start-up, KCGPA will lean more heavily on external consultants and PD resources to build and refine Content Knowledge (CK) and Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). Over time, however, KCGPA will remove these more expensive scaffolds as it builds internal capacity in key instructional leaders: School Leader, Director of Student Support, Instructional Coaches for STEAM and Humanities, and Dean of Students, and Chief Executive Officer. Please note that the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for supporting the School Leader, and so will focus on developing aligned vision and expectations around staff development during the course of this grant. The CEO will also support a Director of Finance and Operations, who will in turn oversee the operational aspects of KCGPA’s growth. This will enable the School Leader to remain focused on her core responsibilities of cultural and academic leadership for staff and students.

Over time, these instructional leaders will increasingly attend to building the capacity of teacher content leads in order to distribute leadership, build institutional knowledge, and develop strong promotion/succession plans as the school grows. The management plan below outlines key steps in the development of CK and PCK so as to ensure high levels of student growth and proficiency for high-need students in the early years of KCGPA’s launch.

Activities	Start	End	Owner(s)	Milestone
<b>Obj. 1.1: Select CCSS-aligned curricula and assessments for all content areas</b>				

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>	<b>Owner(s)</b>	<b>Milestone</b>
Research criteria for making curricular decisions, using tools such as Student Achievement Partners' Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool	7/1/18	10/31/18	CEO and School Leader	Curriculum evaluation rubric and report
Review curriculum evaluation resources (e.g. EdReports and Louisiana Believes)	7/1/18	10/31/18	School Leader	
Recruit and hire curriculum, ELL, and Special Education program design consultants	7/1/18	10/31/18	School Leader	CCSS-aligned curriculum, ELL, and SPED program design plan
Conduct Excellent School Visits (e.g. YWLN, other high-performing schools) to observe implementation and interview instructional leaders	10/1/18	3/31/19	CEO and School Leader	Curriculum training, development, and implementation plan
Plan curriculum-specific internalization and planning protocols	10/1/18	12/31/18	School Leader	
Convene design team members to finalize curriculum decisions	11/19/18	11/30/18	School Leader	

Activities	Start	End	Owner(s)	Milestone
Procure and organize curriculum resources	12/3/18	12/21/18	School Leader	Curricula available for staff in all content areas
Review student achievement data to determine how to improve curricula	Annually from 4/1-8/31		School Leader	Revised, CCSS-aligned curricula
Use KCGPA’s curriculum evaluation process to research and procure additional curricular materials	Annually from 9/1-12/31		Instructional Leaders and Teacher Content Leads	
<b>Obj. 2.1 Staff internalize CK and PCK</b>				
Attend Relay Graduate School of Education National Principal Academy Fellowship	7/1/18	6/30/19	School Leader	CCSS-aligned CK, PCK, and instructional
Attend UnboundEd’s Standards Institute and Teach Like a Champion workshops	Annually, time of year varies		Varies by year; budget lists attendees	leadership systems (e.g. weekly data meeting protocols, literacy coaching protocols, etc.)
Hire new grade-level teachers early as consultants (and each	Annually from 7/1-12/31		School Leader	Completed contracts

Activities	Start	End	Owner(s)	Milestone
year thereafter as the middle school grows)				
Take Student Achievement Partners' Knowledge and Practice Survey and an AP (or similar) assessment for their content area during the hiring process to assess CK and PCK	Annually from 7/1-12/31		School Leader	Completed pre-assessments and individualized learning goals/plans
Facilitate evening and/or Saturday curriculum internalization and planning with consultant teachers	Annually from 1/1-5/30		School Leader	Baseline CCSS-aligned CK, PCK, and curricular
Facilitate summer PD, including STEP Literacy PD with external trader	Annually from 6/1-8/31 from 2019-2022		Instructional Leaders	internalization complete
Instructional leaders and teachers collaborate via Cycles of Professional Learning on a weekly basis, supported by external consultants as needed.	Annually from 9/1-6/15		Instructional Leaders & Teacher Content Leads	Ongoing refinement of CCSS-aligned CK, PCK, and curricular internalization
Instructional leaders and teachers take a Knowledge and Practice	Annually at end of Summer PD, by		School Leader	Completed post-assessments and

Activities	Start	End	Owner(s)	Milestone
Survey and an AP (or similar) assessment for their content area.	8/31			updated individualized learning goals/plans
<b>Obj. 3.1: High-need students grow on norm-referenced assessments.</b>				
<b>Obj. 3.2: High-need students demonstrate proficiency on CCSS-aligned assessments.</b>				
Completed post-enrollment questionnaires for all students	Annually from 3/1-6/30		Director of Student Support	Completed questionnaires, including IEP/ELL information
Administer diagnostic assessments to newly enrolled students	Annually from 8/15-9/30		School Leader	Completed diagnostic assessments
Create or update Personalized Learning Plans for all students	Annually from 9/1-10/31		School Leader	Updated Personalized Learning Plans
Apply CK and PCK in the facilitation of CCSS-aligned curricula	Annually from 8/15-6/15		School Leader	Students complete at least 80% of curricular units for their grade level
<b>Obj. 3.3: Students classified as Limited English Proficient increase English language proficiency.</b>				
<b>Obj. 3.4: Students with disabilities achieve IEP goals.</b>				
Child Study Team evaluates and	Annually from		Director of	Appropriate

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>	<b>Owner(s)</b>	<b>Milestone</b>
plans for referrals from families and staff	8/15-6/15		Student Support	interventions and new or updated IEPs
Review and update IEPs	Annually from 8/15-6/15		Director of Student Support	and Personalized Learning Plans
Implement co-teaching, small-group instruction, tutoring, and personalized learning	Annually from 8/15-6/15		School Leader	Students with disabilities and ELLs receive appropriately supportive instruction
Evaluate ELL and Special Education program design	Annually from 3/1-4/30		Director of Student Support	Evaluation, including recommendations for future design needs

KCGPA has attached a budget outlining critical costs in the effort to build staff capacity for leading CCSS-aligned, highly supportive instruction for high-need students. The budget proposes a gradual reduction of external PD as internal capacity is built. The continuation plan in the following section provides additional details on how KCPGA’s team will achieve project Objectives within budget.

**E. CONTINUATION PLAN**

The leadership of KCGPA is comprised of pillars of the Kansas City community. The board of directors and founding team are dedicated to the success of girls in Kansas City’s urban core. This dedication is shown through the commitment and coordination with city government, law enforcement, members of the business community and nationally known experts in

education. They have the political will and power to advocate for the most vulnerable in Kansas City, economically disadvantage minority girls. The philosophies described in this proposal will not change after this funding ends. These leaders have dedicated their lives to this population and this charter school is the fruit of that hard work.

While a charter school's philosophy begins with its board and leadership, KCGPA also believes in systematically building capacity through shared leadership and deep institutional knowledge. KCGPA intends to partner with the Achievement Network (ANet), a national nonprofit that is deeply committed to KCGPA's mission of equity. ANet assists organizations as they develop the capacity of their instructional leaders to drive CCSS-aligned teacher development and rigorous, CCSS-aligned assessments.

While the proportion of the budget spent on curriculum start-up costs will decrease over time as enrollment increases, the dedication to building staff capacity will not. The current budget prioritizes building instructional leadership capacity in the Chief Executive Officer (who will manage and support the School Leader), the School Leader, the Director of Student Support, the Instructional Coach for STEAM (the first of two instructional coaches that will ultimately be hired), and the Dean of Students. After every PD experience, these leaders will be responsible for refining their approach to teacher development and sharing what they have learned by integrating it into ongoing Cycles of Professional Learning with all teachers. Over time, the budget prioritizes attendance at external PD for the teacher content lead in order to build shared leadership and deep instructional leadership capacity throughout the building. By Year 4 and 5 of the grant, teacher content leads – rather than instructional leaders – will be responsible for facilitating a greater share of the Cycles of Professional Learning and assuming greater ownership over the long-term development of their colleagues' CK and PCK.

This strong, ongoing philosophy of growing staff capacity means that KCGPA already anticipates fundraising beyond the per pupil cost, which will cover the cost of paying staff salaries. A comprehensive funding plan will not only include per pupil reimbursement, but plans for federal and state grants, corporate and family foundations, special events, and individual giving. KCGPA anticipates utilizing every resource available to provide the comprehensive, high-quality services needed for our students to succeed.

#### **F. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS NOT INCLUDED IN NARRATIVE**

**Annual Audit.** As a new nonprofit, KCGPA has not yet secured an independent audit. KCGPA commits to independent, annual audits of its financial statements prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. These audit reports will be available on its website and the website of its sponsor, the Missouri Charter Public School Commission.

**Autonomy, Transparency, and Accountability.** KCGPA has a Kansas City-based, independent Board of Directors connected to the community KCGPA will serve. KCGPA's Board will develop all policies and conduct all meetings in accordance with Section 4303(f)(2)(A) and R.S.Mo. Sec. 610.010, et seq., commonly known as the "Sunshine Law."

KCGPA has complete autonomy over budget, operations, and personnel decisions, with appropriate oversight and policy guidance from its Board and sponsor.

**Roles and Responsibilities of KCGPA, Partner Organizations, And Charter Management Organizations.** While KCGPA has an extensive network of informal community and professional partnerships, it does not have nor does not plan to have a significant formal partnership with any external entities. It is an affiliate of the nonprofit Young Women's Leadership Network, but does not have any formal legal ties with the network.

**KCGPA Meets the Definition of a Charter School Under Section 4310(2) of the ESEA.** Criteria for meeting the definition, such as lottery and enrollment policies, are discussed in the narrative. In addition, KCGPA will operate as a public school under public supervision and direction. The school will operate in accordance with its mission of supporting high-need students to pursue a specific set of educational objectives and agreed to by the MCPSC. Parents will choose to send their children to KCGPA. KCGPA will be nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution. KCGPA will not charge tuition. Finally, KCGPA will meet all applicable Federal, State, and local health and safety requirements and comply with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), Section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (commonly referred to as the “Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974”), and Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

**Performance Contract.** KCGPA is still in its pre-authorization stage. The Missouri Charter Public School Commission has agreed to review KCGPA’s application for sponsorship at its May 30, 2018 meeting. Assuming the Commission agrees to sponsorship, the contract will be drafted and finalized by August 2018 and submitted to the Missouri State Board of Education for approval a full year prior to KCGPA’s launch. The contract will center on student achievement as a core criterion for renewal or revocation of KCGPA’s charter, along with financial, structural, and operational factors involving the management of the school. The draft contract can be found in Appendix F Additional Information.